

BNP Paribas Open

Sunday, March 20, 2022

Iga Swiatek

Press Conference



I. SWIATEK/M. Sakkari

6-4, 6-1

THE MODERATOR: Iga, talk about your match today.

IGA SWIATEK: Okay. I'm ready for it. Oh, okay (laughter).

Well, these questions are always the hardest ones.

Well, I don't know what to start with, honestly. It was a different match, for sure, because of the conditions. That was the first time I played with such a wind here. I was really lucky at the beginning of the tournament that my matches were scheduled without the wind, actually.

For sure you could see that we are, at the beginning, a little bit stressed, and the wind is also not helping. But I'm pretty glad that I played better and better every game, and I managed to somehow find little bit of balance even in these conditions.

At the end, for sure, my main goal was to just play in. It was pretty hard to actually play the tactics that I wanted because of the conditions. But I wanted just to stay consistent and really solid because that's the most important thing when the ball is going, you know, in weird directions.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. You've had some big titles now. This is right after the Grand Slams, in a lot of people's minds, Indian Wells. What does it mean to you?

IGA SWIATEK: A lot, for sure. At the beginning of the tournament, I wouldn't even think about winning, honestly. Of course you have to believe in yourself, but I'm a realistic person, so...

Yeah, for sure, especially winning after playing so well in Doha is giving me a lot of confidence and kind of belief that I can do it because, I don't know. I wouldn't think of myself as someone who's ready to play two tournaments in a row

and win it.

For sure hard work is paying off. Yeah, I mean, I felt for the couple of days the pressure on my shoulders a little bit more because of the stage of the tournament, and obviously how big is it. As you're saying, it's the biggest tournament after Grand Slams.

Yeah, last couple of days have been really stressful for me. That's another reason why I'm proud of myself that I made it.

Q. You talked about building a cool rivalry with Maria. Talk about what makes that matchup so special.

IGA SWIATEK: Well, I think we kind of -- we are, like, stepping a similar path, looking at rankings and looking at what we've been playing for the last couple of years.

Well, me, Paula Badosa, Anett and Ons Jabeur, I don't want to forget anybody, but I think we kind of started playing, I don't know, top 10 tennis at the same time.

I think it's going to be a great rivalry because I think we're going to stay here, honestly. We can show consistency and actually play these big matches against each other. That's all.

Q. The No. 2 ranking now, and you've equaled Aga as the highest-ranked Polish players. Did that come into your mind at all during the match? How are you feeling about something like that?

IGA SWIATEK: Honestly, it did, just like for like two seconds. It's always the case that you have to kind of push these thoughts aside. On one hand, you have to kind of fight for it because you don't want them to distract you, but on the other hand, you have to accept them and not stay focused on that.

For sure before the match I heard when I was preparing on TV something. I got the volume down because I didn't want it to distract myself. For sure my main goal today was to just be focused on tennis and actually continue what I was doing for the whole week.



But, yeah, it came to my mind. Probably in the final and in those important matches, it's the hardest thing to do, to push it aside a little bit for a while and just focus on playing.

Yeah, it's really important because I wouldn't be so focused if I was thinking about that.

Q. What does it mean to you?

IGA SWIATEK: I don't know yet (smiling). I mean, it's pretty surreal for now. I have to look at it and I have to check the rankings by myself and, I don't know, just see it.

Right now it's too surreal to describe it, honestly. But for sure I want to go higher because I feel like getting the No. 1 is closer and closer.

For sure, Ash is one of the players that I want to look at. I don't know. It's going to be a pretty cool experience to actually compete against her because I think she's, like, one of the most complete players on tour. She has shown her mental strength. I think it's going to be really exciting.

Q. You're a fighter like Rafa. When you're seeing him battling out here, do you find yourself pulling for him a bit?

IGA SWIATEK: That's the nicest thing you can say about my tennis, so really, thank you. I'm trying to be a fighter, for sure. He's an example for that.

This Australian Open final that I watched on the stands was really inspiring. I got a lot from it.

