

‘I hope I made Evonne proud’: Barty’s name etched in history after thrilling Wimbledon win



Ash Barty celebrates after winning the Wimbledon final.

By Sam Phillips
July 11, 2021

Ash Barty etched her name in history and achieved a childhood dream with a thrilling three set win against Karolina Pliskova in the Wimbledon final.

Barty beat Pliskova 6-3, 6-7 (4-7), 6-3 in just under two hours to become the first Australian to win Wimbledon since Lleyton Hewitt in 2002.

She’s also the first Australian woman to win the game’s oldest grand slam since Evonne Goolagong Cawley in 1980.

An emotional Barty could only conjure six words when asked about achieving the same heights as her idol.

“I hope I made Evonne proud,” Barty said.

Wearing a dress inspired by the 50th anniversary of Goolagong Cawley’s first Wimbledon title and with the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge watching on from the royal box, Barty blasted through the first four games.

She won the first 14 points, broke Pliskova's serve twice and clinched the set in just 28 minutes. At that point, it appeared as though the combination of an in-form Barty and a nervous Pliskova would send the millions of Australians watching through tired eyes to bed content.



Barty plays a backhand during her winning final.

But after Pliskova's false start, the second set was always going to be the true test for Barty. She was six games away from achieving her childhood dream and Pliskova had found her serve. Nervous moments were around the corner.

A pair of double faults and a forced forehand error opened the door for Barty to break Pliskova's second service game.

The Australian only needed one opportunity. Pliskova sent a forehand into the net and with it, Barty had one hand on the Venus Rosewater Dish.

After trading breaks, Barty had her first chance to serve for the championship. She couldn't clinch the match and was forced to settle for a tiebreak.

Some favourable net cords fell Pliskova's way and a Barty double fault down set point sent the match to a decider.

The world No. 1 forced three break points in Pliskova's first service game of the final set. After saving one opportunity with a brilliant forehand, the Czech missed the most simple volley of the match to gift Barty a 2-0 lead.

Just over 20 tense minutes later, Barty had another chance to clinch her childhood dream when serving for the championship for a second time.

When Pliskova sent a backhand into the bottom half of the net, Barty achieved that dream.

"It's the most incredible feeling I've ever experienced on a tennis court and there was certainly disbelief," Barty said of the moment Pliskova's backhand hit the net.

“I’ve worked so hard my whole career with my team and with people that mean the most to me to try and achieve my goals and my dreams. To be able to do that today was incredible.”

Barty’s run to her maiden Wimbledon title has been nothing short of remarkable.

An ‘acute’ hip injury saw the 25-year-old play through serious pain at the French Open.

When she retired hurt during her second round match, Barty was given little hope of recovering in time to take her place at the top of the ladies’ singles draw in London. After the match, Barty revealed even her team had kept the real odds of her reaching the starting line at the All England Club secret.

While the 25-year-old was always hopeful of recovering in time to take her place in the field, the injury really should have seen her sidelined for two months.

“Just even chatting to my team now once we’ve come off the court, they kept a lot of cards close to their chest and didn’t tell me a lot of the odds,” Barty said.

“(They) didn’t tell me a lot of the information they got from other specialists and there weren’t too many radiologists in Australia who had seen my injury. In a sense, it was a two month injury.

“Being able to play here at Wimbledon was nothing short of a miracle.

“Them not telling me that just proves how much we were against the odds and to be playing pain-free through this event was incredible.

“It’s funny, sometimes the stars align. You can think positively and you can plan and sometimes the stars align and you can chase after your dreams.”

Now a two-time grand slam winner, Barty reflected on the legacy she continues to build as an icon of Australian sport.

“Australians have such a rich history in sport and being able to be a very small part of that is something I have always dreamed of,” she said.

“Trying to create a legacy, trying to create a path for young girls and boys to believe in their dreams and to live through that and learn my lessons along the way has been some of the best parts of my journey.

“To be able to be successful here at Wimbledon, to achieve my biggest dream has been absolutely incredible.

“The stars aligned over the past fortnight and it’s incredible that it happened to fall on the 50th anniversary of Evonne’s first title here, too.”