

Internazionali BNL d'Italia

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Roma, Italia

Elena Rybakina

Press Conference



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THE MODERATOR: Welcome, Elena. Can you tell us your thoughts ahead of the tournament as defending champion.

ELENA RYBAKINA: Really happy to be back. It's nice to be here. Some improvements I saw on-site. Yeah, looking forward for this event.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. In terms of the turnaround and everything, how long did it take? Did you leave the racquets down at all or did you pick them right back up in terms of practice? How much have you been able to physically recover from a lot of matches from Stuttgart through Madrid?

ELENA RYBAKINA: Well, I didn't practice for, like, three, four days. Today I managed to hit a bit. Yeah, I think that's the way to keep on going because it's not easy with our schedule.

Q. Did you watch any of the Madrid final or when your other rivals are playing against each other, you'd rather not think about it?

ELENA RYBAKINA: If I what?

Q. If you watched the Madrid final at all.

ELENA RYBAKINA: I watched a little bit, yeah. Just the tiebreak.

Q. You haven't had much of a chance to defend titles because your first couple titles, there was COVID the next year, then Indian Wells this year you were injured. Are you particularly excited about getting the chance to defend this title?

ELENA RYBAKINA: Yes, I mean, I like playing. I want to keep on going. I think, Why not?

Q. The conditions are so different from Stuttgart to Madrid to Rome. How important are the little adjustments when it comes to two different

tournaments, even though ostensibly it's still clay?

ELENA RYBAKINA: Sorry, can you repeat the question?

Q. The conditions from Stuttgart being indoors, Madrid at altitude, now here in Rome, they're all so different. How important are the little adjustments in your preparation to prepare for this tournament?

ELENA RYBAKINA: Well, now we did big block of the preparation before. I feel like I played so much. Madrid, of course, the courts are different and everything is different. I feel like with today's practice, it was good feeling.

Q. You had another really exciting match against Iga a few weeks ago. I wanted to ask you what it's like playing against her in those close matches?

ELENA RYBAKINA: Against who?

Q. Iga.

ELENA RYBAKINA: I played against Aryna.

Q. A few weeks ago.

ELENA RYBAKINA: In Stuttgart?

Q. In Stuttgart, yeah.

ELENA RYBAKINA: I mean, she's a great player. It's not easy to play against her, of course. We had so many tough battles. I don't know. I feel like we played so many times, I mean, I know the tactic and everything what I have to do on the court, so...

It was very close match, so what can I say?

Q. She can be so hard to start once she wins consecutive games. Have you found a way to stay in the match when that happens against her?

ELENA RYBAKINA: I think so. It's constantly you got to say to yourself what you got to do, so on and so on.

Q. I don't know if you've seen the film Challengers.

ELENA RYBAKINA: Challengers?



... when all is said, we're done.®

Q. Yes. Have you seen the film? It doesn't really matter because there are junior champions, talking about whether to go to college. I know you received college offers but you wanted to go pro immediately. I wanted to ask what was important for you at that time? Why did you think that was a better path than college.

ELENA RYBAKINA: Why did I prefer tennis? I just like to play tennis.

Q. Not in college, though?

ELENA RYBAKINA: Well, it was a choice for me kind of to go, to study in America and everything, but I didn't really want to go. Yeah, I decided to try and keep on playing.

Q. Why didn't you want to go? Why was the pro lifestyle more attractive to you?

ELENA RYBAKINA: Well, I just didn't want to go far from home, yeah.

Q. How difficult is this stretch of the season, Madrid and Rome, these two-week tournaments? Do you sometimes feel these tournaments are too long under this new format?

ELENA RYBAKINA: Yeah, I would say it's long because it's kind of boring to stay also, like you do your routines, then it's becoming a bit boring to really stay too long in these tournaments. I don't know.

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