

Brisbane International

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Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

Victoria Azarenka

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Vika, welcome back to Brisbane. Happy hunting ground for you in the past. Could you tell us a bit about how you structure your pre-season at this stage of your career, has it changed over the years?

VICTORIA AZARENKA: Yeah, I'm happy to be back in Brisbane. I think it's a great opportunity for us to be back here. It's always been a great event. I feel like people really, really appreciate tennis here. Really come support.

My last time here was for a Fed Cup tie. It was amazing atmosphere. Always have good memories coming here.

Pre-season, I had a quite long pre-season this time around. I'm happy I was able to structure it the way I did. So, yeah, I'm kind of ready to start and compete. Already is enough training.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Only been one three-time winner here. You could be the second. Have you thought about that or just enjoying being back here?

VICTORIA AZARENKA: No, I have not thought about that. I'm very unstatistics person. I don't like anything like that. I feel like it's a waste of time.

Of course, I come here with the goal of winning, taking it one match at a time. How many times, it will not really matter.

Q. You were the inaugural winner. What do you love about Brisbane so much?

VICTORIA AZARENKA: Beautiful city. Just great atmosphere. As I said, people I feel like really appreciate sports. I feel Australia in general, the people really love sports and follow. Tennis is a huge culture in Australia.

Definitely a beautiful place to be. Yeah, I think the crowd will show up. I think that's what we are here for, to play in front of fans, put a little bit of a show. I mean, that's why I practice so hard. I still love to compete.

I don't love the travel or going from tournament to tournament, but I do love to compete, that feeling of



going on the court in front of the crowd is what motivates me to keep going.

Q. Why is it that Australia always seems to bring out the best in you and your game?

VICTORIA AZARENKA: Beginning of the year, I guess I miss the tour, I miss the people. A bit more of a fresher mindset (smiling).

But I think since I was a junior here, I kind of felt a good energy. I really love the crowd here. I think the courts and the balls, they fit my game pretty well.

I think it's more fresh after the pre-season where you kind of have more of an exciting mindset rather than end of the year where you're sometimes maybe a little bit beat down. Yeah, at this stage of my career, it's the travel that is kind of more difficult rather than playing. After being at home and having some good time at home with family, I feel excited to come back and play.

Q. There's been a lot of attention on the players that are returning to the tour in Australia as mothers, including Naomi. You've been doing that successfully for years. What advice do you have to the mothers coming back?

VICTORIA AZARENKA: I don't ever give advice people who don't ask me personally because I don't believe in the general advice. I think people have individual -- people are individuals, and they have their own ways of approach. I really stay away from giving advice.

What I would say is that I'm very excited to see players are coming back. I've said it few years ago already. I think we broke the stereotype that you be an athlete and have family. This definitely has been broken. It's actually evolved more and more. The testament of that is how many players are feeling comfortable and confident coming back and continue being on tour.

I believe that we still have a lot more growth to do in that space to continue to push forward being a women's leading sport, how we can make our athletes feel more secure, more comfortable at all levels, not just top level, but also lower levels where they have that stability, financial security to keep coming back.

I think we have an opportunity to do that in women's



sports like maybe not before. I hope we put the right resources into that.

Q. How proud are you of the role you played in setting an example in breaking that stereotype?

VICTORIA AZARENKA: I'm not the type of person to pat myself on the shoulder really. For me what's important is, I always kind of look back to legends before my time, like Billie Jean King who fought for a better future for us. I believe I would love to have not necessarily the legacy, but I love to take that part of my journey and to dedicate my time, influence, or opportunity to better the tour for others.

I believe that's just my passion to do, as well.

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