

Tennis Channel

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Lindsay Davenport

Media Conference



ERIC ABNER: Thanks for joining us this morning. We greatly appreciate it. I want to get my contact info on the transcript. I am Eric Abner, communications here at Tennis Channel. My direct line is 310.314.9445. The email is Eabner@TennisChannel.com.

Just a little background before we get started. This is Tennis Channel's 14th consecutive year of live Australian Open coverage going back to 2008. Most nights this year we begin with the live lead-in show at 6 p.m. eastern time, that's followed by live matches from 7 to 9 p.m. eastern time. The next morning we pick it up with same day encore matches, about 7 a.m. eastern time.

Our live coverage runs from the first round through championship weekend and includes the men's and women's doubles finals and the mixed doubles final. We'll also have same day encore of the men's and women's semifinals and finals.

The on-air team this year includes past players Martina Navratilova and Paul Annacone as analysts; Brett Haber and Steve Weissmann as announcer; and from 50 Minutes Jon Wertheim as reporter/analyst.

We have our Hall of Famer Lindsay Davenport who joined our Australian Open team in 2011. Lindsay is the 2000 Australian Open singles champion, six-time doubles finalist, and during her career she was ranked No. 1 in both singles and doubles and won the 1996 Olympic gold medal in singles.

I hope you all stay safe and let's enjoy the tournament.

Doug.

DOUG DROTMAN: We'll start with questions for Lindsay.

Q. A very unusual Australian Open. I'm wondering what do you think would be the hardest part if you were playing this time around? What do you think for the players would be the hardest part of trying to be ready in this Grand Slam tournament? Lack of matches, lack of regular training, the hard quarantine

for two weeks? More of a physical or mental challenge that's going to weigh here?

LINDSAY DAVENPORT: Yeah, it's going to be a Grand Slam like we've never, ever seen before. You look at all the variables some players are having to deal with in real-time, not a lot of notice.

No question, it would be the 72 players that had the very strict 14-day, couldn't-leave-the-hotel-room quarantine. I was trying to put how that would affect me. I know that if I took 14 days off without hitting a ball, I would feel like it would take me five to six weeks to get back to feeling good.

These players have right about, I believe it is, nine or 10 days before the Australian Open starts. That's a big ask, especially if you look at some of the men's players that obviously have to play three-out-of-five sets, deal with potentially the Australian summer heat.

Sometimes it's big injuries, sometimes it's little injuries, blisters, just discomfort when you get back out on the court. Those players are going to have a significant disadvantage.

For the players that got to get there safely and be able to train a little bit, I think they'll be okay. I think it presents a challenge for certain players that might normally practice five to six hours, have everything a certain way. They've been forced to try to adapt to a different way of life on the pro tour, different preparation.

It's been a long time also since they played matches, particularly for the WTA, whose season ended quite a few weeks earlier than the ATP. Those ladies will be looking to try and play matches.

You like to ease your way into it. All of a sudden right now it's obviously a very compacted schedule. Just the way it had to be. I think they'll make adjustments and get through it.

I worry for those 72 players that were in the hard lockdown. Physically I think we're going to see a lot of players suffer because of that.

Q. Might there be a player or two, maybe one man, one



woman, who you would point to as someone to watch for at this Australian Open, someone who hasn't already won a Grand Slam title or reached the final of a major, but might be capable of a deep run this time, and why you like that player's chances?

LINDSAY DAVENPORT: It's a great question. We've seen it more so I believe on the WTA Tour than on the ATP Tour, where a player that hadn't maybe had the success that you were expecting a Grand Slam champion to have going into becoming one. Iga Swiatek comes to mind obviously at the French. There's been a lot more cases of that. You see a lot of different champions on the women's side.

I really like Elena Rybakina. She's going to be someone to watch for. Again, I don't know if it's going to be this Melbourne, but this is a player who has been slowly kind of gaining her confidence, getting a lot of wins. Had a great start to the year last year, then it was kind of interrupted obviously with COVID. She looked good to me in the first tournament in Abu Dhabi. Curious to see if she can put that all together in this broken-up year.

