

US OPEN

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Caroline Wozniacki

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Caroline, welcome.

CAROLINE WOZNIACKI: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Your thoughts as you sit here getting ready for the US Open.

CAROLINE WOZNIACKI: It's pretty cool (smiling). It's really great to be back here at the US Open and to have the opportunity to play here one more time. It's pretty special.

I have great memories here. I love playing here in front of the fans on these courts. Yeah, I didn't think three years ago that I was going to be here, so this is awesome. Really excited about it. Yeah, excited to get to play on Monday.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. How hard is it to get tennis out of your system? It seems like this is a sport that people are in for so long. It's hard to take that next step in life. How hard was it for you to let it go, and how did it pull you back?

CAROLINE WOZNIACKI: Honestly, I didn't play for a very long time. I didn't even touch my racquets. I didn't know where they were. I didn't miss it. I played since I was obviously very, very young. It's been part of my life and my lifestyle for so long. I needed a break. Obviously I had two kids in between.

I started just missing the cardio aspect. I'll always love the game, no matter if I'm 33 or if I'm going to be 80. I'll always appreciate the game and everything that it's given me.

I hope I'm always going to be fit enough that if I want to go out there and play some balls, hit some balls, play some doubles or whatever, that would be a possibility with my friends.

It just happened to be that I felt like I was hitting the ball extremely well, that I still am young enough to give it another shot. You only live once, so why not?

I'm very excited to have this opportunity and to play again and play at the highest level. I think we'll always be competitors deep down, whether that's tennis or something else.

When you look at yourself and you feel like you still have a chance to do something really cool and really good, then you got to take the chance. You never know if you don't try it.

Q. You just said to play here one more time. Is this a one-shot deal?

CAROLINE WOZNIACKI: No, I just meant I can't predict the future. I don't know what's going to happen in a year. But to be here now, "another time" I guess is a better word, it's great.

I don't know how long I'm going to play for. I don't know if it's going to be a year, two years, three years. I can't predict the future.

I also realize that I'm not that young anymore. I'm 33. Obviously you have Venus still playing. She's older than me. You have older players. At the same time I think what I've learned most is that you can't predict the future.

I'm just enjoying being here in the moment. I hope for a great tournament. I'm definitely planning on playing a lot more next year, playing more of a full schedule.

Q. Is your body reacting the same way that it did three, four, five years ago? Is it more challenging?

CAROLINE WOZNIACKI: I think the older you get, it always gets more challenging. I think that happens whether you play all the time or whether you've taken a break.

Your body, with age, it takes a little more effort to recover and to make sure everything is in line. But I feel great. I feel good right now. I feel like my body is cooperating at the moment. I'm very happy with that.

Yeah, I have great people around me to also help me be in the best possible shape and be as ready as I possibly can for this event.



Q. Did you ask for any advices from players?

CAROLINE WOZNIACKI: I think everyone is so different. I obviously had this conversation with Serena quite a while back. She's supporting me whatever I do. She thought that was really cool that I'm coming back.

But it's just everyone is so different. Svitolina, how she does it. How Serena did it. How I'm doing it. We're all different people. I think it's so cool that you choose your own path.

Most of all I'm just proud that we are quite a few moms on tour that have paved the way I think for the future generation that it's possible to take a break, have a family, then come back. The women have showed that you can still play at a very, very high level.

Q. You've been at tournaments while you were retired. Now you're back competing. Does it feel different being on the grounds?

CAROLINE WOZNIACKI: For sure. You do things a little differently when you're competing and playing. You're making sure you're here when you need to be, training, getting your reps in. But also I am going back as soon as I'm done with everything that I have here on-site, I go back and I want to hang with my kids and chill.

In general, it's just a different schedule. It's just a nice balance, as well, when I go back to the hotel room, the two kids are so excited to see me. Olivia all of a sudden has gotten obsessed with tennis. I see a tennis ball for probably this afternoon another couple of hours (smiling).

It's just fun to see the kids, their personalities, how they really change all the time. It's pretty special.

Q. The city can be kid friendly and not. How are you handling it with two kids?

CAROLINE WOZNIACKI: I love New York. Before I had kids, when I was young, even now, I think it takes a little more of an effort just to make sure the kids have everything they kind of need.

There's so much to do here in the city. We're staying close to a park. I kind of have most of the city scoped out. I have a lot of friends here who have kids. A lot of little play dates for them.

For me it's just fun. As I was saying before, yesterday I was trying to get Olivia outside after she woke up in the morning. From basically the moment she woke up, she

goes, Mama, mama, did you remember?

I was like, What?

Did you bring the tennis balls back?