Q. How did the conditions on the court affect the play today?

IGA SWIATEK: A lot. I actually think I kind of had to win ugly because I felt like sometimes the ball is not going the direction I want. It was pretty hard to play with precision today.

Honestly, I mean, you always want to see the best final that's possible, but in these conditions it was pretty hard to, as I said, play tactically as I wanted, so on the end I was just focusing on playing in.

Q. What becomes the wind plan? What's Plan B?

IGA SWIATEK: I mean, still I don't think I'm the person that actually knows a lot about playing in wind. It's still I think that I want to improve. I was actually talking with my coach about that after the match.

I don't know, you just have to, I don't know, not play so many angles, play a little bit more to the middle. The girl who is going to be taking more risk, she's going to miss a little bit more. For sure you want to be aggressive, not like push the ball. But I also wanted to adjust to what Maria was doing, and I think I did that pretty well in the second set. I wasn't taking too much risk.

Q. Having won Doha, and then now winning here, consistency is something you're still getting your mind around, but that's pretty consistent. 20-3 on the season and 11-match winning streak. Are you mentally leveling up to where, I'm not saying that this is what you expect from yourself, but that it's now not foreign territory for you to play this consistently?

IGA SWIATEK: For sure, but on the other hand, that's the first time I'm in a position where I won two tournaments in a row, so it's all new.

I think it's getting easier for me to just focus on playing and not think about the stats. For sure it's giving me a lot of confidence. Today I'm going to be thinking about that because I can, and I can enjoy and celebrate.

But still, when I'm going to be playing in Miami, I need to be, like, a hundred percent focused on the match. Every tournament is a different story. Even though we are showing the consistency, the players that I mentioned for sure, still any girl can win any WTA tournament.

Yeah, I'm still going to be just heading forward.

Q. Unfortunately the trophy is not here, but that is maybe the heaviest trophy.

IGA SWIATEK: That's true.

Q. Many former champions had a tough time to lift it up.

IGA SWIATEK: Yeah, that's pretty funny.

Q. It seems like it doesn't matter to you? Can you talk about the feeling of lifting it up.

IGA SWIATEK: For the first time I'm pretty happy that I'm taking a replica home because I wouldn't be able to really travel with it for half of the world, honestly.

But I love it because it's really elegant. I'm sure the designers put a lot of work to design it. I don't know, actually. Has it always been like that?

Q. Yes.

have been so crazy. I don't know.

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IGA SWIATEK: Yeah, I mean, I love it. It's nice. It's classy. For sure it's heavy, but it's worth to use your biceps to hold it because it's an amazing trophy. I think it symbolizes the place we are in, so...

Q. You talk about anybody being able to win a tournament now on the WTA Tour. Do you feel like the game is just rising up as a whole, that there's so many powerful, aggressive players out there?

IGA SWIATEK: Well, actually, I was talking with my coach about that. I asked him how it was few years ago when players like Kerber, Wozniacki, Serena, of course, and Aga were on the top, and it seemed much harder for the players that had lower ranking to go up and play against them. Right now it's a little bit different.

Actually, I don't know what next years are going to show us because maybe we are the players that are going to be consistent and are going to, like, build this top five or top 10 on a really strong foundation.

But I don't know. For sure last couple years, I mean, you can see by the results that it's pretty unpredictable.

But I think it was easier for me because of that to come up, but I want to stay here and be that player who is consistent.

It's pretty harder for me to look at the wider perspective and also historically see what's been going on on the WTA because I wasn't, like, studying that. I'm just focusing on myself and what I want to achieve. For sure consistency is one of the things.

Q. Maria was talking about that group of five, that you are in the top 10, some separating from the rest of the pack. Why do you think that is? Do you agree with her?

IGA SWIATEK: Yes, I agree for sure. As I said, I don't know like what's the reason. The reason is that we're playing well, obviously, we're putting hard work.

Like, statistically I don't know why for couple of years we've been having such a weird results. On the other hand you can also say that me winning a Grand Slam as a first title in WTA is also pretty crazy.

As I said, I'm pretty happy that I had the chance to come up. But I think we are the players that are going to build that foundation and actually be consistent.

But I don't know why it's like that and why these past years

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®