

# Omnium Banque Nationale

Sunday, 13 August 2023

Montreal, Quebec, Canada

## Valerie Tetreault

### Press Conference

VALERIE TETREAULT: It's strange for me to be here. I have memories from previous years, but at the time I didn't have many figures to share with you.

Thank you for being here. This is the last day, a special day, because we have two matches in singles instead of one. We were talking with our committee managers and our volunteers this morning because we needed more people than scheduled, and they accepted to be here smiling. So this is very much appreciated, and we'll remember that last day.

So before I give you the results of the tournament, I would like to talk about the decision last night. I know there were questions about it.

We were in a situation where we had a Final scheduled at 1:30, and with the WTA people we needed to make a decision around 8 o'clock or 8:30 in the evening, and we knew Rybakina had stayed very late in the night or very early in the morning, let's say, the day before.

So we looked at the weather forecast, and we had no assurance that the match would be able to be played at a reasonable time. So we spoke with the two teams of the players. We also saw that some fans or spectators had gone back home discouraged.

So we knew we had the option of playing two sessions the next day in better conditions for everyone, for TV, for the players, for the fans. This also was a good thing because we wouldn't be playing our Final at the same time as the Toronto Final.

So because of all this, we chose to cancel the session last night and to have two sessions today, one at 1:30 and the other one at 5:30.

About the players, I know this is what Rybakina preferred. She was still trying to regroup after the very short night she had the day before, and she was not afraid of playing two matches the same day.

Jessica Pegula was also very happy because she was able to have a quiet dinner last night and knowing she didn't



have to get up early, and she could watch her opponents have a battle before playing her own match.

Samsonova was the one who would have preferred to play last night, and she knew it was not Rybakina's choice. But, of course, we spoke with the athletes. We did all this in cooperation with the WTA to make sure we were making the best decision.

So the results of the tournament, for me it was a first, of course. I was thinking I was going to remember my first tournament, and I can tell you I will remember this tournament. There are many stories I will be able to tell.

I had a good team around me, but we had this weather situation. We expected it was going to happen because of the bad summer we had.

We had very long matches that were also very good matches. We were saying in our marketing campaign that people should come to watch the best women's tennis ever. Well, I think we delivered.

So we had a match ending at 3 o'clock in the morning, and the best players went far in the tournament, which made the tournament even more interesting.

And we had a beautiful story with Leylah Fernandez, the Canadian player. It's always special when a Canadian player is on center court. Especially when she's winning against a top-seeded player.

I went and sat in the stadium during that match, and I saw the atmosphere on center court was very special. I know that Fernandez wants to come back here in Montreal in two years and hoping she would do better.

We were more disappointed with the other Canadian players. Bianca's team almost apologized for not doing better. Sometimes you want to do well too much, and it doesn't happen.

I know Toronto was lucky to give the trophy to Bianca, so we would really like to be able to give the trophy to a Canadian player here in Montreal someday.

The attendance, it's a record year, as Eugene said. It's a

**ASAP** sports *...quand tout est dit, nous avons terminé.*

record for women's tennis. Before we were at 182,000 spectators in 2014. It was Genie's year. She had played the final in Wimbledon just before this tournament.

This year until yesterday, including the afternoon session of yesterday, and we still have another two sessions coming, we should reach the Final sessions at 215,000 spectators. This is a record.

We wanted to promote women's tennis, and the spectators came. We had 61,000 fans coming during our family weekend the first weekend. We wanted our tournament to be accessible on that weekend, and some families certainly discovered tennis during the weekend.

The players were very happy. We received many messages from them saying they liked this weekend, and they felt very welcome not only by our team, but also by the crowd. Sabalenka was saying that she didn't see such a warm welcome anywhere else in the world.

So this is what is typical from our tournament, and this is certainly why we are so proud of this tournament.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. You are talking about 215,000 as an estimate. From which day did you start counting?**

VALERIE TETREAULT: From the first Friday, including the family weekend then.

**Q. A day like Thursday, what went through your mind?**

VALERIE TETREAULT: Thursday, that was the day where there was that long match?

**Q. It was the day where you had to transfer matches to the Friday.**

VALERIE TETREAULT: Yes, I had several decisions to make. Everybody knows you can't control the weather, but what you do is listen to the advice of people around you, and you try to see what will be best for the fans, best for the players. Once you considered all these different elements, you can make a decision.

Honestly, I was able to benefit from the help of a very solid team this week. Often I was sending a message, Can we meet in ten minutes?

So we went into our war room discussing the situation. Everybody was giving a different perspective, and then we were able to make a decision together.

For me the key is communication. Communication with the players, with the fans because then people see we are in control of the situation, that we are transparent, that we are giving them the information so they accept the decision easier because everybody knows, of course, you can't control the weather.

**Q. Something negative can become positive. I met someone who has been working for the tournament for ten years saying this year was the worst weather-wise. Of course, you worked with Eugene for years. You knew what you were doing, but isn't it maybe better for you to have such a tough tournament for your first tournament?**

VALERIE TETREAULT: Yeah, maybe it was positive because now I am well-prepared for whatever happens in the future. WTA told me the day before yesterday that after that, it's going to be a piece of cake.