I wonder a lot about when Svitolina is going to break through. I know she's obviously a well-known name. Is this the year where she can play her best tennis at a major? She hasn't been able to do that yet.

Who else? I'll try to get you one more.

Karolina Muchova. She is very good and talented. It wouldn't surprise me if she kind of put her tennis together similar to what Iga Swiatek was able to do in Paris. That one was really surprising. Not that she had a breakthrough win or tournament, but that she was able to go all the way and win the title in Paris, being there, it's still remarkable to me.

The men's side, I think it's going to be a lot harder to do. I look at someone like Andrey Rublev, who is incredibly talented, so good. He's now in the top 10. I think he's ready for more of a Grand Slam breakthrough on that kind of level.

The Canadian, Felix Auger-Aliassime. He's going to win majors, be at the top. Hopefully it's this year. Maybe it's this year. I just don't see Rafa and Novak going anywhere. Even Thiem for that matter. I don't see them letting these guys come up just yet.

Q. Serena recently told reporters about her Achilles that was still hurting her over the break. If the Australian Open wasn't pushed back, she might not have played. How do you think overall she will

perform at the upcoming major?

LINDSAY DAVENPORT: Yeah, I watched the whole match yesterday against Gavrilova. She looked really good. I was really impressed.

You look a lot at the little things with Serena. You say to yourself, We know the serve is most likely going to be there for the rest of her career, the powerful groundstrokes. I look at more how she's moving getting up to short balls. Is she taking the little steps to take balls earlier? Not so much if she's playing defense great. I think with her power, she doesn't have to be able to run down every single ball. That was something that looked much, much better last night against Gavrilova.

She had a little bit more time. Gavrilova doesn't hit the heaviest ball out there. For not having played a match since mid September at the French, she was returning well. Those are sometimes the things that take a little bit more time to get back when you haven't played tournament tennis in a long time.

I read that also about the Achilles. It's interesting. If you remember originally, the players were in their minds going to leave in early to mid December to go Down Under, quarantine, start the month of January. She really got another four or five weeks to be able to get her Achilles better, start training, and leave for Australia actually ready to go, not hoping to get ready to go in Australia. That's obviously a big advantage for some of those players who got a little bit more time.

Everything that we saw last night looked phenomenal from Serena. She now has a day off. We'll see how she comes up for her next match. I mean, that's always key to look for any player, for a player that hasn't played matches in a while, especially for one getting older. Serena is going to be 40 this year. But really positive signs with her in her opening match for sure.

Q. In terms of her chase to 24 titles, do you think she has it in her to get it done this year, possibly in Australia? If she doesn't this season, do you think she will?

LINDSAY DAVENPORT: I absolutely think she has a chance in Australia. The only one I feel like is going to probably not happen is in Paris. That's just due to the surface and what it takes now to win there. She won there a couple times. That's amazing. I'm not sure it's going to happen at this point. I think she needs the kind of quicker surfaces, would enjoy the quicker surfaces to play on a little bit more.

Everyone from what I've heard the players down there, conditions are pretty fast in Australia. They have been the last few years. That has not changed this year. That definitely helps Serena. Tougher to get her serve back, tougher to fight off her power. If you combine that with what seems to be improved kind of quick footwork we saw last night, that's when she's really at her best. I think really tough for the other players to compete against her.

I've always thought she was going to break the record. She's gotten so close the last few years at least of tying it. But she's giving herself opportunities. The whole team, herself, her family, they're committed to helping her see this through till she says she's done.

It's a little bit unfortunate this is the benchmark. I don't know if it's even for her, maybe it's the media. She's been the greatest player we've ever seen. Does she need to get to 24, 25, to make everyone believe that? I don't think so.

Margaret Court won a number of Australian Opens with a 32 draw, 90% of the players being Australian. A little bit of an unfair comparison. It's on her mind, on everyone's mind when she goes out there to play.

