

Internazionali BNL d'Italia

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Roma, Italia

Elena Rybakina

Press Conference

An interview with:

ELENA RYBAKINA

THE MODERATOR: Elena, welcome. How do you feel to be back in Rome?

ELENA RYBAKINA: Feeling great. Really love this tournament. Very excited to start.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. How different is the transition from Madrid with the altitude to come here? What do you do to adjust back to normal conditions?

ELENA RYBAKINA: Yeah, the difference is big. The ball is not flying as much here. I feel like the court's a little bit soft so the balls are becoming heavier. You really need to be always behind the ball and try to hit with all your body.

The conditions are different, but I had time to practice. I still have couple more days. For now it's been okay, I would say (smiling).

Q. Of the titles you've won, four of them are on clay, a big percentage of your titles. You're great on this surface now. At what point did you feel this could be a great surface for you?

ELENA RYBAKINA: I always thought that actually hard is best surface for me than of course on the grass. When I started to play, my coach convinced me actually this is the best surface for you.

In the beginning, as a junior coming to professional, you never play on grass. After I started to feel comfortable on the grass, then I think the statistics and matches I played on grass is big difference compare all the other surfaces.

On clay I would say also I didn't have much confidence because I didn't play as much on clay, even as a junior. I think my first actually WTA tournament was clay. After that, I said, Okay, I can play on all the surfaces.



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Of course, clay and grass is a very short season for us. With the right preparation, you still can play really well on all of them, even if clay for me is a little bit too slow and I prefer a faster rally, shorter.

As the results show, I can play well on all the surfaces.

Q. Aryna Sabalenka was here earlier and says she thinks at some point players will boycott a Grand Slam over the demands for greater revenue share. Do you think you yourself would do that or can you see the players boycotting a slam to get what they want?

ELENA RYBAKINA: Well, it's a tough question because we had so many things in the past where players could come together and boycott, but it never happened. I honestly don't know. If the majority say we are boycotting, we are not playing, then of course I'm up for it. It's not an issue.

I feel like the improvement we need to have, it's not only on the Grand Slams and it's not only about raising the prize money. A lot of people are not aware that there is taxes which are big. You even make more prize money, but you giving it all to the taxes. It's a different topic.

It's tough to say about boycotting. As I said many years we had different issues. For now not once players really came together and did any changes.

Q. Have you been interested in this particular subject, prize money? Have you participated in it?

ELENA RYBAKINA: No, I'm not participating. No one came to me to talk about it, not from the WTA, not from the players council, not other players. It's not on my mind at all.

Q. The smash, the overhead, some players say it's an easy shot they should make 10 times out of 10. Others think it's a challenging and complicated shot. You're the best server in the game for me, but how do you feel about the smash?

ELENA RYBAKINA: I would say all the shots which look like from the side that they're easiest, they are the most hardest one because the balls which are without any speed, even the balls on top, you think that it's so easy to



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put it away.

At the end of the day if you come to the ball correctly, (indiscernible). It's not the balls coming with some speed and you're just putting the racquet back.

I would say all the shots look like from the side are easy, they're actually not.

Q. I want to know how do you feel physically right now? Obviously you had a great year so far. You are chasing the No. 1 ranking. You played many tournaments.

ELENA RYBAKINA: Well, I could say that I wish I would feel better because last week I would say I was struggling a lot with the allergies. Now it's getting better. We are trying with the team, we are adjusting all our practices. We need to really see day by day how I feel. Some days are better; some days are worse. The day when it's rain for me is the best right now.

We wanted to do much more physically to prepare for this tournament. I think we did a good job. Of course, there is a lot to always improve and do even better.

Q. Rome is home to one of the most iconic courts with the Pietrangeli. What do you think about it? Have you played on it? How does it feel?

ELENA RYBAKINA: Yeah, I played on Pietrangeli. It's an amazing court with beautiful statues around. It's amazing I think to watch for the fans and just walk around here. It's really nice.

I really enjoy it when I played on that court.

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