

# Miami Open presented by Itaú

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Miami, Florida, USA

## Naomi Osaka

Press Conference



NAOMI OSAKA: I think it was a really difficult match, but those are the matches that the most fun. I feel like I learned a lot, so I hope that I can continue.

**Q. Naomi, congratulations on this incredible hard-fought victory that you got through. Can you talk a little bit about the mental toughness and the physical toughness it took? You talked I think post-match about protecting your Miami home or being home. We love you from Miami. We're thrilled that you're from Pembroke Pines. Talk about what it's like to protect your home turf, if you don't mind, and being back here, and thank you and best of luck.**

NAOMI OSAKA: Thank you. Yeah, I mean, mentally it took a lot, but honestly I feel like there's a zone of focus that I get to that I don't remember certain things. Like, I was talking with Patrick, and he was, like, Oh, you were a set down, a break down, a point to be like 5-2, and I couldn't remember that. So I was kind of shocked.

But, yeah, I don't know, I try to make every point count, and eventually it adds up. Thankfully I won that match, but as for Miami being my home turf, I told -- well, I tell everyone this, but I grew up going to Key Biscayne, and that being, like, the highlight of the year because that was the time I could see all the pros playing, and it was always such a big inspiration.

Now I guess to be playing the tournament still feels a little crazy to me, and seeing all the little kids is so adorable. Yeah, definitely trying to stay here for as long as I can.

**Q. Tough comeback win today. What are you most proud of about your game currently coming off of that match, and what are some things you would like to work on maybe that you were reflective of in that match?**

NAOMI OSAKA: I think the thing I'm most proud of is my movement. I think I was able to get a lot of balls back today. I don't think I've in my head thought to rely on my wheels in a really long time. So I'm really glad I've gotten to this point in my fitness. It's been quite a long journey post-pregnancy. I'm really happy about that.

Working on I guess not being as nervous. I feel like some of my shots didn't go the way I wanted them to because I was a little shaky, so hopefully with more matches under my belt that will go away.

**Q. You talked about your fitness. You looked really fit out there. I watched that match. You started the year really well in Auckland finally and then the abdomen thing. Is that the toughest thing to come back from after a baby, the stomach muscles? Secondly, how about all the mothers out there, including Kvitová and Townsend today, Bencic and Svitolina. Talk about the trend. I don't know who started it. Maybe Azarenka and Serena.**

NAOMI OSAKA: Kim Clijsters too.

**Q. Yeah, she won a slam, right. How hard is it to come back from that?**

NAOMI OSAKA: Definitely it was a little bit of a letdown to be injured right at the start of the season, especially when I thought I was playing pretty well. I think my nerves have to do with that.

I want to play with the big dogs so bad, and I just see everyone playing so well, and I want to do the same, but I have to remember it's a process.

I can't speak for all the mothers, but for me in particular it was really hard to come back after pregnancy. I've learned a lot of abdomen terms that I've never heard of before, so I feel very knowledgeable now.

Yeah, I'm just really, really glad to be here and really glad to be healthy. It's really inspiring to see all the other mothers playing really well.

**Q. Are you on the right track back to the top?**

NAOMI OSAKA: You tell me. I don't know. I'm just taking it one day at a time. I guess we'll see.

**Q. You used the phrase about "playing with the big**



**dogs," and I'm wondering, how big a deal for you was that match against Iga last year in Paris in terms of feeling like, Hey, I can be back at that level? Do you ever think about that match at all, or have you watched it again at all?**

NAOMI OSAKA: It's funny. I don't really watch my matches because I get very cringey about myself. I don't know. It's the same for interviews. I don't like the sound of my voice.

Some people have sent me points, and I have watched those. I'm just glad or happy that people are still talking about it, which means it's quite a memorable match.

But, yeah, that match was really important to me because I don't typically feel good about my game on clay, but I guess to do so well against her where she's won, like, three or four French Opens, it was a really good confidence booster. I do think about that match sometimes when I'm having a hard day like today.

Yeah, I hope I can have many more of those types of matches.

**Q. You're coming just from the Indian Wells. You faced Camila Osorio. I want to ask you, how did you see her game and maybe if you learned something because you might be seeing the possibility of facing her again? So how would you approach that game?**

NAOMI OSAKA: Honestly I'm the type of player that I didn't know who I was playing until today, so I don't ever look at the draw, and I don't ever try to think about someone until it's the actual reality of it.

You're not going to like me for my answer. I know I played her twice I think, but for me my stand-out memory is we were at the US Open last year, and of course, I had the bow dress, and she was the first person that saw me put it on. She was so adorable. She came up to me because I was very self-conscious wearing it because I thought I was doing too much and I was very extra.

She came up to me, and she was basically hyping me up. I'll always feel a lot of love for her because she took a selfie with me in the bow dress and basically told me it was the cutest tennis outfit ever. She's very kind.

**Q. You mentioned sometime a few months ago maybe that your racquet wasn't necessarily feeling like an extension of your hand. I'm just wondering where you are now in that journey of being more fluid and in unison with your hand, your body, and your racquet?**

NAOMI OSAKA: That's a good question. Honestly I felt really, really good in Australia. Then I got injured, and I couldn't play for, like, three weeks to a month. That gap, it took me back quite a lot. I think now it's better again, but I still find myself not really committed to the shots that I want to hit.

So I would say like a solid 75. I think 75 is a good number.

**Q. (Off microphone).**

NAOMI OSAKA: Passing. I like to pass.

(Naomi answers to questions in Japanese.)

NAOMI OSAKA: I definitely think that's changed quite a lot post-pregnancy, but also I changed fitness trainers. So Gigi makes me do a lot of ab exercises now. We do that almost every day, and I think it's helped me out a lot since the injury because we've kind of been addressing it. He's the person that's taught me all the fancy different parts of the ab muscle.

My ballet skills are pretty nonexistent at this point, but I know the terms like plie, plie, plie.

Oh, really? Did I really say that or...

**Q. After the match I talked on to Osorio, and she said she gave me the best tip which is, You can take the towel.**

NAOMI OSAKA: Wow, that's best advice from me. Oh, my God. I need to give out better advice.

You know what's funny is I played her at the US Open one year, right? No. I don't remember the first time I played her. It was Australia? Okay.

**Q. Grand Slam, first round of the Grand Slam.**

NAOMI OSAKA: I don't know. It really brightens my day to see someone that, like, you can see their eyes are shining. I don't know how to explain it, but her eyes are always twinkling, and it's so cute. She's just so happy. So, yeah, I hope I can give her better advice than take a lot of towels one day.

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