I say she ties it this year. I'm not sure if she breaks it. Two is a lot to win in one year. I say she ties it.

Q. In the middle of this whole quarantine, Craig Tiley came out, I'm going to paraphrase, he basically said the top players in the world should get more perks, they should be treated better, be in Adelaide, have suites, be together. I'm wondering what you think of that. Do you think there's this huge gap? When you came up, you weren't No. 1 immediately, so you sort of held off. How would you have felt if you had been sort of in this tiny room in Melbourne while you saw the top players in Adelaide getting far more benefits than you got?

LINDSAY DAVENPORT: Yeah, it's been interesting. I don't know so much in other sports, obviously it's tough to do that in team sports, but there's always been a huge gap, a huge discrepancy in how the top players are treated to the rest of the field. Even now I think because we have the greatest of all time playing in the same era, it's pretty remarkable.

It can be as simple as how many cans of balls does a player get to practice with per day, courts. When you're able to practice three or four hours a day on the main stadium, then you play somebody who has never hit out there... Little advantages like that always are evident.

That was a huge advantage to those players in Adelaide. I

was thinking a lot about players like Sascha Zverev or Angelique Kerber.

Q. Sofia Kenin.

LINDSAY DAVENPORT: Exactly. There's a whole host, not to just pick those out. Why didn't I get to do that? I was 1 in the world. I won these amount of majors. I don't qualify as that player.

Listen, Tennis Australia has done such a remarkable job of even getting to play tennis in Australia. But they knew. There's no way some of those players were going to go to Melbourne, one hotel room, two guests only, only one could leave the hotel per day to go to practice, if you were even allowed to practice. That wasn't going to fly for some of the players. They came up with an alternative plan.

Would the summer of tennis, would everyone be as excited to play if they didn't have some of those really top names playing? Probably not. I mean, we want all those players playing. This is what the sport is about. That's maybe what it took to get some of them there. I'm not totally sure on that, but I would imagine that kind of played into it a little bit.

Q. Rajeew Ram was saying, he's the defending champion in doubles, he has to fight for practice time. Should we expect this across the board? I'm not singling out Australia. Should we expect more of this in tennis?

LINDSAY DAVENPORT: I think it's always been there, right? Honestly. You have some players at the US Open, to give an example, that are practicing at the other sites, half a mile away. There's other courts in the park area. I don't know.

Not to single out the US Open. Every tournament kind of has that, right? It's tough to get in Roland Garros too. A lot of players are going to the satellite sites.

Maybe this was the most extreme example because everyone heard about it. It was interesting, once you heard those players aren't allowed to use social media from Adelaide, you knew it was like, Oh, gosh, it's a really big difference (laughter).

It got them there. I think we're all happy that all those players, Osaka, Serena, Halep, even Venus was there because she's so great, Rafa, Novak, Thiem. Everybody is happy they're there. They obviously have a little bit of an edge in preparation, though, now, an even bigger one.

Q. My question harkens back to something you said in



... when all is said, we're done.®

answering an earlier question, that is the benchmark of 24 that Margaret Court has set. How do we today honestly evaluate what that represents? You alluded to the many years in which a lot of women didn't play, didn't travel that far, and the field might have been smaller, dominated by Aussies. Should there be some sort of asterisk or explainer as Serena and perhaps other women shoot for that mark?

LINDSAY DAVENPORT: Everyone has their own opinion on this, right? I was of the opinion, I don't know, a few years ago, five or six, as she started to get closer, Oh, 24 is the record. I remember talking to Chanda Rubin. She's like, It's kind of tough. Have you really looked into all the nuts and bolts of it all?

I'm like, I'm not great with some of the history of years past.

We sat there and we pulled up the draws from all these years that Margaret Court won. I'm like, Wow, that's a 32 draw, and there are 28 Aussies in the draw. You know what I mean? All of a sudden I started to really look at all the data instead of just seeing what was on TV or she's got to get to 24.

