

Australian Open

Saturday, 27 January 2024

Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Anton Dubrov

Jason Stacy

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Gentlemen, of course congratulations. Aryna has won the Australian Open for the second time in a row. How does it feel?

ANTON DUBROV: Good. It feels good.

JASON STACY: Yeah, not bad, not bad. I don't know. What do you say? It just happened. It still feels like we're out there a little bit. Haven't really settled in yet. It's pretty exciting, obviously.

It's hard for us. We're the coaches in our different areas, but during the match and straight after the match and on the walk here, we're already talking about the things we need to work on. That's what our job is, is to always be finding things to keep moving, keep moving, keep being better.

ANTON DUBROV: I think it's going to be as last year, we're going to realize maybe a little bit tomorrow. For the moment we're just like dizzy, not dizzy, like happy, not happy. Mix of emotions.

JASON STACY: That's right. Exactly.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. No signature on your head?

JASON STACY: Of course there's a signature on my head, man.

Q. So if it's lucky for this time, it could be lucky for any other tournaments.

ANTON DUBROV: Might get worse.

JASON STACY: It might get worse, actually. Now they're trying to say I've got to get a tattoo of this on my head. I'm like, I don't know about that.

ANTON DUBROV: Was thinking about go maybe on the back a little bit, on the belly.

JASON STACY: It's just going to start spreading. No, no. Just for now. Every tournament we always find

some thing we're doing and we just kind of go with that.

Q. (Question off mic.)

JASON STACY: On match days it's just an autograph, signature. Then she writes random things on my ear. So today was my name in case I get lost. Remember my name.

ANTON DUBROV: I think this one is going to be blood type or something.

JASON STACY: Maybe. No, no, she said next one she's going to write: Please follow me on my Instagram page. We'll both see. Just for fun.

Q. Aryna was just saying before that she went through some rough times at the US Open final, and that sort of motivated her to dedicate herself to improve some things. What did that look like and what was your focus on the last few months? What did you take from that match that needed to change?

ANTON DUBROV: You mean from the US Open, right?

Q. Yeah. I mean, that's what she said. She mentioned it.

ANTON DUBROV: I would say I think Coco also said the same about final of US Open, that it wasn't the best match from both sides. But we're trying to find a way how we can still be able to play our style even if you're not playing the best.

So we try to work more on the volley side, on the drive volley, to go more to the net, just push yourself to go more in front. Because if you cannot play on the baseline, if you cannot hit winners from the baseline, as usual, you need to find some other ways.

So we tried to improve this part. We also trying to improve some, like, all other parts, like serve, return, everything. It's like you have to improve all the time everything. But I think specifically just like movement stuff and more focused to be able to finish on net.

JASON STACY: I was just going to add I think the other side, one was the technical side. We had Gavin come back and help us out just to kind of fine-tune some of the



technical stuff, to give her real good clarity on what she's doing. If she did happen to miss a shot, she knew exactly why and what to do about it. It gives her that sense of control.

I think the other big part, especially this last preseason, she was even more so kind of opening herself up, be more vulnerable, be a bit more open to coaching, and be willing just to go, okay, no matter what, she trusts all of us, she's going to just do it. As you see in the matches, no matter how she's feeling, she's just sticking to that strategy that we know is the best plan for her.

I think it's a combination of a lot of those things. It's been a big part.

Q. We're used to seeing Aryna having emotional ups and downs, but this whole tournament she's just seemed so kind of calm and in control. Is that experience at being at this stage? Is it the confidence in her game, being super confident in everything she's doing out there? What do you think?

ANTON DUBROV: I think she's much better hiding her emotions.

JASON STACY: There you go.

ANTON DUBROV: No, I think she realized, for example, sometime she understand when it started and she can catch herself early and just, okay, this is happening right now. Just slow down. And wherever it goes, what direction, she knows what to do.

Maybe she's not do it all the time, but she understand what's happening. She knows if she will just follow there, she's going to lost all the control. So right now at least she understand like few shots or few points and she understand, okay, I have to come back to my routine, to my rhythm.

So she's more aware when she has to start to take control of herself more.

JASON STACY: Just agreeing with Anton was saying. That's been the plan for years, first was making her more aware of what's happening. She used to ask, What do I do? What do I do? Wasn't really the point of giving the answer of what to do in that moment. It was just her deciding to be more self-aware of those situations and then give her the tools on what to do about it.

But as Anton already said, her awareness of when she's kind of feeling where she might lose a bit of control was happening earlier and earlier and earlier, so now she's a bit more, I guess you say, like within herself.

I think it's just really the same as what Anton is saying.

It's been a big part. It's been a process. It's not like some overnight thing, suddenly she's -- and as Anton said, she's just hiding it really well, and it's not guaranteed it's going to be that way every week. But that's what makes her so dangerous and so powerful as well is that part of her. It's beautiful.

