

# WTA Finals

Saturday, October 29, 2022

Fort Worth, Texas

## Iga Swiatek

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Talk about being in Fort Worth.

IGA SWIATEK: I'm happy that I was able to qualify so early and just have more peace going into the tournament. So I'm happy.

**Q. Talk to us about yesterday. What was that whole night like? I know it's your second time around, but what was it like just getting ready with the girls and being here in Texas, somewhere different?**

IGA SWIATEK: It was great. For sure we expected a different setup, but the weather changed the plans. So I think the photo was pretty amazing, really powerful I feel. So I'm happy that it went well.

Yeah, the preparations were stressful (laughing), as always, but I'm happy that I found a nice outfit. I felt really, really good.

So, yeah, it's also nice to see other players in different setups. It's just you can feel the atmosphere of the tournament, and it's totally different, and we can all celebrate that. So that's great.

**Q. You mentioned wanting to be here. You made it last year. Now having it be one of your goals, what significance does it have for you to be at an event that unlike most tournaments, this is a very small field for just the very top players in the rankings.**

IGA SWIATEK: Well, tennis-wise it's a different event that I don't have much experience at because I only played last year. So, for sure, you have to be ready from the beginning. I want to see how it's going to go for me because still, you know, I feel like I'm learning.

So, yeah, it's just really important. I feel like it's the next most important tournament to Grand Slams, so it was my goal to get here.

**Q. You've been here, of course, but half the field hasn't. It's a lot of new faces for this event. What, if anything, do you think that says about the state of the**

**game right now?**

IGA SWIATEK: You mean that the other players haven't played WTA Finals?

**Q. Yes.**

IGA SWIATEK: I don't know. It really depends on how they are going to approach the tournament. So I can't really control that. I don't know how it's going to go, but I feel, yeah, it's just a different system.

On one hand, you have to be ready from the beginning because you're not going to have these matches against players who are lower ranked, and you can kind of get into the rhythm during these matches. Now you have to, yeah, just, I don't know, be at a better level from the beginning. On the other hand, you can also lose a match and still be in the tournament.

So, yeah, for me, when I look back at last year, which was my first WTA Finals, it didn't really matter. All that mattered was how I felt on court. The altitude didn't help. So my main focus was on that.

I don't really know how it is to play WTA Finals without focusing on this kind of stuff, you know?

**Q. Sorry, I didn't explain myself well. I meant just the idea that half the field is new faces. Instead of having players who we're used to seeing at this event, four out of the eight have never been here before. That's a pretty unusually high number. It was also a high number last year. If that says anything about the state of the tour and where things are that you have a lot of new players that are able to get into that top eight...**

IGA SWIATEK: Last year it was the same, right?

**Q. Yeah.**

IGA SWIATEK: Because Maria played first time. Paola as well. Aryna, not sure. Annet.

I don't know. I feel like it's not... (laughing). I feel like it's



normal. We see those faces on every tournament, so it is not like they're new faces for me.

**Q. Iga, we've seen sometimes someone succeeding so much and hitting many goals, they're not always able to maintain the drive. But for you, it seems that you have plenty of drive. And I'm curious, have you always been this way, and are you putting any extra effort and work with Daria or with your coach into finding a way to stay that driven? Does it come naturally to you, or do you feel you're next level now when it comes to the drive?**

IGA SWIATEK: Well, I feel like I also accepted that I don't have to feel - I don't know - always 100% motivated. You know, sometimes especially after Grand Slams when you are playing these smaller tournaments, you feel the energy level is a little bit lower. But on the other hand, when I'm going on court, it's still the same, and I always want to win. I'm basing my motivation on that.

And even when I don't feel like - I don't know - I want to compete, I want to win. I know that when I'm going to be on court, it's going to be the same.

So I wouldn't say the motivation level is going like that. But even when it's going a little bit down, it's enough for me to perform my best. It's okay sometimes to not be so pumped, you know?

**Q. (No microphone.)**

IGA SWIATEK: No, I mean, I had times where I wasn't that motivated. I don't know. Grass court season is always the time where I'm more confused than motivated.

Yeah, but mostly I feel like when I'm going on court I feel the same kind of emotions and the same adrenaline, so yeah.