Then it was like, Gosh, it's not an apples-to-apples comparison at all. Of course, that's not Margaret's fault. She played what was there, what she wanted to play. She was the winner. It's not easy to win that many times.

It's almost like two separate records here. People love to say the best player of all time, that generation. You can't compare.

Serena, you see her on court. She talked about her nerves and the pressure she felt to get to 18 to try to tie Chris and Martina. She doesn't love to talk about it tons, but it's clear that's a driving force with her, keeping her going, trying to win more majors. It's obviously important to her.

I don't know. I feel like she has the record. It just seems like with everything she's accomplished, how long she's played, the tournaments that she won, the draws, the 128, it just doesn't seem like a totally fair pressure to put on Serena.

Q. Do you think this post pandemic era that we're entering could be kind of a changing in the guard if that we would see Naomi and Iga, Bianca Andreescu, rising stars take over at the slam level? Do you think it could have a sense of urgency in players who have won multiple slams, Victoria Azarenka, Serena, Simona Halep, somebody who has already done it? How do you think the pandemic will play out in terms of what could happen going forward? And then Amelie

Mauresmo said she would support women playing best-of-five sets at slams. Do you think it's more likely that men would go best-of-three at slams or that women would go best-of-five, or we'll see status quo? We're seeing more synergy between the two tours.

LINDSAY DAVENPORT: First one. I think it's the players that would be panicking is the wrong word, but really kind of feeling the stress of doing well, would be the best players that haven't won a major yet: Pliskova, Svitolina. Those players have sat by and seen the normal players, like Serena, kind of almost win majors but be a factor the last four years. Then they've seen some other kind of players come out of nowhere, Swiatek, Osaka, Bianca Andreescu, among others, to win majors. They're stalwarts at the top of the game. I would think they feel a little bit more of a push, This has to happen here pretty soon.

It's not easy when you're at the top three or five for so many years, and you see other people accomplish what you want to accomplish, you're so close. Very tough I would imagine mentally on them.

I think Osaka is going to be kind of the dominant force in women's tennis in the next five to seven years if she continues to play that long. I assume she will. I think her team, everybody around her, has a pretty good handle on what is the amount she needs to play. We only want her to play if she is ready to go and she's happy. I think that they have done a very good job of letting her blossom as a young, one of the most famous now females in the world.

Given her independence, given her (indiscernible) to take over her own career, we don't see the overbearing parents in her case, we don't see the unhappiness. We've seen her stress on court, but we've seen her to come into a person of her own in the last few years. I give all the credit to her parents and team for letting that happen. I think they've set her up to succeed the next few years.

I think that also, just based on age, some of the players, we saw some players quit, Julia Goerges, out of nowhere. I don't know if a lot of people expected that to happen. I think we'll see that maybe the next few years with players we're used to seeing, maybe Kerber who has talked about it a little bit. There will be some changing of the guard. I think some of those players, I think we'll see them start to exit the game as well.

As far as the majors go and playing, it's funny. We've had this, like, conversation for a long time. People talk about three-out-of-five, two-out-of-three, what's best. There seems to have been more of a push, from what I've heard, for the men to play two-out-of-three as opposed to three-out-of-five.

I don't think that will ever change though because historically it has ramifications. When you have players that are winning 20, 17, they want that to be equal through the rest of time. I'm not sure if that's going to change. If there was a time to ever change it at least for a week, it would be this year's Australian Open when you have some players that haven't been able to practice for a few weeks leading right in. Was it really on the table? I don't think with TA or the ITF. I don't see that changing.

I know for a few years when they were talking they were going to three-out-of-five sets from the quarters on, maybe the final. I think the women would actually be okay with that. I never know how that goes with TV talk, change the system right in the middle of it. I felt like it should be three-out-of-five from the beginning or two-out-of-three. To change how you play a tournament midway never felt right to me. Obviously winning seven three-out-of-five-set matches would be a huge ask physically for everybody.

