

# BNP Paribas Open

Monday, March 14, 2022

## Elena Rybakina

Press Conference



E. RYBAKINA/V. Azarenka

6-3, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Talk to us about your match.

ELENA RYBAKINA: It was tough match, but really happy that I won today.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Through your first matches here at Indian Wells, what do you think you've been particularly happy with? What do you think the key has been for you to make the round of 16?**

ELENA RYBAKINA: First match I played against Alison, it was very tough. It was a good match. I was serving a bit worse than today. Today my serve was really, really good. It helped me a lot.

We had great rallies with Alison, so it was tough match. Today probably it was more tough psychologically than physically like the first match.

**Q. Because of the dry air, slower court, can be tricky for people who like to hit the ball big. What is the key for you controlling the ball and playing well here?**

ELENA RYBAKINA: Yeah, it's true. It's very difficult conditions. You cannot get free points. You have to rally more.

For me it's just more attention on the serve. Even though here it's slow, you can still place the ball well and open an opportunity to hit the winners or just be aggressive in the point.

Of course it's not easy physically, especially for me now because I'm just coming from COVID. We see just how it goes next match.

**Q. You said it was psychologically tough. What do you do to keep focused and get such a decisive score?**

ELENA RYBAKINA: Yeah, it was tricky moment. I would say rules are probably not for everybody because it was very strange situation. I just hope everything is good with Vika because I don't know what happened. Hope everything is okay.

Yeah, was just trying to focus every point, don't look at her, what happening. I mean, I don't know what's happening anyway. I just can see that we continue playing and she continues, like, fighting.

I was just trying to focus on myself, on my serve, return, keep on playing the way I played first set.

**Q. Would you have wanted a loss of first serve for time violation? Is that what you were talking to the umpire about?**

ELENA RYBAKINA: Yeah, of course, because no one understood what happened. If she would call physio or doctor, it's one thing. But we stop for couple of minutes, then we continue to play. I guess the rules are not like this. You have to give warning or something.

I'm not saying I want something back for her, but it's just the rules. Also hitting the ball out of the stands, I just know what happens if I do it. I know what's happening with other people. I just don't understand these things. It's not like it's happening first time.

So, yeah, with these things it should be better I think. It should be improvement in this case. Yeah, it just happening a lot now, I would say.

**Q. You must be pretty pleased with yourself that you could block it out?**

ELENA RYBAKINA: Yeah, it's true. I was happy to manage the situation. It's also at some point good that it happen because it's a lesson for me, good experience. Everything what's happening in situation like this, it's good to improve.

**Q. You have Golubic next. What do you expect from that?**

ELENA RYBAKINA: For sure tough match. I have to focus on my serve because it's really a big weapon for me. Be physically ready, be patient. Here the conditions are slow. Rally might be longer than you expect.

So, yeah, just be patient and try to fight and focus for every point.

**Q. You started the season very well in Adelaide. Whatever happened after that, Australian Open, February, was that all COVID related or bad luck?**

ELENA RYBAKINA: No, it was really unlucky for me because first week of the season I started really good. I was, like, thinking that yeah now I'm getting better and better with a lot of matches.

Before Australian Open I felt a bit my leg so decided not to push, not to get injured before Australian Open. Then in the first round in Australia, I had problems with the feet. It was really bad for me. It took me maybe three weeks to feel better and start practicing fully.

I had to retire in Australian Open. Two weeks I couldn't practice. One week I didn't practice at all. Second week we were trying to do fitness, without running or nothing because I couldn't walk. It was really bad.

In St. Petersburg I was, again, happy that finally I can move and can play matches. I played one round. At night I felt really bad. I didn't expect that COVID is going to be that hard for me. It was really, really tough. In one week I think I lost four kilos. I had high fever. I really didn't expect. I thought it's going to be easier.

I think I rushed too much to play in Doha. I was still very weak. But I had this feeling that I'm not maybe feeling the greatest, but at least I can move, I can walk. I just wanted to try to push and play. I think I rushed.

Here is the first tournament I can say, yes, after corona I'm feeling much better. I'm not coughing. Maybe physically, as I said, I didn't have good preparation, didn't practice much, but at least I'm very happy that now I can play.

No matter if the shot is good, it's not good, I'm just happy that now I'm moving, I'm not in the bed. It's just keep on working.

**Q. Was it the bottom of your foot?**

ELENA RYBAKINA: Yeah.

**Q. Plantar fasciitis?**

ELENA RYBAKINA: Yes. I'm struggling with this. In Australia it was mostly the blisters. It was on the both feet. It was, like, really, really open deep and big. Like I really couldn't walk after few days. Very unlucky this thing.

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