

# Mubadala Citi DC Open

Sunday, July 30, 2023

Washington D.C.

## Elina Svitolina

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Can you please share some thoughts ahead of the tournament here in D.C. after a really strong Wimbledon run.

ELINA SVITOLINA: Yeah, I'm really, really happy to come to play here. It's my first time in Washington for this tournament, so I'm excited to start here in Washington, my hard court season, so looking forward to the tournament.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. Since your return in the spring, the results have been pretty good. I'm wondering if that, what's allowed you to enjoy that success after so much time off and to an extent did it surprise yourself how quickly some of those results came after quite a bit of time away?**

ELINA SVITOLINA: From some things, I wish I could play and handle some situations better, like before, before Strasbourg, let's say. And then everything came together in Strasbourg, and I was playing better tennis. I was mentally handling situations better.

The problem for me was at the beginning, because I was one year away from tennis, lots of things happened. War, baby, lots of things happened in this one year, which seemed much longer than that.

So I had to find my focus again, my game focus for every single match, every point. Then when this really improved, I started to play better and really happy it actually came together. Before Roland Garros, I got a lot of confidence winning Strasbourg, and then playing well at the slams, this was really important for me.

**Q. At this stage of your career, do you feel that you're a better player now than you were earlier in your career? Is there anything that you can point to that you have learned about yourself in maintaining your hunger for the game and the desire to improve?**

ELINA SVITOLINA: Definitely I have a lot of experience. You know, now coming back to the tour, starting from zero, I have experience still of playing many years on the high

level, and I try just to analyze what I did well and take the best from that years and just, you know, build on that.

I'm happy that I'm healthy right now, that I have a chance to practice good, happy that everything went well and I was able to really work hard for three months after the baby.

So for me, you know, the priority right now is being healthy. Then I know that if I'm healthy I can put lots of hours on the court and then the result will come, essentially.

**Q. I wanted to ask what your reaction was when you saw who you'll be playing in the first round.**

ELINA SVITOLINA: Well, it is the draw, you know. It is possible. It was possible that I would be playing Victoria again. So I just have to accept this and practice and prepare.

**Q. There has been some talk after what happened in Paris and then in Wimbledon about this idea of maybe explaining to fans why sometimes there aren't the handshakes that they are used to seeing at the end of matches. Did you speak to anybody here about that, and have you heard anything either from the WTA or from this tournament about that sort of thing?**

ELINA SVITOLINA: Yes, after our match at Wimbledon, WTA, as you know, came out with the statement that there would be no handshakes between Ukrainian, Russian, Belarusian players.

Also yesterday I had a chat with Steve Simon and he told me that they will announce before our match that there will be no handshake. So I'm happy with that.

**Q. Can you just talk a little bit about kind of the outpour of support from your fans that you have been seeing?**

ELINA SVITOLINA: Yeah, I got massive support, even sometimes I'm surprised how much support I get at the tournaments, whatever I go. Here as well, I saw lots of Ukrainians. I see lots of flags when I play and lots of really people who support me.

This really motivates me and gives me this support that, you know, you cannot ask for more. Really unbelievable to have that.

**Q. Looking back on Wimbledon now with what you're able to do, beating four major champions, third, fourth time anyone has ever done that in one Grand Slam. How much pride do you take in that run, even though I'm sure you wish it would have lasted longer. How do you look back at that with a few weeks of clarity?**

ELINA SVITOLINA: Yeah, for sure. I didn't expect that, but I believed that every match that I played I had the chance to win. I just had to be focused, to do everything possible for beating them, to follow my tactics, and of course to handle my nerves, because just coming back to the tour, you know, you don't know how your body is going to react.

I was happy, you know, I could find this focus for such big matches and big moments as well. So I tried to take the best out of this and hopefully I can continue playing and doing the same here, the U.S. swing.

**Q. Being a combined ATP and WTA tournament, I imagine it makes your life, in particular, easier than maybe some of the other players. What is it like logistically when you and your husband are playing in the same tournament? Is that something you particularly enjoy?**

ELINA SVITOLINA: Yes, actually was one of the reasons, you know, also to come here, because we could spend some time together. We could, you know, so many weeks a year where we are traveling, so it's nice to have each other, support each other, and spend time together with our teams.

The same almost like when we train, you know, so it's just good, makes you feel good and especially it's a 500 event, so it's great opportunity, I guess, for the fans and for players, as well, you know, it's always nice, the combined events.

**Q. Away from the tour for a good reason with the baby. There's another player returning here this week, Jennifer Brady. She's been gone two years, injury. You mentioned the first couple of tournaments took you a while. What's it like to be away from tour, competition, that long? What are the first couple tournaments, what's she going to find out returning here after two years away?**

ELINA SVITOLINA: Well, speaking from my experience, for me it was, I was happy that I started, I started in Charleston, but then I went back to the smaller events to get this confidence, and to not have so many things going on, because at the big tournaments you have like media, you have a lot of players, fans and everything. It can be really like distracting.

So for me was important to go back to the smaller events to try to practice some things and try to see where I am with my level, because, you know, with all the emotions sometimes can be tough to really see where you are with your level.

And of course being really patient about the result, not to expect too much from yourself. Of course you want to win every match that you play, but it's not easy.

As I mentioned, for me the biggest challenge was mental focus and pressure moments, this, you know, where you have to adjust and just try to accept if it's not going your way and just try again next week.

**Q. Do you and Gael off-court talk much about each other's games, talk about tennis, or is that something that doesn't come up much at all? Are you able to be an extra set of eyes sitting in his box to offer advice or feedback and vice versa when he sits in your box?**

ELINA SVITOLINA: Yeah, we talk like casually, I would say. Never like have a sit-down after each match and talk, like, coach, like coaches to each other. Just like, you know, sometimes I can ask him his opinion, what he thought about the match that I played or he asks me things, you know. So we are just there for each other. So if someone needs help, because sometimes also, you know, it can be not easy, like with the coaches. You know, sometimes maybe you don't see the same things with your coach, so, you know, you also want, like, a second opinion on few things.

So, you know, with us it's quite easy and quite casual conversation. We are not scared to tell each other some things that might hurt each other. I think this is also very important that you receive this information as an advice for your best and not like someone tries to hurt someone.

So I'm happy that we understand each other on this, and it's good.

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