Q. Biggest mystery in tennis is what we're going to see from Bianca Andreescu. You just mentioned Naomi Osaka being a dominant force in the sport. Has your opinion of what she can accomplish in this sport changed due the fact she's been out so long? What do you expect from her?

LINDSAY DAVENPORT: A little bit, right? Now we're going on 15 months, 16 months since we saw her. I think her last tournament was in Singapore in 2019, hadn't moved to Shenzhen yet. You have to have concerns about her body breaking down. I say that only because it's been a couple of different injuries. It hasn't been the same one.

I'd hate to compare her to like del Potro, but you want to be able to see her play a full season, two full seasons, without anything major. Everyone has little things that come into play, you might not play a tournament because you pulled a muscle. But the really serious kind of structural injuries to an athlete's body, that gets concerning when it's happening in more than one location.

This is going to be a really tough ask of her in Australia. From all that I've read or seen on social media, she was really setting herself up well, training in the Middle East. She's one of the few that has 14 days in a hotel room, not able to hit a ball. That is really tough I think on these players to come out and all of a sudden go into a match situation, let alone the fact you haven't been there in 15 months.

I think if she can stay healthy, kind of get her so-called feet wet like in competition, start to get back out there, she's going to be a force. We saw how good she is in 2019.

I don't know if it will be right, like, out of the gate in Australia. When I was reading the list of players, the 72, Oh, my gosh, I can't believe it's her. That is such bad luck. But I hope she does. Obviously, I'd love to see Osaka play Andreescu when they're at their best. That's what we're all kind of waiting for.

Q. Can you elaborate on your thoughts about Elena Rybakina. Do you see a little bit of yourself in her game-wise?

LINDSAY DAVENPORT: That's interesting. Maybe. I first watched her play last year. I knew she came into the Australian Open having played really well in the lead-in tournament. I believe she lost to Barty maybe in the third round. I remember really being excited. She didn't play her best. I was thinking to myself, Gosh, this is a tough draw. Barty, truly one of the few players that has a lot of variety for a player like that in this era. She kind of miss-hit some, didn't play her best.

Then I followed her in the Middle East before the tour shut down. Gosh, she's a good ball-striker. Saw her play in Abu Dhabi this year. I think the same. I think it's going to happen for her.

It might take her just a little bit longer. She hits pretty flat. Just to develop 5 or 10% more safety on the groundstrokes, not adding tons of spin but a tad more margin. You don't want to see her lose her ability and power to finish points. She has that. It's just uncanny.

Physically she looks in excellent shape. She's a good athlete. I don't think she's going to be as well-known just because of her personality seems pretty low-key. She doesn't get very excited on the court. She just kind of sticks to herself, kind of competes really hard. A lot to like about her.

I don't think she'll maybe make as big a splash as some of the other personalities, she's a little shier, but I think her game will for sure.

Q. You'll be broadcasting from several thousand miles away. Can you talk about that experience of what you expect from that, the pros and the cons.

LINDSAY DAVENPORT: Yeah, I think we've all learned a lot in this sport, life in general, since March of last year. Everyone kind of doing their best to still do their work, to do their jobs in kind of an unprecedented time.

We've had the experience at Tennis Channel for a number of years of calling tournaments from our main headquarters

in Santa Monica. We're kind of accustomed to that.

Not being in Australia is a little bit different. It's typically one of our favorite trips every year, to be Down Under, to start the year, to have your finger on the pulse of everything going on.

I feel like at Tennis Channel we're old pros at doing it remotely. We have a lot of kind of intel on the ground. All of us are able to get that, we share it all with each other, we go from there.

It's definitely sad. I think everybody, you want to be at the biggest events. We've seen over the course of last year in every sport it's almost impossible from a safety standpoint, also for the safety of the athletes, all of that stuff kind of takes into account how can we then do our best work.

I think everyone at Tennis Channel is really excited to work the Australian Open again. We always have such a great time Down Under. Now we'll just have a great time in Santa Monica all together.