Q. Relating to that, the business with the head signing, how important is it to create a fun atmosphere and a relaxed atmosphere off the court that's helped her on the court this fortnight?

JASON STACY: No, I think it's crucial. It's an important key element to any performance, to development. We're in a lot of -- I mean, as you guys know, it's all year nonstop, just pressure, pressure, pressure, attention, attention, trying to get better, trying to get better.

As I just said, we just finished winning a Grand Slam and we're already talking about what we need to work on, what didn't go well, and what we're going to do about it. You know what I mean?

I think it's very important from just an emotional standpoint, from a neurological, like more neuroscience base, just how our brains work and just having those times -- people learn better and they pay more attention and they're a bit more fresh, if they have a little bit of fun, have a bit of creativity.

I think it's good to have that mix, which again, allows her to have that good balance of emotional control.

Q. Do you think she's been able to show that more this year, after winning the first one? Under the pressure of last year, she's been able to show everyone here she likes to have fun as well.

JASON STACY: Yeah, the other side of that too is, that's who she is.

ANTON DUBROV: Yeah, that's what I want to say. I think one of our first -- not our first. I think our first year when we start to work with Aryna as a coach, and I talk a lot with Jason, I think half of our conversation was about we're talking about Aryna as a person. And it's always come like there is a person, you need to work with the person and then with athlete.

If you understand, Aryna, she's having fun, trying to have fun everywhere, but we're also trying to keep it like a balance: Fun and discipline. She's keep working, she's enjoying the process.

When she's on the court, it's okay, pressure, pressure, but it's also some fun. Just add in it, and she's try to find it also. She's more smiling right now on the court.

That's why I think our first year of conversation was

about, okay, we need to solve the problem as a person. Then we're going to work with athlete.

JASON STACY: That's what I'm talking about, my man. (Smiling.) Yeah.

Q. You guys were just saying as you're walking to press conference you're already talking about what could be improved, what went wrong. I'm curious how you balance, though, that drive and that ambition to constantly improve, to have that rhythm and that motivation while also taking the time to stop and celebrate wins and celebrate victories. Do you ever, like, let the air out of the balloon a little bit? Or is it constantly just, you know, pushing, having to push her forward?

ANTON DUBROV: I would, I think it's like the same as, for example, if any person would try to work on himself, like, in the gym, you also, like, have a week and few days just, like, okay, just pushing yourself. Then one day just don't want to do anything. You just want to lay down, watch TV, Netflix, whatever.

This is the moments where you can catch yourself, okay, what can I do? This is the moment when you can not just work on the physical part but just add mental side here. Not going to work 100% or 150%. Just work, okay, 70, but with quality. And the same is here.

So, yes, for sure we're gonna enjoy today, tomorrow, couple of days, but this is business, like, so we have to keep working.

I think it started also from our side with Jason, also thinking how we can improve. So as we can improve and if we are not giving ourselves this kind of air or space, okay, we can enjoy, not have this pressure, no, it's, okay, you're in charge of the player, and you have to keep this level from your side so she also will try to go there all the time. She is really motivated, but it's almost sometimes hell those days when you just don't want to do anything. And this is where I think the team sometimes is most important part.

JASON STACY: I guess one of the things we have been saying from the start is, for lack of a better way of saying, put some context in what I'm saying, but doesn't matter how you feel. People ask about discipline, this and that. Well, discipline is doing the things you know you need to do regardless of how you're feeling.

So some of the things we have been working on is giving her tangible, physical things to do with her body, her breathing, whatnot, that will help her make her start to feel a certain way, just keeping that discipline.

I forgot what else I was going to say. There was something you said that made me feel about it. Actually,

I will tell them, one of the things for us is, like, Anton is saying, you know, we want her to always get better. So our job in different ways is making sure we have the right people doing the right things at the right time. That includes towards each other. We're always reminding each other, asking each other, helping each other, just to make sure we're seeing the same thing, are we on the same page, making sure we are also paying attention no matter how we are feeling that day. Because if we're expecting Aryna to do that, then we need to have that same expectation towards ourselves.

ANTON DUBROV: When I heard also first from Jason, because he wasn't sleeping much last couple of years, and I was, like, how you have your energy, like, keep going. He had a lot of presentation, work to do, and everything.

He told me, like, whatever I'm doing, for example, I can give myself five minutes just to relax, but when time is started for me, this is the most important thing right now. No matter what I have outside of this job or presentation or whatever. In this moment right now, I'm here and I'm doing my 100% right now.

So this is what we also trying to bring to the practice or any conversations, like, what we doing right now is the most important. Whatever you feel, if you can give yourself 40% today, you cannot run, okay, let's do this, but we have to keep this level as high as we can.

JASON STACY: I didn't know you listen to me so much, man. Thank you. (Laughter.) First time I heard of this. I'm joking. I'm joking. Sorry.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports