

Billie Jean King Cup

Monday, 15 September 2025

Team Ukraine

Captain Illya Marchenko

Elina Svitolina

Marta Kostyuk

Lyudmyla Kichenok

Nadiia Kichenok

Yuliia Starodubtseva

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Thank you for joining the press conference with Team Ukraine.

We have a question first for the captain. Could we have your thoughts about the week, please.

CAPTAIN ILLYA MARCHENKO: Well, we are practicing. Everything is good. We are enjoying ourselves in Shenzhen. We like conditions. I think the balls and the surface is suitable for my team.

So far everything is perfect.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take questions.

Q. Marta, how important does it feel to be here in the Finals for the first time?

MARTA KOSTYUK: Well, I think it's first time for all of us here, not just for me.

Yeah, I think it's an incredible honor to represent my country, first of all, to be here in the Finals for the first time, beside these amazing girls. We've been in the same team for a very, very long time.

Yeah, it's going to be an amazing experience regardless of the outcome. We're going to do our best. I believe in our team 100%. I think we have a very strong team, so I'm hoping for a lot of support.

Q. Captain, can you talk a little bit about your quarterfinal opponents, what you're expecting from the matchup.

CAPTAIN ILLYA MARCHENKO: Well, they obviously know how to play tennis. They're pretty experienced and good team.

Yeah, I mean, we see that the leader of Spain is here. She's preparing. We will expect a good fight.

Q. Elina, you potentially might face Paula, if she's playing. What do you expect from that? I think you've played her once before. Went to a tiebreak in the third set. Talk about the challenges of facing her.

ELINA SVITOLINA: Yeah, we played against each other a long time ago. It was on grass.

I mean, it's difficult to judge. But obviously we know each other's game. Yeah, she's a good player. For me it would be a big challenge to play against her. But we are here in a very different conditions to what we would be facing each other in any other tournament.

Yeah, it's going to be a tense match. Looking forward to that.

Q. Elina, every time Ukraine plays Billie Jean King Cup, it seems to be the same team you play with, the same players, a very settled team. Do you think that is crucial for success, having a good team atmosphere?

ELINA SVITOLINA: Yeah, for sure. The team spirit. To have good players. We have very strong girls, many in top hundred. Yeah, it's always great to have a choice. It's not easy for the captain, I guess, but still it's good to have choices.

Yeah, I'm very, very happy that we are here in the Finals finally. For so many years we tried to qualify. Finally we're here, so we're enjoying every moment.

Q. Elina, it's been six years after you came back to China. Last time you were here was Shenzhen WTA

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Finals. Now it's Billie Jean King Cup. What is your feeling now back to Shenzhen, to China in general?

ELINA SVITOLINA: Yeah, it's been very long time that I haven't been here, for many reasons in a way. Also the pregnancy, I had to skip couple of years. I also had some surgeries.

But now I'm excited that we are here for the Finals. It's very exciting to be a part of the event, to be able to be playing here again in China.

Yeah, I'm excited for the tournaments and for this competition here.

Q. Marta, you've had a great season this year. You've had some great performances in doubles, as well. How do you see yourself to play in the team, how you can help the whole team?

MARTA KOSTYUK: Are you asking about if I will play doubles?

Q. How are you going to help the team, yeah.

MARTA KOSTYUK: I think the decision is captain's. It's not ours. We give our feedback, we practice everything that we can. I played with both Lyuda and Nadiia. I feel great with both of them on court. They played with each other. I think we have a lot of options when it comes to doubles, which is a really good sign, good for us.

My main goal is to win my singles match, first of all, then not everything depends on me after. I am just here if the team needs me, if girls want to play with me (laughter).

Yeah, I love to play doubles. I didn't play much doubles this year. Usually I really like it. It's like another sport for me, another passion. I'm excited if I will be needed to help.

Q. Elina, this year you also had a great season. You've come back and played well. How do you feel to come back to play in China? What is the plan next for all the tournaments in China?

ELINA SVITOLINA: Yeah, it's been a good season for me. Of course, I always wish to play even more, even better.

Yeah, for me, the Chinese season is a full swing. All the tournaments that there are, I will be trying to play. Depends on my physical conditions.

Yeah, just take one day at a time and not rush, try not take too much. Yeah, just trying to do my best every day.

Q. Last time you came here was 2019. You played in the central court already. How do you feel about this new court?

ELINA SVITOLINA: Well, the court is playing pretty good. I mean, the last time I've been here, it's been very long time ago. The color of the court was completely different. The settings of the court I guess is the same. Yeah, it's been so long time ago for me. I feel like it was in another life for me.

Yeah, now it's new event. Yeah, just trying to adjust as well as I can, just trying to do my best.

Q. How do you think about this Chinese team here, if it's possible to play in the future?

ELINA SVITOLINA: Yeah, of course we see each other every week, week in, week out. We see each other. We know each other's game.

They have strong team. Of course, it's sad that Zheng, she had the surgery, couldn't be here. Of course, home team is always a tricky one, a strong one. Good crowd. It can be tricky.

Yeah, everybody who is here deserves to be here. Yeah, trying their best.

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