Q. As an Aussie Open champion yourself, if you could give any advice to the players what it takes to win Down Under, what would that be?

LINDSAY DAVENPORT: Australia, it's interesting. For people from different countries, it probably is a little bit different.

For me as an American, I always felt the least amount of pressure playing in Australia. That could be maybe simply because it was the beginning of the season, so maybe the expectations weren't quite as high. It always felt really like a nice change of pace to go to Australia in the middle of what would be North America's winter. They're very knowledgeable tennis fans. They were always so excited to see tennis there. I always felt much more relaxed there.

You have to be able to manage the changing weather. That's not something you can exactly prep for. I know the other day in Melbourne, last week, they had a day at 40 degrees Celsius. Right now it's in the low 20s. You just never know what you're going to get. You have to be able to kind of handle that. There's no real great prep for that except trying to get down there early, which these players this year haven't been able to do, try to get used to the conditions.

It's going to be interesting to see, if it does get hot, right now it's forecasted not to get too hot at least for the foreseeable future, that's going to be a lot easier for the players to manage.

It will be interesting with the fans. I know that they're going to let in roughly 30,000 fans a day. Sometimes on some of those outer courts, it was so raucous. It was like a party atmosphere. Especially if you're playing a player from another country that has a pocket of support, you could go out there, they were dancing and singing on the changeovers. That was always something to kind of prepare for also. Doesn't seem like we'll have that. All the fans will be Aussie. The good support system will be there for the homegrown players.

I think also, just like any major, to be able to handle the moment, that's the question mark always for a player, especially one that hasn't been able to win a major or get to that point. We saw it with Sofia Kenin last year. Got to the point in the third set with Muguruza, make or break. Handled it like a true champion. I think it was 2-All in the third, down Love-40. She never looked back. She is like, I am going to win this.

That's the kind of stuff you train for, but you can't actually totally prep for it mentally. You see it kind of unfold in real-time as a fan or broadcaster. That was so great to watch. We've seen other players get there and they can't bring their best. How does that affect them moving on? You don't know. You have to be able to handle your emotions when you're on the cusp of winning any major.

Always love watching that, seeing the eyes of the players as that starts to transpire. Swiatek was another one. She had ice in her veins. She was getting close to winning the French. That's the kind of stuff I'm just in awe of.

Q. On the American women, in addition to Sofia and Serena, there's Danielle Collins, Coco, Jessica Pegula, what do you see from them? Also go back in time to the US Open '99 semifinals, it was you against Serena and Martina Hingis against Venus. What did you feel walking off the court that day? She was 17 years old. Did you walk off thinking you played somebody that is going to be a game-changing champion? The four of you obviously had such brilliant careers.

LINDSAY DAVENPORT: I'll start with the second one first actually.

I first played Serena a couple of years earlier in Chicago. She would have been 15. I mean, I guarantee I walked off the court, to my coach, Oh, shoot, I'm in trouble. It was apparent from when they were first coming up on tour. For Venus it was in Oklahoma at a young age, '94, maybe '93. You could tell at a very, very young age.

I think the things that we can all tell with Coco Gauff, she's going to be a great player. Can you say she's going to win

23, 24, 25, whatever Serena ends up with, that's impossible to predict. There's no question she was going to be great.

It was interesting because for a couple of years there, for a couple of majors, however long it was, it felt that a lot of tournaments it was Martina and I, then the Williams sisters for that short period of time. It was like inevitable. You felt like they were coming, they were improving, they were going to get to the top, especially in the late '90s, it was a matter of time.

At that US Open I have to say, I mean, I was the defending champion, and I was certainly bummed that I lost I think it was a three-set semifinal. I can't say I was shocked. It was going to happen. She was getting better. You could see it in the last couple of years. I had lost to her earlier in the year I believe in Indian Wells. No, I was not surprised. Wasn't surprised when she went on to win the tournament, there's no question about that.

