

BNP Paribas Open

Wednesday, March 16, 2022

Simona Halep

Press Conference



S. HALEP/P. Martic

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THE MODERATOR: Do you want to talk about the match tonight.

SIMONA HALEP: Yeah, it was a good match. I think, yeah, probably the best match of this year. I felt super well. I felt confident. I've been aggressive. Everything I had to do I did, and it was pretty good.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. At what point did you feel that this is going to be one of your best matches?

SIMONA HALEP: Well, I don't have a point. I felt since I stepped on the court that I'm feeling good. I have confidence in my game. I knew how to play against her because we played few times.

Yeah, everything went super well for me and I'm really pleased with the way I've been on court.

Q. First 1000 semifinal in a little bit. How does it feel for you to get to this stage of the tournament? What do you think it means about where your game is?

SIMONA HALEP: It means a lot. It feels very good. Gives me confidence. Gives me the boost that I still can play this level. It's been a tough year, as you know. Now coming into this tournament and playing well means a lot.

I will take all the positives and I will just build my confidence more and more. Yeah, looking forward for the next one. Won't be easy, but I'm just happy to be here in this place. It's the only place that I want to be.

Q. We haven't gotten to the clay season yet, you've made three semifinals. You made three semifinals in all of last year. Before the tournament you said you felt your level was still far off. Does this result close that gap?

SIMONA HALEP: Yeah, it closes because I feel day by day much better. I feel more confident. I feel that my game is coming back to the level that I've been probably the best version of myself a few years ago.

Last year I didn't play many tournaments, so it's tough to compare. But, yeah, slowly I'm getting there. Actually I'm working hard. I did work very well in the off-season. Now I can see the results of that work that I've done.

Q. On a scale of 1 to 10 where 10 is the best, where would you place yourself at the moment?

SIMONA HALEP: You know I don't like to count on those numbers.

I just feel great. I'm close to what I've been in the past. I feel that today was the perfect way to play. I stayed close to the baseline. I've been aggressive. These matches give me a lot of confidence and shows me that I can stay aggressive with anyone.

Q. When you look ahead to the next match, the way it's going, what are your thoughts?

SIMONA HALEP: It's going to be a little more difficult. She's very solid. She's constant. It will be a tough battle. We played only on clay I think. Once in Melbourne. But it's a new day, a new match. I'm expecting a tough one.

Q. The way the conditions are here, slow court, fast air, who do you think that favors?

SIMONA HALEP: I think who adjusts herself to these conditions has a big plus. I always played well here, so I like these conditions. If you get the rhythm, I think everyone can play good tennis here. The air helps a lot. You have extra power when you hit.

Q. The rules are changing in the final set when it's tied. I remember very well your match with Lauren Davis in Australia. What do you think about the rule change? Is any part of you sad there will never be a match like that again?

SIMONA HALEP: It's okay. We don't need three hours and a half matches. It's a good rule (smiling). I take it. Hopefully I don't play that much.

Q. Are you excited about the change?

SIMONA HALEP: I'm excited, yes. I was not looking forward to play in four hours in Melbourne again.

Q. It was fun to watch.

SIMONA HALEP: For you, yes (laughter).

Q. Darren posted an Instagram talking about his burnout from some of the travel. Is there something those of us on the outside don't understand how tricky it has been the last two years mentally to play tennis?

SIMONA HALEP: That was the most difficult thing, to travel and to stay in a bubble at the tournaments. He was in the most difficult situation because he had to quarantine so much. I don't know how he actually handled it. I don't even want to imagine to stay 14 days in a room without a window that you can open, without fresh air.

I think it was super tough for him. I felt last year that he was struggling with that. I saw him in Australia this year. I told him he needs rest. He didn't listen.

I'm sure he's strong enough to come back. But he needs for sure time with family, just to enjoy life. He has a great life.

Yeah, I read the message. I felt sad because he feels this. But he's a good man, he's a good person. I'm sure that he's going to be all right soon.

Q. Darren did it five times last year, the quarantine.

SIMONA HALEP: Don't even mention because I get panicky.

Q. Also \$3,000 every time. During the year did he at all mention it to you?

SIMONA HALEP: No. He was super strong. He didn't talk about it. Probably he didn't feel it, honestly. He tried to play it like good and easy. But he also avoided a lot. He tried to stay safe with the COVID, not to take it. I took it first. I was more relaxed than him.

Actually the last 28 days after US Open, I think they filled the glass. I think he struggled that moment. It's normal. I think everyone who did something like this, it's tough to handle. I feel sorry for him. I'm sure he's strong enough.

Q. What is Iga going to be like in terms of a battle?

SIMONA HALEP: Tough, tough match because she's playing the best tennis of her life. She's in the best moment. I expect a really tough one. But I'm here in the semifinal, so I will take that. I will just try my best next one.

Q. Have you been watching her?

SIMONA HALEP: Here? No.

Q. In Doha or wherever?

SIMONA HALEP: No. I don't really watch tennis. Just enjoying. I'm not taking notes. But I know that she's very solid and very strong.

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