

# Australian Open

Tuesday, 16 January 2024

Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

## Emma Raducanu

Press Conference



E. RADUCANU/S. Rogers

6-3, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Emma, Shelby is obviously a tough opponent any day. How did you feel on the court? How does it feel to get the win under your belt?

EMMA RADUCANU: Yeah, I'm very happy to have come through that. I think being my first slam match back, it is definitely a little bit extra sweet. I knew going in Shelby's a player with experience. She's had some great wins in her career. Yeah, I knew I was going to have to try my best to neutralize her serve, yeah, keep concentration and focus on mine.

I'm happy with the way I came through that today.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. On the same court as your first-round match last year. What were your feelings? What memories came back? How was it being back at a slam?**

EMMA RADUCANU: I really love that court, 1573. I think always at tournaments you have certain affinities with a specific court. I think for me here 1573 is definitely one where I feel very comfortable.

Going out there today I think I was a little bit taken aback by just the support straight when I walked out. I think it was better than any year I've really had before here. It was just amazing to see all the signs, hear the support. It was pretty incredible.

So, yeah, I was very happy to be able to play in those sort of circumstances again.

**Q. Is your mind in a different place than it was when you were last playing Grand Slams? Have you put it in a different place?**

EMMA RADUCANU: Yeah, I think first rounds are always difficult. I think you're always a little bit nervous because regardless if you've played a tournament the week before, it's slightly different conditions, it's different court. It's a first round again. I think that part doesn't really change.

I think what I realized is the difference between me potentially losing first round or doing really well at a tournament is honestly really, really slim. It's just in the way that I move, in the way that I do things physically. I think just not being so drastic, I would say, because I know it's not far away at all, and I know the more I practice consistently, it will come up.

**Q. Could you compare the Emma who walked on court today to the Emma who walked on that same court 12 months ago?**

EMMA RADUCANU: Well, the Emma who walked on court 12 months ago had a huge cyst removed about 10 days before, had to offload. I traveled here on a wheelchair. I only started hitting three days before the match. That whole process was a lot of stress. We weren't sure if I was going to be able to play here.

So I think I was also in a way grateful to be able to have the chance to play. I didn't want to back out of the AO, so I did everything I could.

But I think this year and now there's just a lot more calm. I think I'm more levelheaded. I think things around me have settled. I do feel better, and there's just less I'd say highs and lows around. It's just more of an equilibrium.

**Q. Jack won in five, threw up at the end. He talked a bit about the anxiety he struggles with on court. It makes him feel like he can't breathe sometimes. How do you deal with those moments on court?**

EMMA RADUCANU: Yeah, I think he did amazing to come through in five sets. Physically when he was playing, I practiced around that time, and it was very hot. I can imagine playing five sets was very difficult. But he's been doing great. Amazing week last week, too. Very happy for him.

I think for me, in a way I've been in situations serving out the US Open, serving out sets at the US Open in probably the most high-pressure scenarios you'll ever get. It really doesn't get easier, to be honest. I think you always are going to have an element of nerves, always going to have that stress.

I think the more matches you play, the more comfortable



you feel in those scenarios because the more experiences you have to anchor and pull back your feelings from.

I think just getting on a roll of matches helps. Me, I think I deal with match scenarios pretty well. Yeah, I keep my cool.

**Q. Can you talk us through the celebrations and what was going through your mind? I think you gave a towel away. Was that anybody of extra special significance?**

EMMA RADUCANU: Yeah, I gave the towel to Mark. He was actually there every round at US Open, the one I won. I didn't know he was here. I just saw him in the crowd. He's very vocal. It was actually great to have him there to get me through. He's very passionate and enthusiastic. It was nice to see him there. It was his birthday.

I think at the end, the celebrations, I was pretty calm, to be honest. I just wanted to take time and spend time with the fans and the people who came out to support and waited all day.

It's really hard when they're all calling your name. Especially you hear like the young kids calling your name, it's very hard to walk away from that, but then you end up doing the full circle.

Me, I'm pretty calm. It was nice to interact with them again.

**Q. Did you know before the match that he was there?**

EMMA RADUCANU: No, during.

**Q. How have the wrists pulled up after a few matches? Are you at the stage mentally where you don't have to think about the wrists when you play any more, or when you feel pain, do you start to stress?**

EMMA RADUCANU: No, it's amazing to be pain-free with the wrists. I honestly didn't know if I'd ever get to this stage. Yeah, it just amazing to be playing pain-free. I had pain for so long. I was playing since before the U.S. swing in 2022 all the way before surgery.

It was difficult because I wasn't able to train, I wasn't able to practice. Then having to go play and compete against the best in the world with an hour a day, while not playing for two weeks trying to settle the pain down, is very difficult.

You're playing, and it's like you can't even say I know I'm doing the work, it will pay off, because I wasn't doing any

work. I was trying to make it until after Wimbledon, but I just couldn't. Mentally I wanted to be in the best position possible every match. Yeah, so I just decided to.

I think the time away made me very hungry. I'm just happy to be healthy again and pain-free.

**Q. You mentioned the success this year is basically staying healthy. Are you planning on building any kind of breaks into the schedule to look after those wrists for the next 12 months?**

EMMA RADUCANU: Well, my wrists have been really good actually. I have been doing my rehab religiously every single day. Shouts out to Millie, who is on me like a hawk.

Yeah, it's paid off. I don't have any fear or any restrictions on anything. I've passed all the return-to-play markers. My grip strength is higher than ever. It's just about continuing doing the boring rehab, for example. Yeah, hopefully I'll be in good shape.

**Q. You said you're a more levelheaded person now. What about the last eight months have made you a calmer person?**

EMMA RADUCANU: I just think setting things up how I really like. Just people around me, I think it's pretty calm now. It's nice to be with Nick. I've known him since I was a kid, feel very comfortable there. Just all aspects really of my life I feel like are calming down and settled.

Obviously when you come back after eight months, have experienced three surgeries, you're just really grateful to be able to move freely.

**Q. Do you know your next opponent at all?**

EMMA RADUCANU: I don't know who won the match.

**Q. Wang.**

EMMA RADUCANU: Yeah, I mean, I just came off my first round. I didn't really think about it, to be honest.

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