

Adelaide International

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Kimberly Birrell

Press Conference



K. BIRRELL/J. Cristian

5-7, 6-1, 7-5

THE MODERATOR: Kim, congrats. That was a battle out there today. Just your thoughts on the match.

KIMBERLY BIRRELL: Yeah, it was definitely a battle. Yeah, it was a long one. Just really happy that I was able to fight back and win the second, and then grinded it out from there.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Where does that rank in your career in terms of how grueling it was, and in terms of how satisfying that was as well?

KIMBERLY BIRRELL: Yeah, it's definitely up there, I would say. It's probably, looking back, one of the, I guess, I don't know what the right word is, but just the momentum shifts and how we both fought, I think we both completely emptied our tanks.

Honestly, it's probably easier to say after winning, but it's one of the reasons I just love tennis so much because it tests you physically and mentally. I think it wasn't just about tennis out there today, it was about who could fight and who could keep believing in themselves. And, yeah, really proud of myself that I just kept doing that until the last point.

Q. Part of that mental battle was that you almost had to win the match twice in some ways. You really had the first set on your racquet, and you had to put that one aside. You went off the court, came back, and played a really, really good second set, and then dug deep in that third set. Is that how it felt out there for you?

KIMBERLY BIRRELL: Yeah, for sure. I think there was a bit of a turning point when I held. I think I was serving the first game in the second set. I was up, and then it got back to deuce. And I was like, here we go again, because I obviously had a bunch of opportunities to win the set. I'm not sure how many set points I had.

Yeah, it was definitely quite frustrating. Yeah, just really

happy with how I kind of kept my cool and stayed really with each point. I didn't get too far ahead of myself, didn't look back at the first set, just stayed in the moment and kept fighting for each point.

Q. Were you cramping at one stage out there? Did you have to get the salts into the system?

KIMBERLY BIRRELL: Yes, I absolutely was (laughing). I sort of had like the pre-cramps, your muscles sort of start to twitch. Yeah, it was interesting because it wasn't that hot out there. I think just the length of some of the points that we had had the lactic acid kind of pumping through.

Yeah, luckily I was prepared, and I had all the things that I needed, the pickle juice and salts. And, yeah, I just was lucky that that kicked in. I think I got on top of it early enough.

Yeah, I'm not sure what would have happened if I had to keep playing that last game. I really needed that last point because I could really feel my right quad starting to cramp. So like I said in the post-match interview, I told myself that I'm an Aussie, I can't cramp under 30 degrees (laughing).

Q. Is it a bit like that when you play some of these, I mean she's probably recognized more as a clay courter, and they're always physical regardless of where they are in the rankings. Was it half expected that you were going to have a physical match out there today?

KIMBERLY BIRRELL: Yeah, definitely. We played a couple of times before, so that definitely helped sort of with my pre-match preparations. I mean, at the end of the day, you sort of just have to trust your pre-season and the work that you've done.

Yeah, I think that I've now turned my movement into one of my strengths. So, yeah, it was really cool to kind of be able to show everyone that that's something that I can do, and that I can match it with some of these girls that do like to extend the points and hold my own.

Q. What was it like playing in front of that crowd? Obviously it was a little bit quiet during that first set, but by the time you hit the third set they were right behind you. What was that experience like?



KIMBERLY BIRRELL: Yeah, it was awesome. It was really cool to play out on center court. I think I played out there once before, but this is the first time since the renovations have been done. It's an awesome court.

Yeah, just really appreciate every time that I get to play at home in Oz. And, yeah, it was really loud out there, especially toward the end of the third set, and that definitely helped me through.

Q. Obviously it's a pretty quick turnaround here and you have another really big test in the semis. How big is it to get through a match like that just before the semis as well?

KIMBERLY BIRRELL: Yeah, absolutely. I think I just have to make sure that I really look after my body and make sure I do all my recovery things to tick all those boxes so that I'm ready to go tomorrow.

I know that it's going to be a tough one. You get to this point at the end of the tournament, everyone's a great player. So I'll focus on myself, and then I'll have a look at whoever wins this match and come up with a bit of a plan with my team. But I'm really pumped, I'm super excited, I couldn't ask for better preparation going into AO.

Q. Talking about tomorrow's match. Obviously you don't know yet, Victoria and Madison are playing right now. Talk about the prospect of playing either one of them. I think you played Vicky during her Montreal run, and then you played Madison earlier in your career.

KIMBERLY BIRRELL: Yeah, they're both great players. I think they have quite similar game styles. They really go after the ball and have great weight behind their shots. I think it's good that I have played both of them.

Obviously watched Madi's run at AO last year. So if I get the chance to play her I think that would be a really amazing test.

Same with Vicky. I know she's a great player as well. Yeah, I think I just have to believe that the work that I've done, and my quality of shot is good enough to go up against theirs.

Q. Obviously you're guaranteed into the semifinals, and I know you're focused on your match tomorrow, but AO's next week. Just talk about how much of a confidence booster reaching the semis here in a 500 is to go into the first Grand Slam of the year.

KIMBERLY BIRRELL: Yeah, definitely. It's a huge confidence boost. I know that everyone wants to just get as many matches as they can going into a Grand Slam. This is absolutely huge just to test myself against this

level. I'm really excited to go into AO on a high note, but I definitely want to keep focusing on tomorrow because the job's not finished yet.

Q. What are your thoughts about the 1 Point Slam that was yesterday?

KIMBERLY BIRRELL: Yeah, I had such a fun time watching it with my brother and my boyfriend. We were glued to our phones watching it. We had, yeah, a fun time.

I think it's just cool that something, it's a new initiative by TA. I know Jordan personally. I played Joanna recently. I thought it was a win/win with them being in the final and, yeah, it's very cool that an Aussie got the million.

Q. Would that be something that you would want to do, and what would be your strategy in terms of like rock, paper, scissors or receive?

KIMBERLY BIRRELL: I don't know. I honestly was so impressed that Joanna kept choosing to serve. Because with one serve I think I would be like too nervous to do that. Plus I think my returns are a little bit better than my returns, so I would probably choose to receive. But, yeah, it really worked for her so, yeah, it was fun to watch.

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