**Q. Just what has the preparation been like? I know you kind of planned what it was going to be like after San Diego going into getting here. So did it play out the way you guys had planned, and how are you feeling leaving Florida headed this way game-wise, physically, mentally?**

IGA SWIATEK: I feel like the conditions were totally different, and right now I need to adjust to the ball basically again because we play with US Open Regular Duty. I have to just put more energy in that and in controlling the ball.

In San Diego I felt so comfortable with the Dunlop ball that we played with, that I didn't really have to think about that.

But the preparation went well. I mean, we did everything we planned. I was able to recover. I felt really sore after these two tournaments. I feel more fresh right now, and that's all that matters because I'm able to give my all during matches.

Yeah, I mean, at this part of the season I'm not practicing too much, so I'm happy about that (laughing). I have more free time, and I'm enjoying that, yeah.

**Q. I wanted ask you for your impressions of Coco Gauff. You've played her four times, I believe, overall. What strikes you about her on the court and away from the court?**

IGA SWIATEK: I feel off court that she's really humble. I'm happy about that because I know that from a young age kind of all eyes were on her. I'm happy she's coping with that well. That's what I see, you know? She seems to have really good people around her, so, yeah.

And on court I feel like sometimes I've been really dominating in matches against her. But for sure on Roland Garros, you could see her level. This final was I think in second set it was really tight, right?

Yeah, she is really tall. She has a good reach. But she's moving really, really well, and she's kind of flexible, you know.

Yeah, she has variety. She can go to the net. When I was her age, I didn't know how to play volleys, so I'm pretty jealous. Yeah, she's a great player, and you can see that on singles and doubles as well.

**Q. I wanted to ask you about your reaction to the Simona Halep news because it kind of felt like a shock for so many people. My follow-up to that would be, when you see a former world No. 1 and someone like Simona who is so well-respected, something like this is happening, how much more thought do you put to making sure that that doesn't happen to you?**

IGA SWIATEK: Well, for sure it was confusing to me because I wouldn't expect hearing this news. Simona, from my point of view, seems like a person who always cared about being fair, and she was a great example for me, so hopefully...

I don't know how it works in terms of the system that they're going to... I don't know. Is she going to be tested a couple of more times or whatever? Hopefully, I don't know, it's going to be more clear for fans and for us.

But, yeah, it's kind of like disappointing, and she must feel really bad. From my point of view, the most important thing for me is just taking care of myself and being kind of always safe and making my environment more safe and being careful. So we'll do that.

But right now it's just the beginning of my journey because I always had people around me who actually knew how to do that, yeah.

**Q. I wanted to ask you about Jessica Pegula. You've had many matches with her this year. You always won. But I'm curious, have you seen any evolution in Jessica throughout the season? And what's her story of being 28 years old, making her debut here, having her best season, winning Guadalajara, but kind of later in her career. What kind of stands out to you when you think of Jessica Pegula and her journey?**

IGA SWIATEK: Well, I always felt like she's really consistent, and I'm pretty happy that she won Guadalajara because I felt like she deserved to have this big title even earlier, you know.

Well, yeah, she is that kind of person that I feel like you can kind of trust her. She's on players council and she's always been helpful. Really it feels like she knows what she's doing. She's really intelligent on court as well.

I don't know. I didn't know her earlier. We played our first match in 2019, so I didn't really know what her journey was before. But it's great that she's, like, fulfilling her goals.

Yeah, she for sure deserves that title, and I think even more, so we'll see.

**Q. I was wondering what does a day before a match look like for you, and does that vary from tournament to tournament?**

IGA SWIATEK: My tournaments we play day by day, so there is not, like, special preparation. We just focus on one round, then we kind of switch our minds to thinking about next round.

But on tournaments like that and on Grand Slams where there is a little bit more time, I just try to not think about and not overanalyze my opener and the obstacles that I'm going to face.

I usually know what to do, and I have good routines to keep myself kind of fresh and rest properly. I guess that's the main thing I'm focusing about.

There's always, like, we're not practicing too much day

before the match, so there's a lot of free time, and it's good to find a good movie that is going to keep you chilled.

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