

# ON THE BASELINE

## WOMEN'S TENNIS NEWS

HOME TOURNAMENTS PLAYERS TENNIS GEAR TENNIS TRAVEL LESSONS ADVERTISE WATCH TENNIS LIVE ABOUT

Home / Latest News / 10 Questions with Darren Cahill

## 10 Questions with Darren Cahill

By Paula Vergara

Updated: June 21, 2010

**OTB: Justine Henin has set her sights on winning Wimbledon this year. She came close a few times in previous years, making it to the final in 2001 and 2006. Do you think she has a legitimate shot at the title?**

**Darren Cahill:** Absolutely. Justine is a class player. She certainly has the ability to step up to the challenge. Winning Wimbledon is a dream of hers. When she gets to Wimbledon, she needs to let her game go and not be restricted. I think in Paris, we saw her play within herself. Probably the nerves and expectations got to her a little bit. At Wimbledon, she can get rid of that, and really free up her swing and free up her game plan. Wimbledon is not hers to lose; it's everybody's to gain. She's got to go out there and take it from everyone.

**OTB: What types of weapons does Caroline Wozniacki need to develop to become a serious contender at Wimbledon?**

**Darren Cahill:** I think she needs to develop a little more pace and power on her first serve to give her some free points. To me, Caroline is a very similar female version to what Lleyton Hewitt was six or seven years ago. They play a very similar type of game. Lleyton had the ability on grass to get



the free points off the first serve. While his first serve percentage was never great, (around the 55% mark), he could always rely on it. If he made the first serve, he would hit the lines and he had great direction with it, and he would get a bunch of free points. Caroline doesn't get the free points that she looks for on the first serve. I know she's been working really hard on trying to develop five or six more miles per hour, and to hit her spots on her serve. That will free up the rest of her game as well. A lot of the time she relies on making her side of the court feel extremely small to her opponent. She uses her legs really well, she defends extremely well, and she makes the opposition have to hit five, six, or seven great shots to win a point. It's a bit tougher to defend on grass because of the footing issue. I think she hits a great cross-court, but when the ball is there to take it up the line, she second-guesses herself a little bit. If she can stay a little bit more committed to that particular shot, that could be a match winning shot for her.

**OTB: Would you say that grass is a more difficult surface to master than clay?**

**Darren Cahill:** Yes, especially for this generation of player. They never get a chance to play on grass, apart from the four weeks of the year leading into Wimbledon. Because most of today's game is played from the baseline, and because of the technology, and the strings more than anything else, people are taking such big swings and generating more pace and power from the back of the court, and more spin as well. So it's a little harder to approach the net. Instead of playing volleys around the waist level, most of the time you're playing volleys around the knee level, and that makes it a much tougher volley to make. So most of the tennis these days is played from the back of the court. And if it's going to be played from the back of the court, you need to be able to move well. There is an art to moving well on grass. You don't get that from just playing on it four weeks of the year. You really have to spend some time on it, and feel the grass under the feet, and feel how much you can slide or when you don't need to slide. The players who do well at Wimbledon are the ones who move well.

**OTB: Sam Stosur has done well at Wimbledon--in doubles. She's made it to the final for the past two years. Do you think she can carry over her recent singles success at the French Open into Wimbledon?**

**Darren Cahill:** I think she's riding a wave at the moment. Sam is believing in herself much more

### BREAKING NEWS

- WTA Stars Shine In Shenzhen
- Courting Jamaica
- Bartoli on comeback talk: 'Never say never'
- 2013 U.S. Open -- Serena, Roger Federer due at Kids' Day
- Maria Sharapova pulls out of Rogers Cup for hip



### FACEBOOK

**On the Baseline Tennis News**  
Like

7,594 people like On the Baseline Tennis News.

Facebook social plugin

**Dish Network - Watch tennis in HD with satellite TV sports programming.**

**Grand Slam Tennis Tours - Buy tickets and travel packages for the Australian Open, French Open, Wimbledon, US Open, and other premier tennis tournaments!**

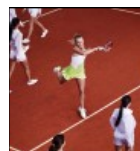
**Tickets to Top Tennis Matches Around The World including 2012 US Open Tennis Tickets, 2012 Wimbledon Tournament Tickets, the Australian Open Tennis Tournament Tickets and tickets to sold out sports events everywhere**

### TENNIS GEAR



**Fila Debuts New Wimbledon Collection**

Drawing inspiration from elegant sporting attire from the 1920s, Fila introduced...



**adidas Launches Stella McCartney Barricade Line in Melbourne**

adidas' new Stella McCartney Barricade clothing line...

than she probably did a year or two years ago. We've all believed that she's had the weapons and the talent to be a top-10 player, but she's now a Grand Slam contender. And she's earned that the hard way. So there's no question that when she gets to Wimbledon, she's going to be a factor there. But grass is probably her least favorite surface. Clay works very well for her, because it gives her a little more time to set up, especially on the forehand and also to get around the backhand and hit that forehand. She hits the forehand much better from the backhand side of the court, and grass doesn't really allow you to do that, because of the unreliable bounce of the ball, and you don't get as much time to set up. That doesn't mean she can't win on it. It just means she'll just have to really bear down in those two lead up tournaments, and really work hard on movement and bending the legs a little more. Her particular style of game can do well on grass. It's just making sure that she can get through and have one or two big wins on the stuff, and then you start to believe in yourself much more.

