

Miami Open presented by Itaú

Saturday, March 22, 2025

Miami, Florida, USA

Naomi Osaka

Press Conference



N. OSAKA/H. Baptiste

7-6, 6-3, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Give us your thoughts on your performance and how you were able to prevail after being down a break in that third set.

NAOMI OSAKA: Yeah, I think the match was really tough. I've played her once before. Honestly it was really frustrating but also really fun at the same time.

I think for me, I haven't been able to play super long matches, so it was really nice to get the experience today.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. How much did it take out of you? How good do you feel about coming through the way you did?

NAOMI OSAKA: Yeah, I think I feel fine right now. I'm not sure about tomorrow morning. But I also feel like I've built up a pretty good tolerance and fitness. Yeah, I'm hoping it doesn't take that much out of me.

I think while I was playing, I felt like I could play some more, so I feel like that's a good sign.

Q. I wanted to ask you about the other night I saw the Haitian fans with the flag. You signed with them. You were dancing around with the flag. Can you talk about the support that you get from the local Haitian community, how much that might also help you give that extra lift in those tough moments.

NAOMI OSAKA: Yeah, it definitely means a lot to me. I think coming and playing this tournament, I definitely see a lot more Haitian flags than anywhere else. Maybe the only other place would be New York. But Miami definitely has a lot more.

I also feel like it's kind of a homecoming for me because I did grow up here. I just feel, I don't know, a different type of energy.

Q. The third set, it was very dicey. Can you talk about how nervous you were and also your show of emotions as opposed to Hailey's where there was virtually no show of emotions. Can you tell us what you said to each other at the net.

NAOMI OSAKA: Yeah, today was an emotional day for me. I was saying that I'm a little embarrassed for how much I threw my racquet, which is something that I don't like to be known for. So very sorry to Yonex about that.

But I also feel like I was trying to be really positive and really vocal. So I might have been a little annoying to her on that end, too. But I felt like I needed to do that to, I guess, push myself to continue. In that regard, this match was very difficult.

And I did notice she was way quieter than me (smiling), but I feel like most of the time a lot of people are quieter than me, so...

Yeah, at the net I was telling her how she's a really good player, which she already knows that. Well, she should already know that. Also the last time I played her, she took a medical timeout, so I was just asking her if it was the same thing and if she was okay.

Q. You talked about building up a fitness base. Where would you say you are 15 months in from maternity leave as compared to where you were in vintage Grand Slam winner form?

NAOMI OSAKA: Honestly, I feel like I'm better than 2021. You know, COVID really set me back, I'm not going to lie. I was in the house doing nothing (smiling).

But yeah, I think I'm definitely faster than 2021. I think I was a teenager in, like, 2018 so should I really compare myself? I don't know.

But yeah, fitness-wise definitely the best I've been in a couple of years, for sure.

Q. I'm asking players about how they keep up their routines when they're on the road. When you're on a



stretch with back-to-back tournaments, what do you like to prioritize on your time off?

NAOMI OSAKA: Well, I think for this swing, like Indian Wells and Miami, my daughter's with me, so I'm just trying to make it back home before 7:30, which is her sleep time. If not, I, like, stalk or watch her through the Nanit cam.

But yeah, I would say when I'm not playing or not doing fitness or whatever, I try to go back home and spend as much time with her as I can.

Q. Is there a jet lag tip that has helped you over the years?

NAOMI OSAKA: With my jet lag? You know what's funny, I just try to push through things. Jet lag tip? No, I would probably have to take tips from somebody.

Yeah, maybe... No, just ignore me. Just whatever. If you can make it, you can make it. If not, it's all good.

Q. I heard you with the Tennis Channel, you were saying one of the things you were proudest of this match was that you fought through, fought for the match, and you might not have fought for this match a year ago. Can you delve into that a little bit more, the extra fight that you have.

NAOMI OSAKA: Yeah, I think last year, I don't know, like, for me it's really hard because last year I was coming back from, like, not even being in my greatest form. Does that make sense?

Like when I stopped playing, my last tournament was Tokyo, and I was ranked 40. I also didn't really have the fight in me anymore. It's really hard for me to describe, but...

I think a big basis of my game is fighting and just trying to stay as mentally strong as I can. Last year I had some good matches, but there were other matches where I felt like since I didn't play perfect, it was really difficult to win, and I just couldn't get over that hump.

This year I've played already a couple scrappy matches. I think the fight kind of got me over it. Then I realized, like, you need to play a lot of matches like that to be I guess one of the great ones.

So I'm hoping that I can continue.

Q. You mentioned after your first match how excited you were to have your mom in the audience cheering you on. Just talk about that.

NAOMI OSAKA: Yes, it's really special to me. I think also viewing her as my daughter and then viewing her as a mom to my daughter, just seeing the different parallels, I realize how - I hope she's proud - how proud she must be because we did grow up here, we played on public courts not too far away. Now to be playing in the Miami Open where we used to come watch is really cool.

I don't know. She's just always really happy and very vocal. She's always the one with the monochrome outfit. Every match day, she asks me, Which color should I wear? It's really cute (smiling). She doesn't get to come to a lot of tournaments, so it's really fun when she's able to.

(Naomi's answers to questions in Japanese.)

NAOMI OSAKA: Yeah, I think for me, I wanted to try and experiment a little. I think when I played against Samsonova, it worked really well to just be patient and wait on the baseline and go for the shot when I had it. Today I tried that, as well, but it was a little bit more difficult because she does hit more slices and she does come into the net.

I was also thinking in the third set maybe I should step up and be a little bit more aggressive, which I think I did, but maybe not to the degree that I could have. It turned out okay in the end.

Yeah, well, I honestly never think about ranking or points or anything like that. I think for me, instead of I'm going to win, I'm definitely the type that's, like, I'm not going to lose.

I don't know. For me, I look around the site or I'm playing and I feel the energy of the audience. There's no place I'd rather be. I want to live to fight another match. So that's kind of the train of thoughts that I think of.

No, don't tell me. Don't tell me (laughter). Thank you.

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