

# Australian Open

Tuesday, 16 January 2024

Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

## Caroline Garcia

Press Conference



C. GARCIA/N. Osaka

6-4, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations, you're through to the second round.

CAROLINE GARCIA: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: How do you feel after that?

CAROLINE GARCIA: I feel definitely happy. It was a great atmosphere out there. Kind of my first late-night session. It definitely feels different. Playing Naomi in these courts, it's always very special.

Yeah, it will be a match I will remember. That's also why I play tennis.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Can you talk about how inspired you were to play well tonight. It seems like this was a pretty perfect match for you in this moment. Felt like everything was perfect watching you. Did it feel that way to you, too?**

CAROLINE GARCIA: Yeah, I mean, you should have seen me at 4 p.m. today (smiling).

You never know what can happen when you step on court. You always try to be as prepared as you can, just tell yourself you have to, yeah, you have to have confidence in myself. I know I was prepared. I did good practice. I did some good tournaments. I just had to go out there, try to be as calm as possible, play my game.

The beginning of the match was definitely important for me. We stay both quite solid on the beginning with the serve, serving big. Yeah, I was feeling good out there. I wanted to have a good time.

**Q. Around 4:00, that's when you sent the tweet?**

CAROLINE GARCIA: Yes.

**Q. Was that all you trying to calm yourself down, put the right energy out today?**

CAROLINE GARCIA: Yeah, I mean, sometimes there is a lot of going on. Sometimes, yeah, I'm really definitely sometimes struggling with my emotion. On court I'm not always having a great time lately.

We are trying to, yeah, work on it. Sometimes it's overwhelming. Definitely to be playing first round Naomi, coming back, great, great player, playing very late match, I was overwhelmed and I was scared to step out there.

Sometime is good to let emotion out, yeah, embrace it. Then you try the best you can.

**Q. It's been three years since you played her last time here.**

CAROLINE GARCIA: Yes. Well, I don't know (smiling).

**Q. Yeah, three years. It might be tough to compare. Did you see any differences?**

CAROLINE GARCIA: I mean, honestly I barely remember the match from last time. I know couple of journalists asked me. I barely have some memories from it.

I mean, for someone who have been out for 15 months, giving birth six months ago, it's quite impressive. I think if she come back and play tournament, that mean she feels ready and she's motivated to go get some big title again.

Her ball is heavy, serve is heavy, forehand is heavy. Come fast. You have to be really ready.

Yeah, it's great to see her back. She bring so much to tennis in the last couple of years. She had some struggle. Now she feels ready to come back. It's great. I hope it goes well for her.

**Q. How did you prepare for this match? Maybe it's very different story this time. How did you try to analyze her play?**

CAROLINE GARCIA: My coach watched the two matches she play in Brisbane. Yeah, it was important also to be focused on the match of today. We know in tennis every match is very different from one to another, from one week to another. I had to be focused on today



and not kind of think what she has been playing before her break.

Yeah, I mean, I didn't know that she was going to serve big, do ace, do winners, and that's what happen. I had to be ready for it, try to bring one more ball back. It was a challenge.

Most importantly with me, it's always to be focused on myself and on my game anyway, so...

**Q. Have you ever faced in a Grand Slam a situation where you're playing a first round that is more like a quarterfinal or semifinal in terms of the quality of your opponent, and you have to be at the top of your game right from the start?**

CAROLINE GARCIA: Yeah, I mean, maybe. I don't know. I don't remember every match.

Lately for sure it was my kind of biggest first round in the last couple of years, I guess. It's tricky. In the last couple of tournaments, I played some girls ranked 200 and 500, and that was not a piece of cake either.

Every match is super dangerous. Every match get emotions. It's different. You want to deliver the best way you can. Obviously playing Naomi, it's a challenge. But I try to think that she will also have some pressure. She's coming back. She is very expected from all the journalists around. It's not easy to be in her shoes either, I guess.

Sometimes you have to try to think a little bit like this. I know I was going to be stressed, but I was hoping I was not going to be the only one.

**Q. The idea that you were stressed out before this match, given the way you played the match, it's two different things. You seemed so relaxed and free, playing pressure-free, particularly serving behind in the second set. What were you telling yourself? How did you get from 4 p.m. to that performance?**

CAROLINE GARCIA: I let it out, so that mean I cried a lot. I talked with my team. Yeah, I mean, they gave me some positive energy, my partner, my coach.

Yeah, after you realize that you prepared, you trained well, I had a couple of match behind me with some good performance against Iga and Elena, even if it didn't turn on my side. It was good performance. I was feeling good physically. Then I tried to breathe as much as I could every single point.

At 5-4 I told my coach, Pressure is coming up, I have to serve it out, and I feel more and more stress.

It was just really point at a time today. It's definitely

important. It will definitely give me confidence to keep trying and keep learning to manage all of that better. It can help me do great things, or at least enjoy the ride.

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