

Internazionali BNL d'Italia

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Roma, Italia

Elina Svitolina

Press Conference

E. SVITOLINA/C. Gauff

6-4, 6-7, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Elina, congratulations on your third title here in Rome. Can you start with how you were able to get it done today.

ELINA SVITOLINA: Definitely was an extremely tough battle. I'm very happy with the way I could handle my nerves, not only today but also throughout this tournament. I think the two weeks, it's been tough, but I'm very happy with the way I've been playing, the way my body been reacting on these tough matches.

Yeah, just very proud of the effort.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Considering all you've been through over the past eight years, does it feel like the most meaningful big title you've won?

ELINA SVITOLINA: I had different titles in different period of time. It's tough to say which one was the toughest. Every title had its own story.

This one is I think one of the toughest draws that I had in a tournament. The way that I've been playing I think is, yeah, I'm very proud of the way that I've been handling myself and handling the nerves and being consistent. I think it's important to throughout the year show good consistency. That's the way that I'm aiming to be. I'm happy that my season been like this from the beginning of this year.

Q. Given that your run to the final was incredibly tough, how confident are you now looking at Roland Garros coming up? Do you think you can push towards that and maybe win that, as well?

ELINA SVITOLINA: Well, I had already two times after winning here the same situation. Now, I mean, it's been eight years that it happened.



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Of course, gives me a lot of confidence. Gives me a good look at Roland Garros. But still I want to put my head down and to really work, prepare from the first round. There are really tough players. You cannot underestimate. You need to be ready for the first-round matches, big battles. Everybody's there to beat you. They have nothing to lose, so you have to expect tough matches.

For me it's just taking one match at a time and putting the best effort and giving myself a good chance to compete well.

Q. I was wondering if you already spoke with Gael about your game. What did he say about your speech? Obviously it will be a special Roland Garros for him. How can you make it more special?

ELINA SVITOLINA: Yeah, I spoke with him actually before the ceremony. He was just very happy, very proud of the effort. He knows how much it means to me to win here, to win my 20th title. I really wanted to before I finish my career get a round number, for me to get over this hurdle of 20 titles.

Yeah, I felt like he's very proud of the effort. He also been watching all the matches this week. After an early loss in Madrid, for sure it was not an easy kind of days for me. He always tells me that you love to play here in Rome, so just go for it. Yeah, I think he's very proud and happy the way I just handle myself on the court.

As you mentioned, for Roland Garros we still have couple of days to relax before the storm of the media and everything what comes with Roland Garros. It's going to be very, very busy, but in the same way I think very special for us as a family and of course for him personally because he been playing Roland Garros for so many years.

I think for him having a French crowd is something that he always dreamed when he was a little kid to play the big matches, to play together. They carry you through the matches. I think for the past years he experienced something amazing. He always remembers that.

I think for him will be a lot of nerves, but I think he already settled little bit down with it. Just going to enjoy and give it his best shot, the last one.

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Q. You are leaving Rome. What is your best remember of this tournament?

ELINA SVITOLINA: Well, besides winning the finals, I think it's partying afterwards (laughter). I remember we just talking with my coach because my coach was with me eight years ago when I won here twice. We both times went to party afterwards. It was like the one to remember, so we were talking about it (smiling).

But today I think will be with the team, good friends, I have a few friends here as well. We're just going to celebrate. We are now older people with a family, more boring, I guess (smiling).

Q. If someone would have told you when you were pregnant that you were coming back to win this title, come back to the top 10, would you have believed this person or not?

ELINA SVITOLINA: Well, I think I would sign for it, for sure. When I was coming back, for me was important just to give myself a good chance to play the highest level. I was never thinking about that I could come back. In a way it came later. I think it was by the stages. First I wanted to be back in top hundred because I was starting from zero, then it was top 30 to be seeded.

Then from last year I started to think, okay, my level I think is there. I need to be more consistent, more strong physically to be more consistent, then I can have a chance to go to top 10 because I was playing already good level.

Of course, you need to believe it to make it happen. Slowly, little by little, I was believing in it. Of course, very proud of the effort, very proud of also coming back from the surgery. I had a surgery two years ago, which was not easy. First one for me, too.

Yeah, I had some ups and downs with little stops here and there. Generally I'm just very proud of the way that I've been coming back and just giving it my everything to perform at the highest level.

Q. As you said, your run here has been pretty crazy, beating three top-four players in a row. Do you consider this the best version of Elina? Are you playing your best tennis?

ELINA SVITOLINA: Yeah, it's been a very tough, tough matches. I think the only one I remember was also tougher was in Toronto when I won it. I also played I think four top-10 players at that time.

Here I think taking into consideration that playing past

champions here as well how loves to play here: Rybakina, Swiatek. I think also Coco made a final here. She won Roland Garros. She's a great clay court player.

For me, of course it gives me a lot of confidence going into Roland Garros. Yeah, as I mentioned, I'm very proud of the effort, of the intensity that I've been able to put in to beat those players.

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