

# Gippsland Trophy

Monday, 1 February 2021

Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

## Destanee Aiava

Press Conference



D. AIAVA/C. Paquet

6-1, 4-6, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Talk us through that three-setter.**

DESTANEE AIAVA: Yeah, I think I played as well as I could have. Tough first match. Obviously haven't played in a while. But, yeah, I was just really excited to compete and get the win today.

**Q. You're still only 20. This is your fifth-year playing here. Do you feel like a bit of a veteran?**

DESTANEE AIAVA: Yeah, I really enjoy coming back every year, playing the AO summer. Yeah, I think I do have a little bit more experience behind me playing in these WTAs and slams now.

I'm feeling quite comfortable now, feeling like I belong here. Yeah, just trying to take that on court, as well.

**Q. You got off to such a great start. Did you feel right at home on court? Talk us through what your preparation has been like.**

DESTANEE AIAVA: Yeah, I felt pretty good on court in the first set. Yes, things fell away from me, but I was glad to get it back.

Then, yeah, I think I've put in a lot of work, as well, before these tournaments. Obviously didn't travel much due to COVID. Yeah, I think I'm feeling pretty confident in what I've done over the summer with my coach. Yeah, I'm feeling quite confident in myself.

**Q. Have you added anything to your game? Anything in particular you've been working on?**

DESTANEE AIAVA: Probably just all around, like, serve, forehand, backhand. Mentally, as well. Yeah, I think everything's coming together. Yeah, my serve speed is up, as well, from last year. Yeah, I think everything's going well.

**Q. How have you found the transition from junior**

**tennis? You had some great results as a junior. Has it been hard to make the step up into senior, WTA?**

DESTANEE AIAVA: A bit easy and hard, I guess. It's completely different level from juniors to WTA, as well. When you're young, you're playing with nothing to lose. Then things kind of plateau a little bit for some.

Yeah, I think over the years I've been playing a lot more WTAs, as well. Yeah, I think everything's just a lot more comfortable now.

**Q. Do you have any sort of expectations for the Open? Obviously you said you had good preparation, you're playing well.**

DESTANEE AIAVA: Just take it one match at a time, see how I go in this tournament.

**Q. Looking ahead, with your ranking and the position you're in, how can you plan the year? Does it make it difficult with coronavirus, not having guaranteed entry into tournaments?**

DESTANEE AIAVA: I'm not too sure about that. My coach has got that covered. Yeah, I think we're just going to see how I do in these next couple of weeks, then plan ahead for that. But I'm sure I'll be traveling this year.

**Q. Was it more a mental battle or a physical battle? What were you focusing on?**

DESTANEE AIAVA: It was probably more mental, just knowing that I've done the work, yeah, can get through the first round. But, yeah, I know that I've done the work. It was definitely more mental.

**Q. You've talked a fair bit about the mental preparation you've done. What does that involve exactly?**

DESTANEE AIAVA: Just working with my coach on different areas I could work on. Probably mostly on court, visualization, all those types of things.

**Q. Where does this match rate in terms of how much a win means to you?**

DESTANEE AIAVA: It's probably pretty important, I guess, just for my first match back. Just probably getting back into the swing of things. Yeah, it does help with my AO preparation, as well. That's the main tournament I'm looking forward to.

But, yeah, every win's a great feeling (smiling).

**Q. Have you looked ahead? I think in round three you might end up facing Simona Halep.**

DESTANEE AIAVA: Actually, I haven't looked ahead, but thanks for that (laughter). No, that's fine.

Yeah, just focusing on tomorrow, who I play now. Yeah, I'll just get ready for that. Hopefully tomorrow's another good day.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

DESTANEE AIAVA: I don't have any. I think I've played her in Tasmania before. Lost that one. Yeah, I'm just looking forward to getting a rematch. I think I'm a lot better player this year, as well. Yeah, just looking forward to competing.

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