I actually forgot. Thankfully my dad had gotten some of those softer ones. We were there basically in the hotel room until lunch because she wouldn't stop playing tennis. That was interesting (smiling).

This morning before I went on site as well, she said, Mommy, mommy, can I go with you to work? I want to be like you. I want to play tennis.

Those are cute things. I said, We can play tennis in the afternoon. I already know what my plans are this afternoon: getting my reps in (smiling).

Q. I remember your press conference in Singapore in 2018. You talked about your illness, the symptoms. How can you handle it today playing professional tennis? How is your situation regarding this illness?

CAROLINE WOZNIACKI: Well, I still have my RA. It's still something that I have to live with for the rest of my life. Obviously when I wasn't playing, it was much easier to manage. You can kind of control the stress you put on your body, your own schedule, sleep, everything else. Obviously that's a little more challenging when you're playing at a very, very high level against the best players in the world.

I think I'm pretty confident in the fact that I can keep my body in check. I think the more you kind of learn about your body, you know what triggers, what you can do to kind of feel better quickly. So it's something that I'm dealing with on a daily basis.

In general I feel pretty good and my body feels pretty good. So far it hasn't been an issue coming back here with that part of it.

Every day is different. Every day is new. Yeah, I can't predict after playing multiple matches, going far into a tournament, how my body is going to react. But so far so good.

Q. What would you say you found hardest both professionally and personally about making this comeback?

CAROLINE WOZNIACKI: Honestly, I think it's more the logistics than everything else (smiling). We're traveling with quite a big team, obviously the kids and everything

else.

I think I realized that the kids are so adaptable, it's so easy for them. We went to Montreal. In two days they weren't jet-lagged anymore, they were ready to go, which was really cool to see. I think that's the biggest challenge, just kind of managing that.

At the same time it's bringing me so much joy to have the whole family and everyone here. For me to be able to focus 100% on my tennis, but then also being able to go home in the afternoon or after a match or even to see them quickly in the morning if I have a match in the afternoon, just seeing them for a little bit, it just brings so much calmness to my everyday life.

I think as I progress into playing more and more, that's what can make a big difference for me. Also when I'm on court, I know that I'm 100% on court, giving it my all when I'm there. When I'm with the kids, that's what matters most to me at that point.

Q. As you make your comeback, what are some of your aspirations off the court in terms of business partnerships, endorsements, or otherwise?

CAROLINE WOZNIACKI: We're talking to quite a few companies right now that I'm very excited about. Obviously I can't talk about it a lot.

Obviously I want to work with companies that I actually use, that I really like, that I can feel like have the same passion as I do and my family, the same values.

As I was saying before, even just places to stay, stuff like that, where it just makes our life easier and more convenient. I think that's very exciting.

That's also a different part of it. I am obviously older and I feel like I have more of a, I don't know, clear pathway for myself also on court, fitness, physical, all of that. But I also feel like I have a little bit more of a clear mind when it comes to off the court, whether that comes to sponsorship, whether that comes to kids, because I don't feel like I'm as stressed anymore.

I realize that, yes, I love playing tennis, I love to play the game, I'm very passionate about it, and I want to be the best I possibly can be. But I also feel like there's some sort of a calmness that comes with the perspective of being a mom, having been away from the game for a while that I think you can't really replicate unless you've been through kind of the whole process of starting off really young, working your way through, then obviously coming back and knowing exactly what you need to do to get back to a very,

very, very high level.

Q. Another close friend of yours, Agnieszka Radwanska, was playing in the Legends at Wimbledon with Li Na. Did you have a chance to talk to her about trying to get her back to tour? Players talk about how they've commented and it's made them a better player, more thoughtful about the game. How has commentating changed your perspective?

CAROLINE WOZNIACKI: I think I've always been a player that saw the game pretty well, kind of knew my opponent's strengths and weaknesses. I was very aware of everyone's tennis philosophy, if you may say.

I think being from the outside, seeing it for a little while, really getting all the stats on everyone, I think it's just again a different perspective, which I think I can use to my advantage.

We have great people. When I was working with ESPN, we have great people. You literally can see everything you possibly want to. That was interesting for me to learn how much stats, how much you can really learn from match to match, what players' rhythms and patterns are. I think you can learn a lot.

If I had a young player and I was coaching someone, which I'm not going to, but if I did, I think I would have them watch quite a few matches because you learn really, really a lot from that. Not only live, but also on TV and kind of getting those statistics.

When it comes to Aga, I think I'll have to disappoint you. I don't think she's coming back. I think she enjoys her freedom. I think she loves the game, but I think she's mostly going to just play legends.

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