

BNP Paribas Open

Friday, March 18, 2022

Iga Swiatek

Press Conference



I. SWIATEK/S. Halep

7-5, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Iga, congrats on the win. Can you talk about the match today?

IGA SWIATEK: Yeah, I mean it was really intense. I think really physical, because I think we had like the longest rallies I played here. At the beginning I had to adjust a little bit to the new rhythm because Simona was for sure playing good than my opponents in previous rounds and I'm pretty proud that I did that. Mentally, I was pretty strong.

Q. Considering the opposition you had today, even though you had a match earlier in the week of 6-0, 6-1, considering the opposition you had today, was this your best match of the tournament?

IGA SWIATEK: I mean, it's hard to say. Well, it was the toughest one, like even though I was losing first set sometimes I still felt like I have a little bit more control over how the match is going.

Today I had to come back from some breaks as well, so I think like mentally it was the toughest one and sometimes also coming back in that tiebreaker, yeah, I mean, it cost me a lot of energy, for sure, but I don't know if like tennis-wise it's the best one for sure.

I think I would say it was the most like exciting one and probably if I was a watching it would be like the, yeah, the most exciting one.

Q. You said in your on-court interview that this was the first time when you played Simona like you felt like you were the favorite or you're supposed to win. Just wondering where that sort of feeling comes from, is it just the rankings and how do you manage that sort of different sort of pressure?

IGA SWIATEK: You know, even when we were playing on Australian Open, it was after I won Roland Garros, I still felt like I'm the underdog, you know. So that was my second tournament after winning the Grand Slam, so basically I

still didn't feel like I'm like settled into the, I don't know, top 10 or something or top 20.

But right now it's a little bit different and I feel like I have much more experience that I can use. But also on the other hand with that comes expectations a little bit. So, yeah, I felt like I'm not the underdog any more and I want to show something else and show what I learned.

So that was like different mindset that I had, I don't know if it was like easier to deal with it or not. Honestly, I think it was a little bit harder, but I also have to get used to not being underdog.

I just felt like a huge difference because players like Simona or Angie or Caroline who I played in Toronto, I mean, I always felt like I have nothing to lose, but this time it was a little bit different. I still have nothing to lose, but it's pretty hard to remember that all the time, you know.

Q. Since you've been playing a little bit differently this year with more aggression in your game it seems like you really have a lot of freedom. Just wondered, does it make you happier to play this way?

IGA SWIATEK: Yes, for sure. I mean, the matches I win more, so for sure that makes me happy and sometimes the matches are a little bit easier than it would be if I would back out in some moments. I'm pretty glad that I'm also good at balancing the aggression, the control, you know, because that's I think that's the most important thing in tennis because really we are super strong and we can hit really hard, but we got to choose the right moments. And earlier I didn't feel like I was choosing the right moments, but I think it also comes with a little bit of experience. So, yeah, it feels better and it feels like I have more options and more skills.

Q. Looks like you got some battle wounds there. Are you okay from that fall and did you even notice in the heat of the moment it?

IGA SWIATEK: I did, because it did, like it's not happening really often, but honestly it felt like the old times, because when I was younger I was falling on every practice,



basically. I don't even know why, but I remember even like one person who is like observing my practices when I was like, I don't know, 12 or 14, he made some comments that, Hey, why are you always on the ground, you know?

But yeah, I mean, I don't care, really. I had so much adrenaline that I didn't even feel it. So it's not like a huge thing, you know. There are sports where you can get really hurt, but this is just skin.

Q. How does this setting aside the format that this tournament takes place over two weeks kind of and Doha takes place over one, how different do these two tournaments feel and/or felt, I guess I should say?

IGA SWIATEK: That's a great question. I mean, for sure in Doha I felt like physically more tired after these matches and I don't know, it was harder to recover, for sure.

But on the other hand it was so nice to have rhythm and doing the same stuff every day. For sure I was tired at the end, but I mean, every girl is going to be when we played like few matches in a row.

This time I feel like mentally it's harder to, I don't know, stay really composed and stay focused, but on the other hand also relax and, you know, forget about tennis for some time.

