

Australian Open

Friday, 12 January 2024
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Jodie Burrage

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Jodie, give us your thoughts on how it feels to be playing in the main draw at the Australian Open.

JODIE BURRAGE: I'm pretty excited. Obviously it's my first main draw. I lost last round quallies last year, a bit of a heartbreak. It feels good not to have to go through that this week. I'm really excited to get going on Sunday.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Do you know much about your opponent?

JODIE BURRAGE: Yeah, I played her twice at back end of last year and lost twice, so...

Yeah, I know a lot about her. The last match was 6 in the third, as well. It was an absolute battle. I've been watching a few clips the last few days of those matches. So, yeah, I think it's going to be another battle out there in the heat.

I know if I play well and I play my game, I can overpower her. That's kind of what I'm going to try and do.

Q. How long have you been in Melbourne?

JODIE BURRAGE: Melbourne? Since Monday 'cause I played in Hobart on Saturday. Tried to get in dubs, didn't get in dubs. Flew over here for a little bit.

Q. Tell us what is different about having a whole week to prepare for the tournament.

JODIE BURRAGE: It's obviously good because you get to know the place. I mean, I've tried to get as much court time actually on-site as possible. It's tough. It's not been easy. I hit with an Aussie today, an Aussie tomorrow. They're getting a little bit of priority.

It's good to get the feel for the courts. You can structure your week a little bit better in the lead-up. I'm playing on Sunday. That's good because I did structure my week to play Sunday.

It's nice to just get a training in, to be honest, because I wasn't well before Canberra. I was pretty sick. I've literally just come off antibiotics and stuff as well. It's

actually nice to get some training in. Apart from my matches, I've not been doing a lot.

Q. How are you feeling now percentage-wise? Are you ready to go?

JODIE BURRAGE: Yeah, yeah, good. Getting there. No, yeah, feel good now. It's nice to be off the antibiotics. I had tonsillitis pretty badly. Even though my tonsils were feeling better, when you're still on antibiotics, it still hits you a little bit.

Yeah, it feels good to be off them for a few days. Been practicing, yeah, really good out there. Yeah, ready to go on Sunday.

Q. (No microphone.)

JODIE BURRAGE: Yeah, definitely, I know if I really commit to the game I want to play, my aggressive style, serve well, I know that I can get it done against her.

But she's going to throw a lot at me. She's a very crafty player, makes a lot of balls. I've watched her play a few weeks ago. It was a great second set. So, yeah, it's going to be tough.

Yeah, I do have confidence. I got so close last time. I've got the confidence that I got it done.

Q. I thought I saw you down practicing with Emma today. Did that not happen?

JODIE BURRAGE: No, yeah, it did. I hit with Emma and then I hit with Kim straightforward. We were at NTC, had to do a full sprint all the way over to Court 11. I hit for two hours today with two different people. It was good.

Q. What did you think about Emma's level?

JODIE BURRAGE: She was absolutely creaming the ball. She was proper going for it. It was a good practice actually. Played some good points.

Yeah, it's nice to see her back on the court, back playing some really good stuff as well. It will be really interesting to see what she does this week. As I said, she's hitting the ball really, really well. I'm excited for her.

Yeah, it will be good to see what all of us British girls can do this week. I think the conditions do suit us if we have our aggressive game style out there. Yeah, it will be exciting.

Q. What are the biggest things you learnt last year that you will take into this?

JODIE BURRAGE: I think one of the main things for me is when things actually go well, to celebrate them and enjoy it a little bit more than I did last year. I don't really feel like I did that as much as I should have last year. There's ups and there's downs.

Don't get me wrong, I know I had a really good year, but I also put pressure on myself to keep getting better. I'm around a hundred now. I believe there's a long way to go and where I can get to.

I think you have to kind of look back a little bit and see where you've been and see the improvements that you've made. Then also saying that, just keep the work ethic really high. Being around these players here, being at these tournaments, you see there is another level to get to. It's really inspiring me to try to get to that level. The more I'm around it, the more you want to chase it, the better you want to play.

Yeah, it's enjoying the roller coaster of what tennis is, but also, yeah, getting the work done day in, day out. Last year I went away from Australia with a fractured knee. It hindered my year a little bit. Again, for me this year, it will just be to have a healthy, consistent year, trying to get my scheduling right so I'm not playing weeks on end, and I do have those down weeks where I can train a little bit.

I feel like last year I was chasing top hundred, chasing the cuts for main draws. That kind of led to then my tendon issue I've got in my knee now. I am learning a lot as I'm going. Yeah, I will take those lessons into this year.

Q. A boring tennis balls question. How do you find the balls? People say you get to game six and they fluff up.

JODIE BURRAGE: Yeah, I mean, it's different. The first four games when you play the new balls, then the last five it's a different ball game. It's like you're playing two different matches in the same match.

But I do like the Dunlop AO ball. They are fluffing up. You do actually have to think about how you play, what you want to do with, yeah, how the balls are.

Q. Now that you are top hundred, do you have a clear ranking goal or more a case of seeing how high you can go?

JODIE BURRAGE: I actually think this year I really just want to secure myself in the top hundred. I think I've already dropped to 102 or something.

At the start of the year, that's what I want to do. I've not got many points to defend the next few months because of my injuries last year. It kind of gives me a free run to take a stab at a few of the bigger tournaments, yeah, try to cement my top hundred ranking.

Once I get into that place, then look at where I can get to. I mean, I'd love to say I want to finish the year top 50 or whatever. I think realistic goal is top 75. Yeah, depends how the year goes, to be honest.

Q. Do you spend much time hitting with Emma at the NTC? If so, what do you make of the trajectory?

JODIE BURRAGE: Yeah, I hit with her a few times at NTC when she was back fit and playing. Again, she was hitting the ball really well then. Obviously different to playing at the NTC London compared to out here in 30 degrees heat. The ball is coming off a lot bigger here. It will be good to see what she can do. Hopefully she can stay healthy. I think that's her ultimate goal. If she does, then the results will come.

Yeah, it's nice to see her back on court. Hopefully we can do a few more practice sessions together because it's always some good ones.

Q. You're not new to tennis, but being in the main draw, I wondered if there's any particularly nice perks you've noticed here. I don't know if you get extra money on the card or whatever else.

JODIE BURRAGE: To be honest, I think at slams, they do treat quallies and main kind of the same. The court time, you do get priority, even though most of us are at Albert Park anyway, or Albert Reserve. You don't get any more money on your badge. Not that I've noticed. It just feels better if people don't realize that you're in main draw, they ask you when you're playing. I'm not actually playing till Sunday, Monday. Oh, it's so good, you're in main draw. I'm like, Yeah, it is.

I guess it's kind of just how you feel. It's all new and exciting. I'm just taking it all in.

Q. With Ben being in France, how have you found that in terms of you trying to train?

JODIE BURRAGE: Yeah, yeah, there's more travel, that's for sure. Off-season I did all of it in London. My coach had another baby in November, so he obviously couldn't travel. I didn't want to compromise any time that I had.

I did some weekend trips, and he came over a few weekends. It's a really nice place to go. Actually, got some really good tennis setup stuff around there. There's a lot of academies actually near where he is, which is lucky. I think in the future, yeah, I'll probably be doing some training weeks down there, which will be nice, especially in the summer. It's beautiful down there. The weather's going to be good.

Yeah, I'm excited for it. It's been good. It's been different, but we're making it work. We're both doing well, you so you can't complain with that really.

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