

# Australian Open

Saturday, 13 January 2024

Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

## Shelby Rogers

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We will open it up for questions for Shelby.

### Q. How are you?

SHELBY ROGERS: I'm great, thank you. How are you doing?

### Q. Great. Tell us about your work to get back on the tour after a while off.

SHELBY ROGERS: Well, it's not my first time coming back, so I guess in a way it was a little familiar, but this time very different. I had a lot more going on off court this time. I think it was a bit a blessing maybe. I got married in December.

### Q. Congratulations.

SHELBY ROGERS: Thank you so much.

So I was able to take a little bit of time and enjoy some things off court, as well, while still doing the rehab, which is not always easy. It's a challenge physically and mentally. Happy I did it.

I'm so happy to be here. One of my most favorite cities and tournaments.

### Q. The actual injury was abdominal all the way through, or other things?

SHELBY ROGERS: I had quite a few things. I did have knee surgery back in July after Wimbledon, after the grass season. Yeah, a few other things, as well. My body was definitely asking for a little time off to recover. Yeah, just tried to listen the best I could to my body and tried to get as strong as I could.

Again, just happy to be back and really grateful that I was able to get healthy and be able to play.

### Q. Emma has had time off, as well. Similar situation. She talked about coming back and feeling different about tennis. Do you feel different about tennis after six months away from it?

SHELBY ROGERS: Well, like I said, it's not my first time

I've had an extended period of time away from the game. I feel that it's not a unique statement for someone to have stepped away from the game and come back and say they feel different.

I think it's quite easy when you're in this world, if you will, on tour going tournament to tournament to lose a bit of perspective, to get sort of blinders put on where you have your ranking plastered on your head week to week.

I think sometimes it's difficult to keep that perspective week to week. Especially if you don't have your identity rooted somewhere outside of tennis, you're sort of living and dying with wins and losses. Yeah, it can be really difficult.

It's really nice to hear that she's feeling refreshed and has that perspective again. I think it's really important for especially the younger players to keep that.

For me, I could say the same. I had a lot of off-court stuff going on. Also you're just excited to be back. You kind of go back to that pure genuine love of the game, forget about all the stories that have been created and the drama and the ups and downs of things. I guess it's kind of a fresh start in a way, yeah.

### Q. What did you think when you saw who you were playing?

SHELBY ROGERS: Honestly, I was just happy I was in the draw (laughter). Getting here, I was excited. This was a goal of mine, to be able to ready to play in Australia. So just really grateful to be here.

Honestly didn't matter what name came up. Yeah, just ready for that opportunity.

### Q. When you started to analyze what sort of game, the preparation for the match, what did you think?

SHELBY ROGERS: Well, first in my mind was when do we play. That's always what you want to know, is the schedule. We have a few more days still before we even need to prepare. Just focus on the training, on the practice, on the gym and recovery, getting the body right before the match. That's step one, I think.

From there, we've only played the one time. I think we've



both changed a lot since that match, as well. Had time off, gone through a lot of things.

I don't know if there's a lot of value bringing too much from that match forward. I think both of us are going to be very curious as to what's going to happen, how each of us are going to play. Should be a lot of fun.

**Q. What are your memories, not particularly good ones, of losing 1-2 in the U.S.?**

SHELBY ROGERS: I honestly didn't remember the score till you just said it (laughter).

**Q. Sorry.**

SHELBY ROGERS: No, no, not in a bad way. I mean, maybe it wasn't one that lingered with me too much. The one before lingered with me a lot more. Beating Ash Barty was one of the most amazing matches I've ever experienced there on Arthur Ashe. After that, had like a crazy doubles match. It was just like a lot happening.

Yeah, honestly not too much lingering there. Maybe trying to have a short memory with that one, if you will (smiling).

**Q. Were you a bit physically jaded for that match, jaded from the long previous ones?**

SHELBY ROGERS: I think physically, emotionally, mentally, yeah. Sometimes when you have a big win and you leave everything on the court, it's definitely hard to turn around. That's why these great champions are so incredible because every single match you're leaving everything on the court, right? To do it day in and day out is one of the things you have to learn, how to manage your energy.

I think Novak talks about that quite a bit, how you manage your energy throughout a tournament. Yeah, it's a big part of it, for sure.

**Q. What's harder, planning a wedding or coming back from knee surgery?**

SHELBY ROGERS: That's a great question (laughter).

I will say I quite enjoyed the planning of the wedding because I wasn't one that was really super caring about the details. I wanted good food and good music, fun people there. That was really it. The rest I'm like the napkins are going in the trash, I don't care what color they are (laughter).

I'll say the rehab was a little tougher.

**Q. On the thing about having other things going on in life. When you see all the young generation**

**coming into the locker room, do you ever talk to them about having things outside tennis? Do you have a view on the number of people that seem to be quite tunnel visioned, that kind of aspect of being a pro tennis player?**

SHELBY ROGERS: Yeah, all the time. I love having conversations. I'm that person that's always willing to give advice. I don't know how helpful I am, but... If people have questions, I'm more than happy to talk.

It's crazy talking as like a veteran right now. It just doesn't feel like it should be. But, yeah, I've been out here playing for a while.

I remember being young and not scared but not knowing many people, trying to fit in, trying to find your place. I sort of wish I would have had maybe a few more mentors or older players that would have guided me a little bit. I think it's super helpful and valuable. If I could do the same for even just one person, it's okay.

For me, my faith has played a big part in being able to be consistent and steady on tour, like I said before, finding my identity outside of tennis, so I'm not basing my value and work on winning and losing.

I think it's really important to be able to keep your mental health really good and just stay happy out here, finding joy in the sport. We do such a beautiful thing here. Being a professional athlete is incredible. I think when everyone around you is doing the same thing, sometimes you lose sight of that, the perspective we were talking about.

Every girl out here is incredible. I think it's really important to highlight that sometimes.

**Q. It's a pitfall, people do fall down sometimes, they can become a bit one track in this sport?**

SHELBY ROGERS: Yeah, absolutely. I think there's times to have blinders. You want to be focused, you want to be set, have goals, be ambitious, shoot for the stars absolutely.

Also I'm a big believer in balance. For me, when I was strictly focused on tennis and intense and that's all I did, I didn't play as well because I wasn't enjoying it as much.

So finding good restaurants or enjoying the culture, finding some fun things to do in the city, again while managing your energy. That was always something that was important to me, was to have the balance on court and off court, in moderation, of course.

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