

# Miami Open presented by Itaú

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## Ashleigh Barty

Press Conference



A. BARTY/Ka. Pliskova

7-6, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Congratulations. 2019 Miami Open champion. Describe how you're feeling. Has it sunk in? What's it mean to you?**

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Yeah, it's been an amazing fortnight of tennis. It really has. I think it's pretty cool to have played such a good match today, obviously in a big situation and a big match. Certainly proud of myself and happy the way that my team and I have been able to get through these two weeks.

**Q. Talk me through the match. Broken early, you broke back, first-set tiebreak. Played a nearly flawless breaker. You looked confident and composed in the big-pressure moments in the second set.**

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Yeah, it was going to be a match of small opportunities. I think I was able to claw my way back into the first set and take an opportunity when I got it in the tiebreak.

I think it was important for me to try and get that first set. I think that first set today was going to be massive. I was able to get a bit of a roll on in the second early and keep the foot down.

**Q. Now into the top 10. You're the first Australian to win the women's singles at the Miami Open. You must be pretty excited about your future.**

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Yeah, it's just been an amazing fortnight. It really has. We keep putting ourselves in these positions, and I keep giving myself the opportunity to continue to grow as a person and as a player, and I think that's the most exciting thing.

**Q. Does this kind of bring your experience in the game kind of full circle, given the break you took and all that? If so, can you talk about that, kind of that journey from when you came back to this moment, kind of?**

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Yeah, it feels like it's a long time ago now since I took the break and since I came back. It's been a few years now, but I certainly feel like I'm a very different person. I feel like I'm a more complete

player, I'm a better player. I have been able to put myself into more high-pressure situations and in bigger matches.

So it's been, you know, a helluva couple years since my comeback. I can't really complain at all.

**Q. Is this validation for you, a tournament of this level? Or had you always expected this?**

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Oh, zero -- I mean, there were zero expectations. I think all it is is it's an opportunity for me to continue to try and get better every day and to enjoy the journey that we're on.

It's been a beautiful two or three years since I have been coming back into the sport. I have been certainly able to grab my opportunities with both hands. I have had some heartbreaking losses but also some pretty amazing moments, too.

**Q. You're the 33rd tournament champion this year in 33 events, men's and women's. What's that say about the state of the two tours, you think?**

ASHLEIGH BARTY: It's amazing, isn't it? I think particularly on the women's side, I think the level has evened out a lot, and the depth has grown over the last few years.

I think anyone in the draw has a legitimate chance of winning the tournament. I think you have to continue to put yourself in those situations and try and make the most of it. I think the margins are getting smaller and smaller, particularly in the women's game.

**Q. For us ugly Americans who know next to nothing about cricket, what can you tell me about any similarities between what you had to do today and what was involved at the professional level of cricket as far as the challenges and the abilities required?**

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Zero (smiling).

**Q. Well, that was my hunch, but I wasn't sure. But obviously you're very good at both. How is that?**

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Oh, I think I was, you know, an average cricketer and I'm becoming a better tennis player. No, it was certainly an enjoyable time in my life. It was a time that I think I found myself a little bit more as a person and I met an amazing group of girls and a

new circle of friends, I suppose. But I think tennis was always my calling.

**Q. I was wondering how your doubles success translates into your singles career, which has obviously gone on a trajectory maybe since the US Open and before that maybe?**

ASHLEIGH BARTY: I think ever since I was lucky enough to step on the court with Casey, my singles career has gone in an upwards direction. She taught me so much on the doubles court, and then also about life in the tour in general.

I think the experiences that I had with her certainly put me in good stead. And then being able to continue on in the last couple of years with Demi and CoCo at times, Vika here, it's always really enjoyable for me when I get out on the doubles court. I love it. I try and get out there at every opportunity that I can.

**Q. I'm just wondering, the time that you were away, how much more did it make you appreciate tennis? Did you think about it while you were away? When you came back, did you have a new appreciation for the sport?**

ASHLEIGH BARTY: I think I had a new perspective. Obviously I'm very appreciative of what I have and the people that give their time and their energy towards me and trying to help me become the very best that I can be. I'm extremely grateful for those that are around me and very lucky to have such a genuine group of people.

I think the time that I was away, I certainly, you know, grew to love the sport more, having not been involved in it.

**Q. Congrats on the win. You're going to end up having your first WTA top 10 ranking after this win, for sure. Are you going to use this win as motivation moving into the clay court season? And how does this push you personally better?**

ASHLEIGH BARTY: It's just been, you know, an amazing two weeks. It really has. I feel like we have jumped over a few hurdles this week. We have been able to, you know, make the most of some situations that I put myself in.

I think that's the beauty of this sport is that there is always another opportunity to become a better player, to try and make the most of what you can. That's what we have been able to do over this last fortnight, to beat some really quality players. And to back it up each day is probably the most pleasing.

**Q. What do you think technically you have improved the most over the last year or two, things you can do now you couldn't do before maybe**

**under pressure? Second, just a mental challenge of becoming a champion at this level, it often seems like you're a humble person. Has it been hard to believe you belong among the divas, if there are any divas out here?**

ASHLEIGH BARTY: That's an interesting question (smiling). I think first and foremost I feel like my game has become more well-rounded. I feel like I'm more exposed to pressure situations and am learning how to deal with it and how to enjoy it more.

