

Internazionali BNL d'Italia

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Anhelina Kalinina

Press Conference



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A. KALININA/V. Kudrmetova

7-5, 5-7, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations.

ANHELINA KALININA: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: First WTA 1000 final. How do you feel?

ANHELINA KALININA: It feels amazing actually, yeah. First tournament, first final. Didn't expect. Was playing match by match. Yeah, it went to the final. Unbelievable.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. I wonder if you want to say something more about what happened at the end? You refused to shake hands. If you want to say something more or not.

ANHELINA KALININA: To say more about what?

Q. The fact that you refused to shake hands at the end.

ANHELINA KALININA: We didn't shake hands because the girl is from Russia basically. It's no secret why I didn't shake, because this country actually attack Ukraine.

So, yeah, this is sport, I understand, but it's also kind of politician thing. So, yeah, it has nothing personal. But in general, yes, it's not acceptable.

Q. Last year at Wimbledon you talked about how much you wanted to help Ukraine, your family, as many people as possible. How much have you been able to help? Is this week, with the prize money, also going to help you in that regard?

ANHELINA KALININA: Even without this prize money, I was helping, yeah.

Q. How have you been able to help and who? Just your family?

ANHELINA KALININA: Not only my family. But I don't like to make it so public.

It's not like a lot of people, yeah, but it's some people that I know, some people that I don't know, but maybe 10, five to 10.

Q. The up and down of this match is the result of this difficult problems you have with Russia, with your opponent, or is normal?

ANHELINA KALININA: I'm sorry?

THE MODERATOR: He was wondering if the up and down is because of who you were playing.

I think she talked about playing a Russian.

ANHELINA KALININA: What was the question?

THE MODERATOR: If the up-and-down nature of the match was because you were playing a Russian.

ANHELINA KALININA: No, because she was also a top player, very great player. So, yes, it was a big fight. It was about tennis.

It was tough. I win 7-5, then I lost a little bit maybe concentration. Also too much nerves because I was serving for the match. This is my first semifinal. I was trying to little bit turn off the emotions, but it's very tough when you're playing such tough matches. Sometimes, like, you really want to go for it, you really want to finish the match, then it's trouble. Yes, I did this mistake.

Third set I think I was much better mentally. I was staying stronger, more focused. Yes, I'm really happy and proud of myself how I handle it after the second set.

Q. After a second match like this, a long match, how strong are you after this tournament?

ANHELINA KALININA: I don't know how much strong. I was playing basically... It just didn't go a little bit in Indian Wells, Miami, Charleston, Madrid. I'm just saying I was losing kind of second, third round, even first. But now it went through.

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Yeah, it's tennis. This is sport. I respect everyone. It can go both ways, yeah. I appreciate the moment that it goes to my way now (smiling).

Q. Do you hope to get a sponsor after this final? Is the second time you get into the top 30 this year. Why you don't have a sponsor? I don't know if you had some requests or not. Being top 50, very consistent.

ANHELINA KALININA: Yeah, I have a sponsor, sponsorship with Yonex. I still don't have sponsor for clothes. Yeah, we're waiting. We're hoping.

Yeah, I have to improve my tennis, yeah, be high in the rankings. All the girls, as you see, everyone is good. It's not always about me, it's about this market in general.

Q. You mentioned last year how your family home, your parents' home, was bombed. I'm wondering what the status is of your family. Have they been able to rebuild or where are they living? You said your grandparents were in occupied territory. Is that still the case?

ANHELINA KALININA: My whole family now is in Kyiv, yeah. Actually few days ago, where my family is working, because my mom and dad, they're like tennis coaches, and it was huge, huge bomb near them, near their academy.

Q. Near the tennis courts?

ANHELINA KALININA: Yeah, near the tennis court. We have academy. Just, I don't know, maybe 300 meters airport, and there is no airport. This is how they live.

Q. How do you react to the fact that here in Italy there is quite a lot of support to Ukraine? Even before the tournament you had an evening, they were helping Ukraine. I'd like to know if Nova Kakhovka, where you were born, is the situation much worse than anywhere else or more or less is the same everywhere? How much you are in contact with the people who live there? I don't know if your family is still there. I didn't understand very well what you said, if the family is still there close to the airport which is not existing any more.

ANHELINA KALININA: Yeah, I understand the question.

I was saying, I don't know, two months maybe ago, before my grandmother and grandfather, they were in Nova Kakhovka, this is currently occupied territory by Russian soldiers. But they were able to go immediately when it was attacked. So currently my whole family is in Kyiv.

I have no connections with Nova Kakhovka any more because everyone is in Kyiv, yeah. I'm super happy because it's absolutely impossible to stay, to live, because there was so much weapon, so much soldiers near my grandmother and grandfather house. It was absolutely not possible to live, to stay.

They are very old people. So for them it was very tough to make this decision to move from that city. They're living, I don't know, 60 years there, 65. Yeah, we kind of pushed them, like, You have to go.

No, it's not a normal life. Yeah, when the bomb came directly to their house, but it was a little bit maybe, I don't know, couple of meters left, not exactly in their apartment, but left. They kind of wake up and realize, Oh, my God, yeah, we have to move.

Q. About the reaction of Italy towards Ukraine and you in particular, did you notice something more passionate?

ANHELINA KALININA: I would say here the crowd was supporting me so much during the whole week. During the two weeks actually. I was feeling so much support. I don't remember where I was playing. Almost for me it was like the whole stadium was cheering me up.

Yeah, it's kind of amazing feeling. I have never experienced something like that. They bring so much energy to fight when you don't even, like, have energy to do that.

From the bottom of my heart I want to thank every person who was in the stadium from the first match till hopefully tomorrow I will have another match. Thanks for them. Yeah, they kind of motivated me and they give me much more energy to fight.

Q. Looking ahead to either playing Elena or Jelena.

ANHELINA KALININA: Yeah, I know both of them (smiling).

Q. Can you talk a little bit about the challenge. Also physically, given what you've had to do the last three matches, how is the 24-hour turnaround and how are you feeling about that?

ANHELINA KALININA: Yeah, first of all, I would say it was a huge advantage for me that after Tuesday I have two days off. I was resting Wednesday. Then I hit maybe 45 minutes on Thursday. Today I was feeling much better than previous days. I had my time. I was, like, recover.

That was a huge advantage that we kind of had this day off.

If I would say about Rybakina or Ostapenko, both are Grand Slam champions, both girls are super aggressive on court. I played both of them, yeah. For me, doesn't matter who's going to win because it's going to be so tough anyway, yeah.

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