**OTB: Do you see any potential for the up-and-comers to dominate this year at Wimbledon?**

**Darren Cahill:** The ladies' game this year has been really fascinating. You can argue that it's been more interesting than the men's game in 2010. I think that's partly because for the last 2-3 years, we've had Serena and Venus really dominating the game. But with Justine Henin, Kim Clijsters, and Maria Sharapova coming back, it's added a lot more flare to the women's game. I think it's still going to be the people that we expect to be in the second week that will still be there. Sharapova has a great game for grass. She's going to be a factor. We're just waiting for her to make that breakthrough. I thought that what we saw of her game in Paris was very impressive. She was maybe just a point away from beating Justine in the third round, and was hitting the ball great. She won a clay court tournament going into the French Open, so she's obviously playing well.

**OTB: What types of playing styles are well suited to grass?**

**Darren Cahill:** You've got to move well and serve well. The big servers normally dominate, especially in the women's game, and even in the men's game as well. The people who can step up to the plate and hit their spots, get the free points on the serve. It's very difficult when you get behind on the point on grass, to turn it around to get it back in your favor. So if you can step up and hit the big serve and get on top of the point instantly, then you're in a great position to win that point. That's why Serena and Venus have dominated Wimbledon for the last number of years. That's why Sharapova is going to be a factor, and why Kim (if she's playing well) is a factor and Justine as well. They either serve huge, or they hit that first shot and get on top of the point instantly.

**OTB: Do you think Ana Ivanovic will get her game back on track soon or is she still struggling?**

**Darren Cahill:** I have no doubt she'll get it back. She's got a top-10 game. She hits the ball great. She has just as much power as any player in the game and she's got the will and the desire. It's just a matter of time for Ana. At the moment, she steps onto the court and is not quite sure what's going to happen. When it's pretty clear what you're going to accomplish on the court, and you step onto the court and you know what your base level is, then you know what to expect of yourself. You know you have 2-3 levels to go up from there. There's no going down from there, but you can certainly come up from there. Once she finds that base level that she can rely on, she can be much freer on the court and expect more of herself. Ana is in great hands with Heinz Gunthardt. I think he's a wonderful coach.

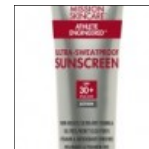
**OTB: What weapons does Venus Williams have in her game that makes her so hard to beat on grass?**

**Darren Cahill:** She moves great. The small things that she normally struggles with on hard courts—the second serve, and the forehand a little bit—they seem to disappear when she steps onto the courts at Wimbledon. She's a different person. It doesn't matter how much you're struggling with your game. When you turn up to a tournament where you've done well previously, you instantly feel good about your tennis game. It's like you never left the place. It seems that way for Venus—she crushes the forehand, she moves inside the baseline and takes player's times away. She serves well, she doesn't have nearly as much trouble with the second serve, and she just imposes her game. She doesn't let anybody play their game. Everybody pretty much is relying upon how Venus is going to play.

**OTB: What types of match statistics seem to be the most important in analyzing a match and why?**

**Darren Cahill:** It varies with every single match and every single player. What works for Justine doesn't work for Kim. And what works for Venus probably doesn't work for Serena. Some [statistics] stand out and some are glaringly obvious, but there are certain statistics where you really have to go behind the scenes. At the top level, you're only looking at 4 or 5 points making a huge difference in turning a result around. That could be: How close are you getting to the net? Or where are you serving for the big point? Or what type of serve are you serving? That's what makes tennis such a great game. The variables are maybe more than in any other sport. Not only the variables on your side of the court, you've got to worry about the variables on the other side of the court as well. The one statistic that you can pretty much rely on that's going to be very effective as to whether you win or lose, is second serve points won or lost. If you're winning the vast majority of your second serve points and your opponent's second serve points, you're probably winning most of your matches.

**OTB: Lindsay Davenport will be playing mixed doubles at Wimbledon with Bob Bryan. Any thoughts on that?**



**Court of the Rising Sun. Play it Skin-Safe.**

Heaven on earth to a tennis player? Quite possibly a beautiful...



**Support Breast Cancer Research Year-Round. Make a Difference While You Play Tennis.**

Don't let the end of October and Breast Cancer Awareness...

**The Best Wood Fencing**

[perfectionfence.com](http://perfectionfence.com)


Classic & Contemporary Designs Professional installation available

**Darren Cahill:** That doesn't surprise me. I saw her in Paris, and she looked to be in great shape. She was doing some commentary over there as well, and she was enjoying life. If she wants to get out there and challenge herself again, I think it's great to see her back. I think she's an inspiration for everybody when she steps onto the tennis court.

*Paula Vergara is a freelance tennis journalist, covering the WTA and ATP tours. Paula's publishing credits include On the Baseline Tennis News, Tennis.com, USTA New England Magazine, and Bob Larson's Tennis News. Paula is also a member of the United States Tennis Writers' Association. To view her work, visit [www.paula-vergara.blogspot.com](http://www.paula-vergara.blogspot.com).*

## 0 COMMENTS

You must login to facebook in order to comment.




Also post on Facebook
 Posting as Paula Vergara ([Change](#))

Facebook social plugin

## 4 LEGACY COMMENTS



**Aaress Lawless**

June 21, 2010 at 1:05 pm

Great interview, Paula! The information on the 2nd serve points was exceptionally fascinating!

His comments are excellent, especially the thorough breakdown on Stosur's game. I'd definitely like to see her do well over the next 2 weeks.



**Liz**

June 21, 2010 at 7:59 pm

Darrens comments are so professional he certainly is the best, if only we had him back in Australia – a great interview.



**Liz Cahill**

June 21, 2010 at 8:13 pm

It was a great artical, Darren is so professional and the best in what ever he does, Australia certainly miss him.



**Paula Vergara**

June 22, 2010 at 11:57 am

Thanks, Aaress. And yes, Darren is very professional as well as a great person to talk to (and learn from). He is so knowledgeable about the game of tennis. Nice to see him having so much success as an analyst on ESPN.

Too bad Sam Stosur lost today in the 1st round, but as Darren noted, grass is not her favorite surface.