

US OPEN

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Ons Jabeur

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome. If you could, just your thoughts on this year's Open.

ONS JABEUR: Well, I'm happy to be here. It's a great honor to come back as a finalist. Let's see, I mean, I've been practicing really well this week, really excited to play.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. A little bit of a tough end for you in Cincinnati, not feeling physically great. How are you feeling now? How has your preparation been?

ONS JABEUR: Always trying to be 100% healthy. It's always tough. I'm doing everything possible to be ready. It's looking great. So I'm just going to take it one step at a time and see how it goes.

Q. You're such a popular player, people really pull for you, they want you to win. Do you feel that? Is that a positive thing or does it bring pressure with it?

ONS JABEUR: I do feel that, especially when I step on a tennis court, most of the people cheering for me. That's a privilege.

It's a positive thing. I don't think anyone would hate that. But I do take it as a great energy. In Cincinnati, that did help me a lot to make a comeback. That was really amazing.

Q. I think that's an NC Courage hat you're wearing, and I saw you joined the ownership group. What went into that decision? Do you follow the team? Do you follow the NWSL?

ONS JABEUR: Finally Naomi accepted me in the team. I've been trying to get in the team for years now (laughter).

You know, it's a great honor in so many ways. First, it's a great team. I'm still learning more about the team and about the league here in U.S. Definitely for me the most important is supporting women's sports.

As, can I say a football fan, please, as a football fan/soccer (smiling), I'm really excited to go and see some matches. If they let me play, I will definitely go and play.

But when I met Stu the first day, I told him I'm really interested, I want to get involved in something in soccer. Hopefully we'll follow more the team. I'm very excited. I will try to know more the team definitely.

But, yeah, it's very personal for me, so I'm very, very excited about it.

Q. You played just the one tournament since Wimbledon before this US Open. Did you feel you just needed time to decompress, get away from tennis, get over the disappointment of Wimbledon?

ONS JABEUR: 100%. I honestly wasn't ready to play Montreal. I wasn't ready to come back soon on tour because I felt like I needed time for myself.

They say time heals. I'm still waiting a bit. The Wimbledon loss still hurts (smiling).

It's much better than a month ago, for sure. Yeah, just I think I'm 28 years old now, I've learned from the mistakes of playing, playing, playing tournaments all the time. I think I was really proud of myself to just take a step back, enjoy time with my family, and get ready for the next tournaments.

Q. You sound a little congested. Are you healthy? Is everything fine?

ONS JABEUR: American AC kills me (laughter).

Q. It appears very possible that the WTA Finals will be played in Riyadh. I'm wondering what your thoughts on that are. Will you go, assuming you are qualified, what you're thinking about that?

ONS JABEUR: You know, as an Arab player, I'm very excited to be there. I am someone pushing for a change, pushing to give more and more opportunities especially for women. I know in Saudi they're changing things and they're evolving.

I've been there last year to give, like, a speech and



interview there. It was very nice meeting a lot of amazing womans there. For me, I was trying to push to have something, tennis, there in Saudi.

I think it's a great step. I think it's something that could help the Arab world to have more tennis players, to get more involved in sports.

Yeah, if they play there, and hopefully if I qualify, it will be a great honor and opportunity for me to go and play there, especially meeting a lot of women. They told me they look up to me. That would be a great opportunity for me to meet them and speak to them.

Why not? Just do a lot of great things together.

Q. As you know, there are a ton of juniors who don't make a successful transition to the pros. What do you feel like is the common thread between the ones that make it and can kind of foster a long-lasting career?

ONS JABEUR: Well, I mean, I think being a tennis player, you always have like a different path. Some players, they did not play juniors, but then they're playing good in professional; some, they did play good in juniors, they went also good or bad.

For me, I think my case was kind of particular for me because of my game. My game have a lot of variety. For me, it was tough to adapt to the professional level because if you play like a dropshot in juniors, that can work, but not with someone professional, they have a lot of experience than you. That was kind of tough for me.

Adapting to just sticking to one choice of shot, knowing when to hit that shot, that is when I started to play good in professional tennis.

I mean, I don't know for the others, to be honest with you. But definitely I feel like the combination, the perfect combination, would be to play juniors a little bit and then start playing ITFs and WTAs as soon as you can.

Q. You practiced with Marketa before the tournament. Is that just part of trying to exorcize those demons of Wimbledon?

ONS JABEUR: Tried, it did not work (smiling).

No, I've always practice with her. She's honestly a great person even outside the court. Especially she's a lefty, so you set up some practices with lefties. She's fun to practice with.

It was a great honor to practice with the Wimbledon

champion this year (smiling). I was supposed to practice with the ex-Wimbledon champion today, but yeah. Good stuff.

Q. What are your observations on Coco Gauff's development as a player?

ONS JABEUR: Very happy for her that she won in Cincinnati. I don't think a lot of thing changed in her tennis. Everybody always have talked about her forehand. I don't see nothing wrong with her forehand. Just small things that she adapted as a tennis player.

She's a great athlete. I think maybe the attitude or mentality changed that maybe she believes more in herself during the matches. That's great. She got the help that she needed. I'm really happy for her.

At least she's showing that she wants to change, wants to win, and that's really amazing.

Q. On the NC Courage, with 50 years of equal prize money at the US Open, what is it like to invest in women's sports in this moment?

ONS JABEUR: It's a very good consequence for me. I'm very happy. I always try to push for women's rights. I believe that we deserve more. Especially in tennis, it's great that we have equal prize money at the Grand Slams, but I feel like other tournaments, it needs to be better, for sure.

We are playing great tennis. We had great generations. Honestly, I see women's soccer is going that way. So tough coming out (smiling).

Yeah, for me to be part of it, it's a great honor. Definitely I loved watching the World Cup. Definitely will be rooting for NC Courage right now. I don't know what is your favorite team, but that's my team (smiling).

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

ONS JABEUR: Thank you, guys.

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