

WTA Finals

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Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Iga Swiatek

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome to your fourth consecutive WTA Finals. Tell us how your preparations have been so far.

IGA SWIATEK: Actually I came pretty early. I'm happy I had time to get used to the surface.

The preparation? I mean, pretty nice because the venue looks amazing. As you said, it's my fourth WTA Finals so I can kind of compare. For now we didn't have any problems. It's all pretty smooth.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. You went through some new things recently, ending your partnership with Tomasz, hiring someone new, skipping the Asian Swing. How did you handle all those decisions? How does it feel coming here with less match play than your rivals?

IGA SWIATEK: I'm going to answer the second question first.

I think it's not going to be a problem. I don't feel rusty. I played some points, as well, here with Aryna and Qinwen. Also I've been practicing that way. I don't feel like I missed a lot. Honestly, it wasn't like a really long break still. Probably a bit longer than a normal pre-season.

I spent this time still playing tennis and for sure focusing on finding new coach, making this transition. It's always tricky. For me it's a decision hopefully for years because I look at my career kind of long-term.

Yeah, we'll see.

Q. What specifically around your game are you hoping to make changes with with Wim Fissette?

IGA SWIATEK: If I'm going to answer that, then everybody is going to know what is my weaker side (smiling).

No, I mean, I think it's kind of obvious. I for sure want to improve my serve, as I've been doing for past years. I feel

like I still need to continue that. For sure I'm not a complete player.

I think tactically there are many ways I could go and have more variety on court. Wim has some nice ideas.

Honestly for now we've just been preparing for this tournament and getting to know each other. The real changes, we're going to talk about them during the off-season because that's the proper time to do it.

For now I've been trying to just be in the best shape for this tournament. Some technicalities, we're going to work on them in the pre-season.

Q. We saw you yesterday practicing on center court with Aryna. She comes here as the No. 1. How determined are you to take it back off her?

IGA SWIATEK: Obviously we're both fighting for this spot. Yeah, it's been us basically kind of over the past few years.

Yeah, I mean, I am in the tournament. I obviously want to play my best game here and win this tournament. I'm just going to focus on my first match and do everything step by step.

Actually, I don't know, it was just nice to practice with Aryna because we haven't done that in a while, since probably 2022. It's been a long time. I'm not really sure why (smiling). Yeah, it was a really good practice.

She's a great player. She also kind of deserves to be world No. 1. For sure I'm going to fight for me to be in that place.

Q. Do you personally have any reservations or concerns about playing here in Saudi Arabia, given the human rights record here, particularly around women's rights and the LGBTQ+ community?

IGA SWIATEK: Honestly I came here not having, like, many expectations. I'm trying to kind of observe and also learn how everything works. I'm trying to kind of educate myself. I think you kind of know that I'm kind of that person

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that likes to do that, so...

Yeah, for now I'm going to spend my time here doing that.

Q. How do you see Saudi Arabia invest money to hosting the sport event? How do you see the atmosphere since you came to Saudi Arabia?

IGA SWIATEK: Well, I got to say that the atmosphere, mostly it's about the people. The people have been really welcoming, really nice. From the minute we came here, everybody was super nice. We feel like we've been taken care of, you know?

I feel like probably this event can be much better because of that.

Q. Did you know that you were going to lose the No. 1 ranking that week? Maybe you didn't know the permutations that you were dropping points, or did you know?

IGA SWIATEK: Obviously I think I'm going to lose it like two weeks ago (smiling). Honestly, I don't mind.

Q. Do you know what you need to do here?

IGA SWIATEK: I don't. I want to play the best kind of tennis. That's what I need to do.

Q. When you've spoken this year about the schedule, a lot of fans believe you've spoken a lot of good sense. Since then, you've missed a couple of big tournaments. Maybe got fined. I don't know. Do you feel like your authorities listen when you have things to say on subjects like the schedule?

IGA SWIATEK: Well, I feel like when I first came to WTA, it was pretty tricky. Now I think that they are listening to us much more. I've seen some progress in terms of the communication.

Yeah, some things have been decided already in terms of the calendar and mandatory tournaments. It's something that we kind of can't take back because this is business, this is our contract, this is money. For sure it's not going to be easy. It depends.

I guess it's all going to be about proper planning, making your own decisions kind of, no matter what's going on with the rankings, mandatory tournaments sometimes. For sure for us as players, the priority should be our health in general.

We'll see. For now, like, this has been first year with all

these mandatory tournament obligations. Maybe at the end of the season there's going to be a good time to give some feedback and talk about it internally with WTA.

For now obviously we need to be ready for the season to be as long as it is. I'm sure for fans, it's exciting. I'm going to prepare myself, as well, to be ready to play everything.

Q. You mentioned before seeing your career long-term with respect to bringing on Wim, what you are working on. Are there short-term sacrifices that you've thought about that you've accepted, that you are willing to take on in order to make those long-term changes? How hard is that when you're No. 1 in the world, succeeded at the level you have, to accept maybe short-term losses?

IGA SWIATEK: Well, yeah, honestly it's not easy. I feel like, I don't know, understanding some decisions, it's more kind of a grown-up thing to do. Understanding this long-term thing, for sure, is important if I want my career to be really long and balancing everything out.

But honestly, well, sometimes it's hard to make a decision. But when you do it, I don't have any regrets usually. I'm an over-thinker. If I make a decision, I'm pretty sure it's going to be a good one. So basically I trust myself in that way.

But for sure it was much harder, like, couple of years ago to make these kind of decisions. Now I feel like I know a bit more. Probably in the future I'm going to have to also make some decisions. You can see the most experienced players on tour, they are a bit older, skipping some tournaments, but actually being able to play their best games on Grand Slams, the biggest events that they really care about.

I think like Novak, for example, is a great example of that. We can learn from people like that.

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