

# Caroline's Rheumatoid Arthritis Journey



**Caroline Wozniacki is a 29-year-old former professional tennis player from Denmark who was born into a family of athletes; her father – and tennis coach – is a former footballer in Poland and Denmark, and her mother is a former member of the Polish national volleyball team.**

Caroline began playing tennis at the age of nine and her professional career took off at the age of 15 when she joined the World Tennis Association (WTA) tour. In 2018, Caroline reached her lifetime ambition of becoming a Grand Slam title holder (by winning the Australian Open) and achieving world ranked number one status.

2018 was meant to be her golden year, but things changed for her as the year progressed. She had just finished taking part in a Grand Slam tournament before becoming unwell with flu-like symptoms, which she struggled to shake. She felt so unwell that she was forced to pull out of the Washington Open one week ahead of her first scheduled match. The following months saw disappointments and missed opportunities due to her mysterious symptoms.



a rheumatologist, Caroline finally received what she had been fighting for; a definitive diagnosis of rheumatoid arthritis. This was her first victory, and allowed her to process, reset and focus on how she was going to gain an advantage over her disease.

**After being knocked out of the Coupe Rogers cup in Montreal, she awoke in such severe pain and was unable to move. Caroline and those close to her, including her husband David Lee, felt helpless.**

**Before her diagnosis, she knew nothing about rheumatoid arthritis or other chronic inflammatory diseases, such as axial spondyloarthritis, psoriatic arthritis and psoriasis, but she educated herself and established a long-term, evolving game plan with her rheumatologist.**



After seeking professional help, she was told her pain was perhaps due to her being either sore from a heavy tournament schedule or being out of shape. Other doctors questioned if Caroline was pregnant or whether it was “all in her head.”

Knowing her own body and that something was not right, Caroline insisted on further investigations. After additional tests from doctors on the ATP Tour and then

Caroline formally retired from professional tennis after the 2020 Australian Open and will now be focusing on life outside the sport; including advancing her studies, supporting awareness and research of chronic inflammatory diseases, such as rheumatoid arthritis, axial spondyloarthritis, psoriatic arthritis and psoriasis, and to consider building a family. Her retirement is not due to her disease and while she knows her rheumatoid arthritis will always be a part of her life, she can't wait to find out what the future will hold.

Join Caroline's journey by following her on Instagram, Facebook or Twitter and share your own experiences with inflammatory diseases, such as rheumatoid arthritis, axial spondyloarthritis, psoriatic arthritis and psoriasis, using #AdvantageHers.

#AdvantageHers

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