

BNP Paribas Open

Friday, March 11, 2022

Simona Halep

Press Conference



S. HALEP/K. Alexandrova

6-2, 4-6, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Could you talk us through the match today, how you felt on court.

SIMONA HALEP: Well, it's always tough to play the first match of the tournament. She's super difficult opponent. We played before. I knew that it's going to be a tough battle.

But I'm happy that I could win. It's important at this stage. Yeah, I take only the positives. It was a good match.

Q. Coming back over here where you've had such success in the past, do you have a different mindset when you come and play here?

SIMONA HALEP: Well, the most important thing I think is to take the great memories and to try to make the transition in the moment that you are here.

Yeah, I like to play here. I like the conditions. The wind is not easy. The rest I feel good. Yeah, I'm pretty confident when I come here every time.

But you never know at this level, so I'm just taking day by day and I'm trying just to reach the level that I've been before.

Q. Can you talk through your coaching setup and journey this year. I saw you were working at the Mouratoglou Academy?

ANDY MURRAY: Yes, I'm looking at Mouratoglou Academy. I've been there before coming here. I have a coach here and a hitting partner from the academy.

Q. How did you consider making that choice?

SIMONA HALEP: Actually Darren pushed me to go there because he respects Patrick a lot. He thought it's the best choice for me because it's close to my home. It was. It was a great week over there. I really enjoyed it. It's

amazing what he's done there. Many kids. The atmosphere was super, super nice.

Actually I've seen those kids that are dreaming to become professional tennis players. It was a nice vibe. I can say I took what I needed from there. It was important to go there.

Q. Close to your home in Romania or do you have a home in France?

SIMONA HALEP: No, close to Romania. It's two-hour flight. It's easy to go there.

Q. Can you talk a little bit more about Morgan, what it's been like? I guess you've worked with him for a couple weeks.

SIMONA HALEP: Yeah, one week actually (smiling). It's tough to say something. But he's a good guy. He knows tennis. He knows what he's doing. I'm trying, yeah, to know him better this period.

Q. When you start with someone like that at a tournament, is it basically continue going as you've been going, he's more observing you and he's thinking how he's going to coach you as time goes on?

SIMONA HALEP: Yeah, it's a lot of talking because we don't know each other. I like to keep my routine. Yeah, I've done this for many years. He adjusts himself to me. I'm listening when he has an opinion.

It's combined. I never had a coach younger than me. It's the first time (smiling).

Q. How does that change the dynamic when your coach is younger?

SIMONA HALEP: I always like to work with older coaches because of the experience and stuff like this. But, yeah, it's something new. It's interesting. I don't have problems right now.

I will see how it's going to be.



Q. Didn't you want to actually go back on tour without a coach, to do it on your own? If that was the case, what changed your mind?

SIMONA HALEP: Yeah, I wanted that and I did for two tournaments. But it's pretty difficult because it's not easy to adjust the practices that you have to do. Also before the matches, is difficult to be alone.

I really felt that it's more professional to have somebody with me. But those two tournaments were very good because I saw what I need, I saw where I am. Now it's really good that I've been to the academy and I got the feeling that I need a coach with me.

Of course, it's not easy because it's a new collaboration. We don't know how it's going to be. But it's good to have people that know tennis around myself.

Q. You talked about getting back to your top level. How close do you feel you are to that right now? If you're not quite there, what do you think it will take?

SIMONA HALEP: Honestly, I'm not that close, in my opinion. But I'm working hard to do that. I'm focused on some things. I just stick to the plan.

Of course, with matches, I need matches. Hopefully I can win one or two or more matches. I need that confidence. But physically I'm super good. I feel healthy, I feel in a good shape. So it's just a matter of time to come back to the level I had. I'm not stressing about that. I'm just doing as much as possible every day to get to that level.

Q. Obviously Darren has been your biggest coach during your professional career. Do you feel you still have some wisdom from a whole bunch of people you worked with, Wim, Darren?

SIMONA HALEP: I think with every player that you are working, you are learning something from them. Of course, I didn't have long relationships with the other coaches. Only with Darren. Definitely Darren was the most important person for my career.

But, yeah, as I said, I think everyone brought something to my game, to my personality. It was good. Everyone was good at that moment.

Q. Is there any more contact with Darren? You just said he gave you the suggestion or advice to go to the academy. Is there anything more than that sort of thing?

SIMONA HALEP: We are friends, very close friends, very close friends. We are talking. I respect him a lot. He respects me a lot. It's very nice collaboration, friendship more than collaboration. Yeah, you never know what future brings. Yeah, I'm happy with him.

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