

# National Bank Open

Thursday, August 7, 2025

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

## Karl Hale

### Press Conference

OLIVER WHEELER: Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to the end-of-tournament press conference for our tournament director Karl Hale. Karl, I'll start with the first question. Why don't you just reflect on the tournament as a whole for us, first of all.

KARL HALE: Just an outstanding event from the beginning to the end. We started with our one-day qualifying. Vasek's retirement to a sold-out crowd on Sunday. Our opening week had just fantastic matches, with great giveaways from our National Bank Day. Our TennisFest weekend with our retro night, and also our Coffee Party new initiatives were very successful.

The night sessions were the best I've ever seen, it was the best product. I think the 12-day model shows the power of it, the rest that players had in between the matches.

And then this championship week, we saw it last night, you know, the Zverev/Khachanov match was the match of the tournament so far.

So, extremely happy with it, the fans saw an amazing tournament, and we'll continue to grow from here.

OLIVER WHEELER: Questions.

**Q. Just would love your thoughts on what Vicky is doing in Montreal, the run that she's on, and just your earliest memories of seeing her as a player.**

KARL HALE: Yeah, I mean, she's been on the radar since she was 12 years old, when she signed with IMG. Over the years she's had some adversity going through the levels, and then this year just started off the year on fire.

Now to see what she's doing, we're not surprised, because we all knew she had this talent. But it's amazing she's going to win the title today, which I believe she is going to win. More importantly, I think she has the demeanor and the makeup to be a sustainable player for the next 10 years, which is great for tennis in Canada.

I think it's a testament to our development system, because



what you've seen over the past 20 years is the torch being passed, for example, from Vasek to Vicky. And it shows that if talent hits our system, we can make a championship player.

**Q. You mentioned the development system. You were the tournament director when Bianca won here. What does Vicky's run just do for the overall Tennis Canada organization, and then the momentum next year for the women coming here to Toronto?**

KARL HALE: Yeah, I mean, our fans, you know, they saw this past two weeks a great product here. They're eagerly anticipating our own. Of course, we're very patriotic, as you saw with Bianca. It was the best final I've ever seen, even though it was short lived. Our partners are excited about it, our fans are excited about it.

I think it's also going to push Leylah, Bianca, Carson, all of them to be better. So it's just exciting that we have this player that's going to be on top and probably No. 1 player in Canada soon.

**Q. You listed a bunch of highlights from the week. If you had to pick one thing that you think, this is why the 12-day model is great, what would it be?**

KARL HALE: For sure the product. We were here as a staff, obviously with the players as well, until 1:00 or 2:00 in the morning, wrapping up.

I remember in the past when, at 10 o'clock, the crowd would be sparse. Now the fans were staying for that second match until midnight. We couldn't move people from the upper stands down because there was too many people there.

So, to see the product so strong throughout the tournament, from beginning to today, is just a testament to the 12-day model.

Sorry, just to add to that, what's really exciting is we had 15 of the 16 seeds left in the draw. That's the only tournament this year, slam or not, to have that. We had the No. 1 and No. 2 seed last night, first time since 2016. So you're seeing the best players move through the draw.



**Q. What's been the feedback from the players about the positive things on and off the court, and also if they have mentioned any area for improvement.**

KARL HALE: Yeah, the winning player today will have very good feedback (laughing), 1.2 million reasons. No, the feedback has been very, very good.

Hospitality, we did a report this morning to talk about a few things, and the players and the staff loved the Canadian hospitality. It's improved over the years. Our sports science center downstairs is considered one of the best on the tour, to keep the players healthy to perform at their best. So the feedback has been very, very good.

**Q. There's always been a bit of rivalry between the National Bank Open and the Cincinnati Open. As you may have seen, Cincinnati underwent a major renovation and made a significant investment in their facilities this year. So I was just wondering if you are having plans, similar plans for expansion or renovation of the facilities here, just to keep up with them, and further enhance the experience for fans and players.**

KARL HALE: Montreal is the priority right now, so we're doing a feasibility study at that site. We'll take the learning from there to implement here over time. So that will begin shortly, and then we'll take it from there.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports....