

Adelaide International

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Kimberly Birrell

Press Conference



V. MBOKO/K. Birrell

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THE MODERATOR: Kim, a great run here in Adelaide. You have a lot to be proud of. Just your thoughts on the match today and your run here as a whole.

KIMBERLY BIRRELL: Yeah, thank you. Obviously today was a tough one. I think she played very well though. Yeah, I think, even though the score was quite one sided, there was still some high-level points.

So, yeah, I think going into next week, I still feel good, I still feel quite confident, and just really glad that I have the amount of matches that I have now going into AO.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. What are your main positives to take out of the week into AO, apart from the performances, but what does it do for the confidence and mentality?

KIMBERLY BIRRELL: Yeah, yeah. I think it's just so important to start the year on a positive note. I think that I'm really just proud of my attitude. I'm glad that my body has held up really well. I think that's huge. Especially after a long match yesterday, I actually felt pretty good waking up this morning. Sometimes you don't really know how you're going to feel when you first wake up. Apart from like the usual little bit of stiffness, I was actually totally fine.

I'm so stoked with that. I think it just goes to show how much I put into my pre-season, and that that work's really paying off now. So, yeah, lots of positives to take into next week.

Q. I was going to ask about the physical toll of yesterday. You pulled up okay?

KIMBERLY BIRRELL: Yeah, no, I pulled up okay. I think it's just normal toward the end of the week to feel a little bit more fatigued. I think today I'm not sure if I can blame that. I think she hits the ball with such quality of depth and weight behind it that maybe I think the little bit of soreness could have hindered me a little bit from the corners. I think against someone like that you really

need to be able to stay low, and, yeah, when you're a little bit sore that can hurt you a little bit. But, I mean, I wouldn't say that's why I lost today (laughing).

Q. Is there anything that you maybe changed up in preparation for this year which has led to the really good physical condition, or, yeah, I guess, what have you done differently?

KIMBERLY BIRRELL: Not too much, actually. I think one massive thing is just the consistency of working with my psychologist. So I've been really sticking with that and keeping myself accountable. I'm still chatting with him, even when I'm feeling good, and throughout pre-season too.

I would say the only difference was I finished my year one week earlier. And then with the tour starting a little bit later this year, I gained two extra weeks. I actually had a week, which was amazing. I had 10 days off. Last year I had three days. So that was a huge difference, yeah.

Q. Just coming up against Victoria, what are your thoughts on her game and how far she can go. She's burst onto the scene and now she seems to be surging up and up.

KIMBERLY BIRRELL: Yeah, I've known Vicky for a while. I practiced with her when she was maybe 13 or 14, in Toronto. I already knew she was going to be an amazing player. At that age she already was. I'm not surprised with the success that she's been having.

I think today, yeah, I just was maybe a step too slow. And when I did get those opportunities, I didn't quite take them. She played really well. When she is on a roll she's quite hard to stop, especially with the quality of her serve. So, yeah, she's got weapons, for sure.

Q. On Vicky, you don't want to look too far ahead, but she's drawn potentially Sabalenka in the fourth round of the AO. Is that a match that you can potentially see her knocking off the world No. 1?

KIMBERLY BIRRELL: Yeah. I mean, that's the exciting thing about women's tennis. I think on any given day anyone can beat anyone. So I think that would be a really entertaining match for everyone to watch. I hope that they do end up meeting each other in the fourth



round. I think with her weapons she can for sure stress someone like Sabalenka, yeah.

Q. When we spoke outside yesterday you said Vicky has obviously got weapons, but you felt you had your weapon in terms of the return of serve. Is it hard to get into it when she's just crushing first serves and not missing them, I guess?

KIMBERLY BIRRELL: Yeah. I had a quick look at the stats, and I don't think she missed many first serves today. So, yeah, that's a credit to her. I didn't get too many looks.

I think what would have helped me is just holding onto my serve, especially at the start of the match, and maybe stressing her a little bit more on her service games. As I said, I think she just got on a bit of a roll and it was quite hard to stop. She was going quite quickly between points, and I was just a bit, you know, taken aback for a minute there. I think I got into a couple of her service games, but didn't quite take the opportunities.

Q. Have you had a look at what your ranking, have you and your team looked at what your ranking is going to look like now? Obviously it's going to receive a nice boost after this week.

KIMBERLY BIRRELL: Yeah, I think that's just an extra added bonus after a week like this. I haven't exactly looked at the numbers, that's something that I'm trying not to do as much this year. Obviously it really helps defending my points from Brisbane last year. And, yeah, I think it's awesome that this has kind of happened at the start of the year. It definitely takes a little bit of pressure off my next few weeks, definitely.

Q. Speaking on the AO, you have got Maddison Inglis, another local Aussie. Any thoughts on that upcoming match?

KIMBERLY BIRRELL: Yeah, Maddy is one of my good friends, so that was a bit of a bummer to see that we play each other first round. I actually was watching her second set of her last round qualies, and really wanted her to win. We grew up playing together, and have played each other quite a few times. I think definitely once last year.

So, yeah, we know each other's games really well. I think it will be more about who can keep their cool. Anything can happen, I guess, especially with all the added stresses of a Grand Slam. So I think I'm just really going to focus on myself and take all the positives from this week. It will be tough, for sure, but I'm looking forward to it.

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