

BNP Paribas Open

Thursday, March 12, 2026

Elena Rybakina

Press Conference



E. RYBAKINA/J. Pegula

6-1, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations. Into the semifinals. What were you most pleased about in your game today?

ELENA RYBAKINA: Yeah, happy that I managed to come back in the second set and win it in straight sets. It was a tough match.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Well done today. Seemed like a pretty tight second set. Jess played pretty well, and it was pretty high quality. What are your thoughts about how were you able to turn it around from a break down?

ELENA RYBAKINA: Yeah, I think quality of the match was good. I started pretty well, very aggressive, and the serve was working today.

In the second set, of course Jessica, she's a tough player. I felt that I played a little bit passive. She took the opportunity, got the lead.

Yeah, after, it was a fight for each game, a lot of close rallies. Yeah, was just trying to fight and find a way. In the end, everything worked out.

Q. The scoreline looks quite similar to what happened in Australia. Do you think that that kind of experience helps you in terms of, like, confidence?

ELENA RYBAKINA: I didn't really think that it's very similar, because the conditions are different. Of course Jessica, she's a fighter, and she needed some time to also find the rhythm and get used to my fast balls. Again, it was matter of just couple of points, and then it went quickly other way.

So I think, yeah, it's just tough opponent, and I didn't keep the intensity as high as it was in the first set. Of course, after, it got very tight one.

Q. Pretty warm this weekend. It's going to be warm for the next couple days. I just wonder how you feel about the way it feels out there with the heat? Is it good for your game?

ELENA RYBAKINA: Well, in the heat, the ball is flying more, which I prefer. But honestly, when I warmed up today, it was full sun and it wasn't that nice. And we were lucky that when we stepped on the court it was full shade.

Yeah, it was a bit tricky. I played some matches on the sun, some in the evening. Tomorrow is going to be again evening match, which I'm happy.

Yeah, we will see how it's gonna go, but definitely now it's a bit hot, and it's not easy in these conditions.

Q. I think in Qatar you said that you are trying to use, like, slow balls mixed up more, different kind of shots, because it's useful in slower condition. Even that time, you mentioned that Indian Wells, that kind of ability would help you to play good in Indian Wells. So do you think it worked out or it's working out here?

ELENA RYBAKINA: Yeah, it's very similar conditions in terms of it's really slow. But I feel like here, the ball is flying through the air quicker. Sometimes it doesn't stop as much as it was stopping like in Doha.

But I knew that it's gonna be slow. I knew that especially if it's night matches, then the ball is not flying as much as during the day.

So I was trying to adjust, and knowing the conditions, of course, I change a little bit the tactic or preparation for the match. But overall, I think we'll know how it is here. It's not easy to predict, and you need to be ready for everything.

Q. Talk about facing Elina next. The first time you met was six years ago, and the last time you played was last year. I'm curious to know, because we all talk about the fact that she's a more aggressive player now than she was back then, did you feel the same way about that? Do you think she's a lot different player than she used to to be?

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ELENA RYBAKINA: Yeah, definitely I felt when she came back that she's playing more aggressive and she's trying to really step in on some shots, put pressure, and I think she's a dangerous opponent. She reads the game well.

I will try to focus on my serve, because it's a weapon, and I really need to use it well, and then of course try to fight and find a way so hopefully I can win this match.

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