So this tournament I would say mentally are harder, the longer ones, you know. But physically it's nice that we have time to recover. Especially when we're played in the heat, you know.

Q. Could you take a moment and just talk about the challenges that Maria Sakkari might have and the challenges that Paula might have and also have you finished The Great Gatsby and what are your final thoughts about that?

IGA SWIATEK: I finished. I mean, it was pretty easy to finish, because it took like few hours to read it, honestly.

I was hoping for something longer, but I mean, it was like easy to read, I would say.

There wasn't like much depth to all the stuff that is going on. But on the other hand when I read like that it's like describing the Americans after the war and the confusion they have and, I mean, it made sense, but honestly, if I wouldn't read like that description and I don't know the opinions on the internet I wouldn't even thought of it.

I mean, I read better books (laughing) but it's a classic, so I don't want to say anything bad. But it was interesting, it

was easy to read and it was fun.

But I don't know if the ending surprised me or not. But still we don't know a lot about him, right? The Gatsby? So that's the nicest part, that it was all a mystery.

I forgot your first question.

Q. Paula and Maria.

IGA SWIATEK: Okay, that's probably more important question if we're in a tennis tournament. But, I mean, I don't know what changes are they going to have because I can only speak of myself and I don't know my challenges, because honestly I don't know, I don't know how to answer that, because I don't know what they feel.

Q. What challenges do their games bring to you?

IGA SWIATEK: Oh, okay. Well Paula for sure plays really fast ball and she's pretty confident here and I feel like she understands the court pretty well.

And Maria, matches against her are always really physical. And I don't know how I'm going to use the experiences that I had in Doha against her in these conditions because it's pretty different.

But, honestly, I tried not to think about that because still we don't know who is going to win and I have one day off, so I'm going to try to just relax, because we need to rest.

Q. Days ago you said that changing your coach is one of the biggest decisions that you made and I read some of your interview where you said that you prefer having a Polish coach and you speak fluent English and you travel many countries, so why do you still prefer to have Polish?

IGA SWIATEK: Well, that's a hard question, because it's not like obvious for me. I was just thinking that it may be easier to communicate. And my whole team is from Poland so it's pretty convenient and there are no like cultural differences. He also knows what happened after Roland Garros and he understands the hype that was there, because, I don't know if, I mean it was pretty big in Poland, but I don't know if people from other countries really felt that hype. And I think it's easier for him to understand my situation, because of that.

I think for having a coach from a different country, I mean, I think maybe I got to get older for that and like have more experience.

But I don't want to like change coaches, honestly, so I hope

it's going to work out with Tomasz for years. Yeah, but I guess I'm still pretty young, so I wanted to have like whole team from Poland.

Q. After your match against Angie Kerber you said she surprised you with some of her tactics that were different from how you seen her play before. I wonder if Simona Halep switched anything up on you, anything surprising, having played her a few times?

IGA SWIATEK: Honestly, no, but still even though I wasn't surprised, it was pretty hard at the beginning to get used to the rhythm that she played. Because she played much slower.

And I played with Clara Tauson, with Madison, with Angie, who was, who wasn't playing that fast, but also she hits sometimes pretty flat. So I need to kind of switch and really go forward for that ball because it didn't have much energy.

But I knew that, but still, when I was out there it was pretty hard to change that.

Honestly, it didn't surprise me, but her game, it doesn't have to be surprising, she's like fighting for everything and she's running and she's like reaching every ball and she can play really good angles. So I knew it was going to be hard anyway, even if it doesn't surprise me at all.

Q. If you look back to Rome, that was your first WTA 1000 final. Now this is obviously your third. How does, does it feel different, like when you won the semifinal in Rome and you were going to go play the final, were you like so excited, I made a big final, you seem very composed right now.

IGA SWIATEK: I don't remember, honestly, what I felt. Well, for sure, I don't know, this one feels different because I have kind of a streak and honestly like I feel in Rome I was like more fresh. How was I in Rome? I already forgot. Was I stressed? But I tend to forget how I felt, you know, so that's why I have her.

Well, I don't remember, sorry. Honestly, I don't remember.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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