

Australian Open

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Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Angelique Kerber

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Angie, welcome back to the Australian Open. What does it feel like to be back at the tournament?

ANGELIQUE KERBER: Yeah, I mean, it's really nice to be back here in Melbourne, especially at the Australian Open. I mean, yeah, for me it's one of the best tournaments with best memories. It's really special to be back and start here. For me, actually the first tournament, yeah.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. I know you needed matches at the start of the year, but was that almost too much, having five matches against such top-quality opposition in next to no time at the United Cup?

ANGELIQUE KERBER: I think it was not too much. It was good for me to have not so many matches and also so tough matches already with top-10 players, top-30 players.

I think, of course, I had, like, two days off after that to really get a good recovery because we played so long, always until the night.

But I think for me it was a good start to have already good matches. But it's, of course, a different thing if you play in a group or a team event than to starting, actually this is my first real tournament, let's say.

Yeah, I'm really excited for that.

Q. Were you always planning on coming back? Did you waver at all? Why did you decide to come back?

ANGELIQUE KERBER: It was always in my mind. I mean, it was always in my mind to come back from the beginning. Of course, you never know how everything went, if everything is good, and how I feel. But that was my plan.

Why I'm coming back? I think this is the question a lot of people are asking me. I mean, it is because I love the sport, I love to play tennis. I already saw it last week with a lot of emotions again, a lot of dramas, up and downs, match points down. This is what I was missing, being on

the court, seeing the fans and having the emotions out there.

Q. Obviously today you practiced with Caroline on Laver, I believe. What was that like? Did you ever kind of hit the pause button and think, imagine 10 years ago, 15 years ago, this is where our lives are, what we're doing now?

ANGELIQUE KERBER: I'm with Caro in touch all the time. We were really close friends. Today we practice on Margaret Court actually.

I mean, it's nice to see her back, as well. We are in the same stage, to be honest. Of course, there are completely different things now we are talking about. But yeah, when you're looking back 10 years ago, where we are now, it's a lot of change in the last 10 years.

I think we are both, we love the sport. It's so great to being here and perform again on a high level.

Q. I was just thinking about your career. You've had enough longevity, years on the tour, to have experienced different eras almost: the best of Serena Williams, now you just played against Iga Swiatek at the top of the sport today. How good is she, in your opinion, based on her against previous eras?

ANGELIQUE KERBER: Yeah, I mean, I have a lot of generations. I saw a lot of come and go.

I think it's tough to compare all the players. I mean, everyone is completely different. I mean, Serena plays a completely different game than Iga. Of course, Iga plays her best tennis the last few years. She is on top over years right now.

It is a tough opponent. I know her also very well off court. Yeah, I mean, she's only 22, 21. She has a lot of years ahead (smiling).

I'm also looking forward how she will go in the next few years, how good she can be in the next years, like Serena maybe. I mean, we will see.

Q. You are not only coming back a mom, but recently there are many players who gave birth to



kids, like Caroline and Osaka and Svitolina. Do you get inspired or encouraged by these players who came back earlier than you?

ANGELIQUE KERBER: I think we are all in the same, yeah, area right now. I think we are all trying to inspiring us. It is great to see, like, moms coming back. I'm one of them. Especially now I think it's also really interesting for the fans, for the people outside, to see us playing again, how the comebacks will go.

I think, yeah, Caro and Elina, they start already last year. Now Naomi and me, we are starting here.

I think also for us, it is completely different mindset because, of course, we are not really the important person right now in our lives, there is someone else.

It is nice to see them back. I think for me, I'm really excited to be here and see all the faces again after 18 months.

Q. You said you were coming back with a more relaxed attitude compared to maybe how you went about your tennis in the past. After five matches at United Cup, very dramatic situations, did you find yourself after losses reacting the same way that you used to, or did you feel different? You know what I'm asking.

ANGELIQUE KERBER: I have still the fire. I guess it's still there. Of course, if you lose the match, I still need little bit time for myself.

Now it's a little bit different because I just need a few minutes and I'm okay again because I need to. But it is still there. Also my team, they said it's still there. When I lose a match, because I hate to lose, so it is still there. I think this doesn't change.

Which change that I'm faster recovery to that, because of course if I'm back in the hotel, I have to be again someone else. It is nice. I feel, of course, like I said, I'm a little bit more relaxed after that. I try to enjoy it even more on and off court, try to making things not too complicated like before (smiling).

Q. I'm asking because I know sleep is very important to you, how you feel about the rule changes about the late-night matches. Do you think it should be applied across the board for all tournaments?

ANGELIQUE KERBER: Yeah, it was really tough, to be honest. I mean, we played three times, all the matches, until 3, 4 a.m. After that we had treatment. It feels like jet lag. It was really tough for all of us, for the whole team members, us players as well. It was not easy.

I don't know how we could change this because, of

course, the semifinal was before like 10:30, so our semis was late, then we played the finals again late. It was for sure not easy. That's why I needed, as well, like two or three days of recovery afterwards.

Yeah, I think what we could do? I mean, just try and play and win, so we did it.

Q. Stop matches starting after a certain time, I'm sure you're in favor of that?

ANGELIQUE KERBER: Yeah, I think they already changed some things. This is what I know.

Q. Looking to the first round with Danielle, what do you think of that as a first-round draw?

ANGELIQUE KERBER: It's for sure a tough draw. I mean, she is a tough opponent. She hits the ball very hard. I don't know if I will find my rhythm, to be honest.

Yeah, it is how it is. I think it does matter against who I am. I'm not really looking so much to the draw. I know I have a tough draw. It is my first real tournament. For me to being here, I am trying to play as good as I can and to see how far I can go.

I know that I need patient for the next few months. Yeah, I'm starting here to see how far I can go and how I will feel afterwards.

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