

# Gippsland Trophy

Sunday, 31 January 2021

Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

## Johanna Konta

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Talk about how important it is to get some good matches here in the Melbourne Summer Series ahead of the Australian Open.**

JOHANNA KONTA: I mean, obviously even on a normal season, we always look forward to the lead-up events into the Australian Open. So normally obviously we have Brisbane or Auckland or Shenzhen, all those tournaments, which we don't have this year. It's nice we have something to play.

I think everyone feels very lucky to be out of the quarantine period and practicing, preparing to start to compete this week, today. Some people already started to compete today.

**Q. Obviously here from Britain where things have not gone very well. How does that shape how you look at the rest of the year, what competition might be like for you in terms of quarantines when you go home, quarantines when you go away? How is it possible to be a pro tennis player in 2021?**

JOHANNA KONTA: I think the honest answer is I don't know. I think obviously before we left for here at the beginning of January, it was starting to get a little bit worse at home with the infections and everything. But it definitely has taken a turn for the worse since we've been away. We have a really tragic death toll so far. I know it's not a good situation at home.

But like we had in 2020, I think everything is continuously ever evolving. I don't know how it will be. I don't know how the quarantines will be. I don't know how things will shape up. But hopefully sooner or later, not just for the UK, but I think everyone in the world will see the back end of this at some point. I'm very hopeful.

**Q. How do you adjust your mind in terms of not a normal year going in? Is it as simple as one day at a time?**

JOHANNA KONTA: I think you have to. I think 2020 was a good preparation I guess for 2021 in that sense. I think it is just about staying very flexible and very open to what opportunities we will have, what those opportunities

will look like.

Yeah, it's very much a day-to-day thing. I'm feeling very, very grateful for the opportunity that I have to be here, to be competing. So that's what I will let fill my energy up, make me happy. Yeah, kind of day by day really.

**Q. I believe you had a chat with Craig Tiley a couple weeks ago when all the controversies were happening about quarantine. He said that he was very impressed with the conversation with you and made the point this young lady will go far after her tennis career has ended. What would be some things you would look at beyond your tennis career?**

JOHANNA KONTA: I'm not sure, has Craig Tiley offered me a job post tennis? Is that what he specifically said? It's on the record, Craig. It's on the record (laughter).

I mean, I don't know. Whatever I will be doing, it's still a ways away. I haven't really thought too much into it. I am very enjoying my time on the council, which has definitely opened my eyes into how the WTA runs. Therefore, we've had a lot of contact with a lot of individual tournaments, some of the slams. It's nice to see the inner workings of our sport and the different arms that our sport has.

But I don't know what I'll be doing.

**Q. Tell us about your quarantine. What was it like? How did you find it? What was it like to get to normality? I saw you were at Luna Park recently. What was it like being outside with no lockdown restrictions?**

JOHANNA KONTA: You know you don't believe everything you see on social media, right? I was not at Luna Park. I walked past the front of it. Jackson, my boyfriend, thought it would be really a fun idea for me to just pose in front of it. That's what that was. I wouldn't say that's quite normal, but it is what it is.

Quarantine itself, it had its challenges. I think everyone experienced different challenges when it came to that period. Some had it a lot more difficult than others, that's for sure.

But I think once we kind of got through the first few days

of stress and teething problems with everything that was happening, I think after everyone, including myself, got into the groove of what it was, we took it day by day, enjoyed it for what it was when we could.

I think everyone was very happy to see the back of those two weeks. But, yeah, I think, again, a day-by-day kind of mentality. Really pleased to be milling about as normal.

**Q. I believe you're back with Dimitri. How did that happen? What has that been like?**

JOHANNA KONTA: I mean, it's been good. It was very interesting just also because of the way 2020 was. I spent so much of that at home. Obviously the season went on a break for quite a period of time. In a way it never really felt like we stopped working. Obviously we always maintained a very good relationship even after the initial break back at the beginning of last year.

Yeah, no, it's been really nice just to continue on our work together, all of us in the team. Yeah, I think it just felt right to keep going. We still have work to do. I'm enjoying learning from him. Yeah, that's about it.

**Q. Is Dimitri here? Is he in Australia?**

JOHANNA KONTA: No, he's not in Australia. He's not here. I was only able to bring two people, so I brought Dan and Jackson. But I am keeping in touch with him through the phone and writing and things like that, yeah.

**Q. As we stand, we're a week out from the Aussie Open, how is your form? How do you assess your opportunity at what has been a crazy winter period?**

JOHANNA KONTA: I think it's nice that my body is heading in the right direction. I feel physically more and more prepared to play and compete, and hopefully compete consecutively in days and weeks. I think that's also kind of a long-term perspective of the season itself.

But in terms of specifically the Australian Open, I mean, right now I'm just looking forward to hopefully playing a few matches this week coming, then once we get through that then we'll see kind of how the Australian goes.

I'm always looking forward to and preparing for the best-case scenario. My intention is to be playing in the Australian Open for two weeks. So we'll see how that goes for me.

**Q. Do you think players would agree to another extensive quarantine like the one they just experienced or was it too much of a hardship? What is your sense of where players would be?**

JOHANNA KONTA: I don't know. I think it's all to do

with circumstance. I think everyone knew coming here that we'd have the two-week period of quarantine. I think everyone was looking forward to the opportunity of having some sort of normality after that period.

I don't know where else in the world this would be possible just because I think Australia is in the best position possible to offer some normality after the quarantine period. So I don't know if it would be possible or relevant anywhere else, to be honest.

**Q. You just made mention being on the council; you've learned a few things about the running of the tennis tour. What might have surprised you the most? What has stood out for you?**

JOHANNA KONTA: That Steve Simon is very good at his job. I have a lot of respect for him, just for how hard he's worked last year. That for me was a very big learning curve of how he dealt with the whole thing. Watching it from the inside, I was very humbled by that, feel very grateful that we have him as part of our organization.

To be honest, it's just been humbling to see how hard everyone is just trying to do the best that they can to keep our sport alive. I think maybe not enough acknowledgment or recognition has come from the fact that tennis is such a global sport, so the fact that we were even able to limp through 2020 and are still really trying hard to put stuff together for this year and get things going is a real big feat.

The amount of players we have coming from all over the world, from the tournaments and how hard they're working to make stuff happen. I think there's just a lot of kudos to everyone involved in this sport in trying to keep it going, hopefully get it flourishing again at some point when the world allows.

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