

Brisbane International

Saturday, 30 December 2023

Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

Kim Birrell

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Kim, how does it feel to start the season at your home event?

KIM BIRRELL: It's really special. Yeah, spent so many hours out on the practice courts here. It's basically like a second home. I spent, yeah, my pre-season training here.

I think as Aussies, we're so pumped to be able to start the year at home, spend a few extra days in my own bed, which has been awesome. Awesome to see so many great players here in the draw.

Yeah, can't wait to play in front of my friends and family, too.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. How much of an advantage do you believe that is, being able to sleep in your own bed, not have the jet lag, and the home-court advantage?

KIM BIRRELL: Yeah, I think it is huge. I guess you do never know what can happen at the beginning of the season, especially with a lot of the other players coming from the other side of the world where it's winter. We've spent lots of time out in the heat now. It's been weeks and weeks of grueling training during our pre-season.

I think it is definitely an advantage. I mean, everyone in the draw is a professional. They get here and they know what they're in for. They prepare as best as they can.

Yeah, like I said, anything can happen. Yeah, I think I put myself in the best position to play well this week.

Q. Could you talk about what memories do you have of this tournament as a Queensland player?

KIM BIRRELL: So many. I was here when the tournament was in its first year. I think I actually was able to play on Pat Rafter Arena like in between the night matches on the little hotshots. I think I was 11 years old. Yeah, I had that memory.

Just watching so many great matches over the year. Then getting to play in 2019 I had my first top 10 win. That was really special, a moment I'll never, ever forget.



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In 2020 when I was injured, I worked in the media team. Lots of different memories here. Yeah, I'm super grateful I get to play again this year and the tournament is back on. When I saw it on the schedule, all the other players, I think we were all really stoked.

Yeah, lots of, lots of memories.

Q. Were there any particular players that inspired you?

KIM BIRRELL: Yeah, I remember watching Sam play out here, Ash as well. I always idolized Kim Clijsters growing up. I remember when she won. I think she donated her prize money to a charity. That has always stuck in my head.

Yeah, I mean, you can't beat the experience of walking the hallways and seeing your idols. Now growing up and sort of feeling like they're my peers is really, really a cool feeling.

Q. The tournament hasn't even started yet, and we've got a fair wham of the court filled watching Rafa warm up. As a tennis fan, it must be great being a Brisbane or Gold Coast girl to see what a player like his caliber, even Naomi coming back, can do for the game?

KIM BIRRELL: Yeah, no, definitely. Like I said, when we saw the tournament was back on the schedule, we were all so happy. Then to see the caliber of players that entered, have chosen to start their year here, it's just awesome.

I think so many players have this tournament as one of their favorites throughout the year. That's clear with, like I said, the caliber that are here this week. I just have so many memories watching Rafa play growing up. I used to wake Australian Open at 4 a.m., all times during the night, to watch him in finals of Grand Slams. It's does not get old seeing him in the corridor. Yeah, I think lots of players are pretty sad he's hanging up his racquets pretty soon.

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