I was surprised when it was all said and done that it was Serena who won first. That was back then. Now it's easy to say Serena won the first one. Back then Venus had accomplished a lot more at that stage. I think everyone expected she would win a major first. Happened to be Serena. Venus followed about eight or nine months later at Wimbledon.

American women, it's a great story. I think we're always at our best when we have that mix of players at the very top, in the middle between the 40, 70 range, then the other players kind of coming up.

There are so many players now getting in the main draw. We've had some where we've had 17, 20, 16. It starts in numbers. We definitely have that on the women's side. Then you have a player like Jennifer Brady who could have been tied for most-improved player last year. If I'm ranked 70 at 24 or 25, whatever age, I still have a chance to get to the top. Maybe I have to change a few things. Those are the stories that I think give a lot of hope and a lot of confidence to some of the players that maybe haven't broken through on the biggest stages yet, haven't gotten to the top 20 or top 30, of players like Jen Brady. Those kind of stories reverberate in the locker room, her peers, Sloane won a major. Sloane is amazing. Everyone saw her potential. I think it's the other players that have played on tour a little bit longer that show that kind of improvement that really kind of inspire the masses.

Loved to see that from Brady last year. We also are spoiled right now in the States with the mix of young players coming through, with Coco and Amanda. We also have other players coming through. You could say Caty

McNally, you can say Ann Li, Whitney. I don't want to leave anyone out, there's so many. That's when you know the sport is really doing quite well in a certain country.

Right now in the United States they've worked incredibly hard on the USTA side, Ola Malmqvist, Kathy Rinaldi, doing a great job breaking through on the pro tour.

Q. You mentioned Whitney Osuigwe. She's one of the players who kind of ran into a little bit of a roadblock after being really an excellent junior. Still only 18. Qualifying was a big deal for her. Do you have any thoughts or observations on what she needs to do to make the transition from juniors to pros successfully?

LINDSAY DAVENPORT: Gosh, it's so hard. You see players sometimes make it seem so seamless, look so easy, like Coco Gauff. Back in my day it was Capriati or whoever. It's not hard going from the juniors to the pros. The reality is it's brutal. It is a very tough transition for 97, 98% of the players that come through.

Sometimes it's a case of physicality. Sometimes it's a case of playing style. Sometimes what works in the juniors doesn't always work in the pros. Sometimes a player in the juniors that might be misfiring at 15, 16, 17, all of a sudden starts to find their range at 17 or 18. They're able to then kind of go on their way on the pro tour.

For Whitney, I think it's going to happen. She's very well-taught. You always like to look at that as a player. She knows her way around the court. She knows how to construct points. I think she's going to work on her power, some kind of finishing shots, something that will set her apart, something that will make days easier. I know if I go out there, I can finish points with this shot.

She's a great athlete. She's going to be there and she's going to compete every single match. If it were me, I would be really working with her on just playing a little bit more offensive tennis a little more naturally, a little easier. I'm sure she's doing that.

I think it's not easy when you see your peers kind of breaking through and being so successful. You start to think, Why isn't that me? Why aren't I? You have to remember it's not a race of who gets there first, it's just about you and your journey and your process. Maybe it happens at 20, maybe it's 25, maybe it's this year. You just never know. But you've got to kind of keep sticking with it and keep going down your own path, not really worry about the others.

It's not easy. I grew up the same birth year. Capriati broke through. She was incredible. Also Chanda Rubin, one of

my dear friends, I saw her kind of break through a year before me. I was thinking, Gosh, I don't get it. I'm like her in practice, but I can't do this yet when it comes down to the match.

For a lot of players it does happen. I'm sure with Whitney, she's kind of feeling that also. But I think she's improving in her own way every year and it will happen.

DOUG DROTMAN: Lindsay, thanks. I'll hand it back to Eric for any parting shots.

ERIC ABNER: Thanks, again, everybody. Thanks, Lindsay. Anybody who needs anything over the next few weeks, you have my contact info, the Tennis Channel, coverage the Australian. Stay safe.

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