When you hear that from a supervisor traveling all over the world to go to different tournaments, it makes you understand what happened this week was very special and unusual. I do believe it might happen again with the climate change. We had a bad summer this year, and it might happen again.

So, again, we start talking about the roof. Of course, as soon as it rains, we talk about the roof again.

The name of the supervisor was Clare Wood.

**Q. The roof, is it just a wish, or do you have serious discussions about it?**

VALERIE TETREAULT: The conversations went far before the pandemic, but because of the pandemic, this project was put on hold. We skipped one tournament because of COVID, so it was financially very difficult for Tennis Canada. So what we did after the pandemic was to try to recover from that, so priorities have changed.

But when we see what is happening now, a roof would be important. For the time being, a roof is not mandatory. It's not a standard imposed on the tournaments, but we see that, of course, the Grand Slams have roofs, but even in the 1000 tournaments many of them have a roof.

So this is pressure on our tournament. So it's not mandatory yet to have a roof, but it can become mandatory in five years or in ten years. If we wait until then, it will be a bit too late to talk about it.

This stadium also is getting old. It was built in 1996, so we need to think about all of that and start the discussions

about the roof. We have to do that before it becomes mandatory.

**Q. I was wondering about the number of courts you have because you are going to have 96 players soon. So can't you improve that? You played matches on four courts only this year. Is it enough when the weather is not so good?**

VALERIE TETREAULT: The good thing this year was that we had an extra court that was always available and that we could use any time if needed. The Hawk-Eye, for example, was available on that court, so if it had rained on the Monday and Tuesday and we might have had many matches to play the following days, then we could have used this extra court.

About the number of courts with a view to 2025, I believe we have enough courts as it is, but this is something we are discussing with ATP and WTA. If we feel it's necessary, we might even consider satellite sites for practice courts around Montreal.

We would need to have exactly the same surface, and also there are logistics to be organized, but I believe the way the stadium is now is enough to accommodate everyone for the future.

**Q. What was the most difficult moment and the easiest moment during this tournament for you? And what did you find absolutely extraordinary for your first tournament?**

VALERIE TETREAULT: The most difficult was yesterday evening. There were many things to take into account. Of course, the last day TV is very important, and the fans were waiting. The players were there. We knew one player had to play two matches on the Finals day, which is quite complicated. So I believe yesterday evening was the most complicated moment.

Also, we had to make sure that all those having tickets understood perfectly well what they were entitled to because we didn't want to have to manage their frustration today.

The most beautiful moment... there were several of them, but I would say it was Leylah's match because of the atmosphere on center court. The match ended, and four minutes after the end of the match I had a text from Eugene saying he was happy for me, and this was heartwarming.

We also had the ceremony for Eugene yesterday on center court. There were still people there in spite of the rain, and

he shared his testimony, and it was important for us to do that. Of course, I was tired maybe, but I confess, I had some tears on the court then.

**Q. What happened for the match between Rybakina ending at 3 o'clock in the morning?**

VALERIE TETREAULT: Well, normally we don't want to finish a match at 3 o'clock in the morning, but I believe that for the people who stayed and watched the match, it's something that they will talk about. It's a great memory.

And for the staff also it was a beautiful moment. I was really surprised to see so many people staying. It shows the crowd loves tennis and likes the show. So there was something beautiful about it even if it was not ideal.

And, also, it was maybe one of the best matches of the tournament. People even say it might be the best match of the year on WTA Tour. Of course, there were not enough people watching it because it was very late, but it was a wonderful fight between the two players.

It shows that the players love this tournament and really want to win it. It would have been easy for either player to go on the court that late thinking they might let it go, but they fought to the end. They really wanted that win.

Also, you had Bencic who sprained her ankle, and the doctor even told me, I'm sure she's not going to keep playing, but she did. We wondered whether we wouldn't change the schedule to give her more time to recover, but she really wanted to play and had treatment until the last minute before going back to the court, and she played her match.

So this is not only a tournament that is on the road to the US Open and for preparing for the US Open. In fact, the players really want to win this tournament, and it shows how much they appreciate the tournament.

**Q. Did you count how many people stayed that late?**

VALERIE TETREAULT: It was a bit late. I would say there were maybe 400, 500 people or a bit more maybe.

**Q. You were a tennis analyst. What is going to happen today according to you?**

VALERIE TETREAULT: I believe Rybakina will win her first match, and something tells me that we are going to be surprised, and the story will be that the one who played a match ending at 3 o'clock in the morning and having to play two matches on the same day will win the two matches.

Maybe she will win the title, but this is just a feeling.

**Q. Which player is most favored by this situation?  
The one who will be fresh for her Final or the one who  
played in the morning?**

VALERIE TETREULT: The length of the first match will be the determining factor. If Rybakina plays a quick match, she would have had the opportunity of playing on center court and getting used to it before the Final. In that case she might be in a more favorable position, and this is my analysis.

Thank you.

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