

BNP Paribas Open

Friday, October 8, 2021

Simona Halep

Press Conference



S. HALEP/M. Kostyuk

7-6, 6-1

THE MODERATOR: Can you talk me through your match today.

SIMONA HALEP: It's been a great match. I think the first set was a little bit tougher because I didn't play for long time before coming here, so I was a little bit nervous, but she played good tennis.

But the second set, it was much better. I felt much more confident.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. I wanted to ask you a question about the balls. Some of the boys are saying that the balls that are being used this year at Indian Wells are a bit heavier than they used to be. Since you girls play with slightly different balls, I wanted to have your opinion, considering that you have been a former champion and you have played this tournament a number of times.

SIMONA HALEP: Well, I feel the same. I didn't feel any difference between the balls during these years. They become a little bit bigger after few games, but it was also in the past. So, no, I feel they are the same.

Q. I wanted to congratulate you both on court and off court. Congratulations on the wedding as well as the win. Weddings are great, but they also take a lot of time and attention away. How were you able to refocus and get your head right back into this?

SIMONA HALEP: Well, my husband took care of the wedding, so I didn't move one finger for it. I just said that I want white flowers, so he knew what I like and he did everything. So thanks to him I didn't have to stress myself for the party. I just enjoyed it. Many people came, my family, my friends.

Yeah, I just, after two days, I went on the gym, so, yeah, I

was back very fast to do the training after the wedding.

Q. We are all here hoping to report on more wins for the new British star, Emma Raducanu. Obviously you could play her. I wonder how much of a connection you have got with her so far. Have you spent any time talking and would you like to play her?

SIMONA HALEP: We didn't talk much, but I just congratulated her for what she's done. It's amazing. The performance is huge. I'm really happy for her.

She's so young, and it's extraordinary what she has achieved already. Of course it's going to be a big challenge because she has a lot of confidence. She's kind of favorite for the next match if we play. I stayed so much this year with injuries, so I'm just trying to come back as much as possible and as good as possible.

But I'm happy that I will have the chance to play with US Open champion so fast in the next tournament after that Grand Slam. Yeah, I just want to be ready. And honestly, I will focus on myself like I do every match.

Q. I'm curious just how easy or difficult it was to lock in and focus on this tournament, obviously a big event. You spoke a little bit about the wedding, but also ending things with Darren, as well, a lot of kind of changes...

SIMONA HALEP: Turning 30, as well. Big change. (Laughter.)

Q. Yeah, just with all of that going on and swirling around you, how are you kind of approaching things right now?

SIMONA HALEP: It's not easy. Many things are happening in my life, actually happened already. Now I feel like more relaxed because everything is set. I know what I have to do. I know how the things are set.

The party, the wedding was great. I mean, I had a lot of fun. We danced a lot. Yeah, I enjoyed it maximum.

With Darren, yeah, it was not easy, but we have been together six years, great years, and he will be my friend forever. He's a great person. We still talking. It's nice to end one tennis relation in this way.

Yeah, I'm good. Of course it's not easy after so long time not having him anymore, but I still feel him there. So it's good.

Q. Do you have plans or are you looking forward in the offseason or for next year to bring on a new coach, or do you have a sense as to what that situation will look like for you going forward?

SIMONA HALEP: I have already. I have two Romanians coach. Daniel Dobre, who was with us before, and Adrian Marcu is with me now here. We worked together in 2013. So he knows me pretty well and I feel good with him, so we will stay like this.

Q. Just on Raducanu, obviously she's cited you has one of her big role models, and there has been that sweet photo of a young her with you. I was wondering what it's like to still kind of have a few years ahead of you in your career, about how people come onto the tour that see you as a role model, and also if you remember anything from when that photo was taken?

SIMONA HALEP: Well, I don't remember anything from that picture when was taken, but I saw it and I was really happy that we have this picture. She was very nice to send me that one on Instagram.

Actually, I feel old when these teenagers are coming and winning the Grand Slams, but we just have to admire them. It's amazing to be able to win at this age. I feel like at 18 you are so young and you are not actually ready for the big success, but they are and they have been. So I admire all the 18-years-old that are playing so well and winning so big tournaments.

Yeah, I wish her luck. She has to stay focused, because, yeah, many, many years ahead of tennis, so I'm sure that she will win more. But, yeah, will be a little bit tough when she feels the pressure, I think.

Q. Two parts. Will you change the way you go to the tournaments or travel, now that you're a married woman?

SIMONA HALEP: No. Craig, no (smiling).

Q. But in all seriousness, will it change your mindset at all being now a married lady? And just on the other side of things, as far as Killer is concerned, was it a

mutual decision between you?

SIMONA HALEP: Mutual decision between me and Darren?

Q. Yeah, to separate or part ways.

SIMONA HALEP: Yes, yes. We thought it's the right moment because we had like six years together. He always said that when it's too long is not healthy for the player and for the coach. So, yeah, it was together that we decided.

Q. Going back to the younger players, knowing yourself so well as you do now and all the experience you have, how do you think you might have handled early success as a teenager? Do you think that would have been a good thing for you or maybe not so good?

SIMONA HALEP: If I was not able to do it, so I think, yeah, it's tough to talk about that. I won my first Grand Slam late. I won tournaments before, but you cannot compare with the success of Grand Slam. I cannot really talk about that, but I feel like from my experience that you have to be extra focused after that big successes, because you are so young and you don't really have experience on winning titles, because I think was the first title for Emma, and was a Grand Slam.

So I think it's good also. It's a boost for you probably. But I cannot talk exactly what one player feels at that age to win such a big tournament. So I cannot say much. Sorry.

Q. Just on Darren, do you expect him to go back on the tour soon? If you played against somebody who he was coaching, would that feel weird? I know that happens to all players one way or another, but obviously you had an unusually long time together.

SIMONA HALEP: I will never be with Darren as opponents. Even if he will coach another player, for me will be the same. He's my friend and always will be.

But I will be happy to see him coaching again. I'm sure that he can do another player to touch their dream, yeah, her dream or his dream. I don't know what he's gonna coach. But I will be happy to see him back on tour, yes.

Q. So there was that kind of agreement that whatever happens, was that the agreement, that whatever happens he won't actually be helping somebody when they play you in the future?

SIMONA HALEP: No, there is not something like that, no (smiling).

