

Australian Open

Thursday, 18 January 2024

Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Emma Navarro

Press Conference



E. NAVARRO/E. Cocciaretto

4-6, 6-3, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Emma, congratulations. You're through to the third round. How do you feel?

EMMA NAVARRO: Yeah, excited. Excited to be in this position. Really tough match today. I felt like my opponent played really well, and I felt like the better I played, the better she played.

So definitely took a bit of weathering the storm. But, yeah, just excited to be in this position and to be able to play another match here in Melbourne. It's really special to be here. Yeah, I'm just excited.

THE MODERATOR: Open it up to questions.

Q. You've been winning a lot of matches at various levels. Just wondering how much this sort of Grand Slam second round, first time trying to get to a third round feels different? Have you just played so much you feel comfortable in any match situation these days?

EMMA NAVARRO: When you've been played so many matches, you kind of get in this match rhythm. I like it. It's kind of nice to be in that match rhythm, and it's just like you're constantly preparing for your next round tomorrow or the day after. So it's kind of nice to just be in that rhythm and always be just getting ready to play again.

I think it makes it easier for me at least, too. You never get in that practice mode where you're trying to perfect different parts of your game. You're just staying in that match mode where you're trying to get the most out of yourself in your matches.

Yeah, I think it's helped me a little bit and hopefully will continue to do so.

Q. Are you the kind of player that thinks the best practice is playing matches?

EMMA NAVARRO: Yeah, for sure. There's nothing like the experience of playing matches, physically and

mentally. I think just being in those tough moments and building confidence by getting through those tough moments, it's something that you can't get on the practice court. It's so valuable to get on the match court.

Q. In terms of just, again, milestone after milestone that you kind of keep crossing off, what are you the most pleased with? Is it winning a title? Is it being seeded in a major? Third round in a major? What gives you the most satisfaction of the stuff that you've been able to accomplish within the last six months?

EMMA NAVARRO: I would say there's not really any ranking or result that I would say is my proudest accomplishment. Sometimes I'll just hit a shot on the court where I'm, like, Dang, I didn't have that shot two years ago. It's pretty cool that I can pull that shot off now.

It's cool that I can think of specific times when my coach and I have worked on that shot. I can remember the progression of it and remember when I couldn't get it and it frustrated me a lot. To have that shot, whatever shot it is, work out on a stage like second round of a Grand Slam, I would say that's the coolest thing for me.

Q. When is the last time you thought that, and what shot was it?

EMMA NAVARRO: I hit a volley today, like kind of a dump drop-shot volley down the line today. Volleys have always been a struggle for me a little bit. I've been hesitant to come to the net and I guess just take that leap of faith forward.

I just played that point with a lot of conviction and then ended at the net with a volley winner. So, yeah, I think that was the last time.

Q. As Ben was mentioning and we talked about the other day, just your heavy play schedule last year, how much of that was strategic in terms of how you chose to schedule your 12 months, and how much of it was, I don't know, this is just kind of what happened? Can you give us some insight into that?

EMMA NAVARRO: A little bit of both. I think priority number one was get a bunch of matches in. I think



something that more experienced players have that younger players don't is that they're just incredibly confident in how they play and how they win matches.

There's no wavering on a break point. They know exactly what they're going to do. Maybe as a 20-year-old I didn't have that, and probably a lot of other 20-year-olds don't have that either.

So just trying to get as much match experience in as I could. Just getting so confident in who I am as a player, that was a top priority.

Then, yeah, we just kind of made our schedule. Like, looked ahead and made our schedule depending on how I had done that week or the week before, just my previous results. But, yeah, top priority was just play as many tournaments as I can and get a bunch of matches in.

Q. You played largely a bunch of lower-level tournaments, a lot of smaller tournaments end of last year and then two 250s to start the year. I'm curious, is that your plan for the rest of the season, or are you going to start trying to play -- now that you have ranking, you can get into any tournament pretty much. Are you going to play the top ones or still pick where you can get more matches?

EMMA NAVARRO: Not sure yet. Yeah, coming into this year I didn't know that I was going to have the success that I've had at 250. Yeah, not sure what the rest of the year will look like.

Q. As you were getting the results that you were getting and obviously accumulating points and seeing your ranking go up, was there ever a moment where you were just kind of, like, Wait, whoa, it's moving. Like that number next to my name week after week to the point where, yeah, it was January and you were seeded in Melbourne.

EMMA NAVARRO: Yeah, definitely. I remember. I think it was in April after last year after I won the 100K, my home 100K, I was top 100 after that. I kind of couldn't believe it. That was always a milestone that I felt like if I can reach this milestone, I'm going to be really satisfied with my tennis career.

Reaching that milestone for sure I was, like, I guess I've really made some strides. Then from there it was just kind of like bonus points.

Then, yeah, getting top 50 was crazy. Just came way faster than I thought it was going to. Same this year, the success I've had this year. Now being top 30, it's pretty crazy.

Focus stays the same. Still just trying to be the best

player I can be. My coach talks a lot about whenever I play, I act like I'm playing a dual match in college. It's just a singular match on that day, me versus my opponent. Obviously there's more to it than that, but kind of simplifying it on those terms has helped me a lot.

Q. When the seeds came out for this tournament or even before, there were a few other writers that were working Australian Open previews. I had several people ask me who you were because you were in the seeds, and they had not seen you play very much. Do you have that reaction? Do you ever see that as well, people sort of being surprised there is this player who wasn't here at all last year at all who is now among the seeds, and where did she come from? Do you feel like you get that reaction from people in the sport?

EMMA NAVARRO: Yeah.

Q. How does that play out?

EMMA NAVARRO: I guess there hasn't been any specific scenarios I can think of, but I've just risen in the rankings really quickly, and I've kind of been really under the radar. Just playing life ITFs last year where it doesn't get a lot of coverage.

Yeah, I guess a lot of people don't know me. Hopefully they will now or going into the rest of the year. But yeah, I've been pretty under the radar so far.

Q. What do you want people to know about you as they get to meet you for the first time?

EMMA NAVARRO: As a tennis player, I would want them to know that although I don't show a lot of emotion, I'm always giving it 110%. It means the world to me. I'm going to always fight as hard as I can until the last point. Even if I'm not first-pumping or doing whatever, it doesn't mean it matters any less to me.

Yeah, just that I put my all into this. Results and rankings don't come easily, although someone like me it looks like I just showed up in the rankings, but I've put a lot of work in over the years and so has the team that I have around me. Yeah, it takes a lot of hard work, and it's been a long time coming, I guess, or just it's taken a lot of years to get here.

Then just as a person, I guess top priority for me is always my family. They're always in my corner. So just really grateful for them and appreciative that I have them by my side all the time. Yeah, they mean the world to me. I'm just a family girl, I guess.

And I'm pretty easy-going off the court, pretty chill. Not so serious as I am on the court, so yeah.