I think, you know, when I can go out there and play my brand of tennis, that's when it becomes most exciting and most enjoyable for me. I'm being able to do that more and more often. And I think the best thing is I do feel like, you know, I belong on this tour. I feel like when I play my best, I'm good enough to match it with the very best in the world. I just need to keep giving myself the opportunity to challenge myself and play against the best in the world.

You know, some days it will go in your favor and some days it won't. I think the challenge and the beauty is to just keep going and putting one foot in front of the other and enjoying the journey.

**Q. Congratulations. Players of your generation, maybe one year younger than you, but Naomi and Ostapenko recently they have won big titles. So of course you have gone through totally different path, but did you see their successes as inspirational?**

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Oh, I think obviously when you see girls having success, it motivates you. I think, for me, I have had a very unique journey. I think every tennis player that walks on the court has had a different journey and different experiences.

You know, I think, for me, it's been very much a personal development and a development of my game over the last two or three years to put me in this position. Yes, I saw those results, but I don't think I needed any extra motivation than what I had and what my team is able to give me.

**Q. Congratulations. As a fellow Australian, very nice to watch you play the last fortnight. I know you'll head home. That's my understanding now. All the singles success you're achieving, but to win a Fed Cup would be massive. I know that's the next focus. It's in your hometown, Brisbane. Australia's building a really good team. You've had a taste of Belarus playing with Vika, against Sabalenka yesterday. What would that mean to add to your singles success for Australia to have some real Fed Cup success?**

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Yeah, I think, for me, Fed Cups are

the most special weeks of the year. A fortnight like this is truly amazing, but Fed Cup has a different feel about it. I think the way that Alicia, our captain, has been able to create a culture of a desire and need to play for your country has been amazing.

And I'm very fortunate to have girls, you know, like Casey in particular who really taught us how, what it is to play with Australia and really appreciate it. I think those opportunities don't come around often. We only get to do it two or three weeks a year. So when we do it, particularly in Australia in home ties, we want the crowd behind us. We want to do as best we can and let every Australian know that win, lose, or draw, we are out there giving our all and playing for the green and gold.

**Q. Speaking of Vika, you haven't played a ton with her, but she's a player who has had some great singles success, particularly here, winning it twice. Have you learned anything maybe playing with her that's helped in the last couple of weeks for you?**

ASHLEIGH BARTY: I think the beauty of Vika and I is that we instantly gelled together. We really did. I think our games complement each other well on the doubles well.

We have only played the two tournaments together, but I think we've had success instantly. She's obviously a player who loves the pressure situation. The tighter it gets, the better she gets. I think we saw that a few times in doubles this week.

But, yeah, I'm sure it won't be long before she's back to her very best once again.

**Q. Congratulations. We saw in the women's championship at Indian Wells and now again today that a game with variety, change of pace, slice, drop, can win championships. Could you talk a little bit about that kind of game and where you see it fitting in and where the women's game is going?**

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Yeah, I think I have always tried to bring as much variety onto the court as possible. Yeah, I felt, for me, it's always about sometimes trying to neutralize what your opponent's doing. Obviously there was a bit of a phase in women's tennis where there was this big power and strikers that were getting on top of rallies early.

But I think the physicality in tennis is, especially on the women's side, has grown, which has allowed more players to neutralize off that big first ball and work their way into the points.

I think, you know, a little bit as well is the depth has improved across the board in women's tennis. The top

40 is much stronger than it was, you know, five or ten years ago, I believe. You know, anyone in the draw has a legitimate chance of winning the trophy.

**Q. Congratulations. I just wanted to know, looking back to that break you took a few years ago and now coming back to see where you're at, you have a very strong start to this early season. Taking out No. 1, Simona, in Sydney, and you've won this one, and you have beaten a lot of top 10 and top 5 players in the world, and you yourself are now into the top 10 in the world. Do you ever wonder if that break was essential to where you are at now? Did it ever cross your mind to not return?**

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Oh, I think for me it was a bit of a no-brainer. I needed to take the break. Otherwise I don't think that I'd still be playing the game, to be honest.

I think it gave me an opportunity to go and relax and see kind of what it was like to kind of have a normal life, because the tennis tour and the tennis life is very unique. It's very different. It's not for everybody.

So I think I needed to take some time to step back and realize how much that I wanted it and how much that I do love it. I came back with a different perspective. I really did. I have an amazing team around me with people that give their time and energy and care for me, push me and drive me to try and be my very best. I think we are starting to see that now.

**Q. Your serve, your height, sometimes people think just the taller players have the better serve. You actually have a very good serve. 15 aces today. I think that was a career high. Can you talk about that, not being so tall and being able to serve the way you did?**

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Yeah, it's always been an important part of my game to allow myself to try and get in control of points early on. You know, I'm very fortunate to have had a coach in Jim Joyce who taught me everything I know and tried to teach me every shot in the book and create this Ash Barty style of tennis that is a little bit unique. He's certainly done that.

And now with my team, and, you know, with my coach, Craig Tytzer, he's able to continue to develop it and create more weapons.

**Q. The greatest moment of your career? Most painful moment of your career? Why do you love playing tennis?**

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Greatest moment of my career is definitely Fed Cup moment. I think playing the doubles match with Casey last year in her last-ever match in Fed Cup to win the tie.

What was the second one? Most painful. Oh, there is too many (smiling). I'm not going to lie. I think Sydney hurt this year, losing in the final. That hurt, for sure. I mean, I think that's why I keep coming back. That's why I love the sport is that you have these amazing moments and you have these heartbreaking moments. But the journey in the middle is pretty bloody good.