

China Open

Friday, September 29, 2023

Beijing, China

Elena Rybakina

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome back to Beijing, Elena.

ELENA RYBAKINA: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Can you give us your thoughts about playing here after so many years away.

ELENA RYBAKINA: Actually, it's my first time here in Beijing. I really like the place, the atmosphere, people. So, yeah, really looking forward to start here.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Obviously you have had success in China before, in Nanchang and Shenzhen. When you look back at that player in 2019, 2020 and compare it to the one that's here now, from a tennis perspective, how different are you? What are you doing better than that version?

ELENA RYBAKINA: Yeah, it's been a lot of time back. I think I improved a bit in all the aspects. Of course, I was young and I was just coming up. It was amazing experience for me to play in Wuhan in that time for the first time.

Yeah, I think it just changed a lot with experience, overall like making decisions on the court. Yeah, it's been just a long time.

Yeah, I'm happy to be back.

Q. In terms of just now going into this last section of the season - obviously you qualified for the Finals for the first time - is there a different energy or different focus at this point of the season for you this year compared to maybe in years past?

ELENA RYBAKINA: Well, for sure I'm focusing now just to play a little bit more matches because unfortunately I got sick again, and maybe no one knew it. Yeah, in New York was tough for me. After that, it was couple of weeks to recover. That's why now coming even to Tokyo, it was not the best for me maybe to play there.

Yeah, now I'm just looking to play some matches. Of course, all the focus is going to the WTA Finals.

Q. Would you like to say something to your Chinese fans since you are one of the most popular WTA players here? I believe you have felt that during the past several days.

ELENA RYBAKINA: Yeah, I just want to say big thank you for this support because I really felt it. Even I didn't play here so much, but from the years before I already felt huge support.

Now even practicing, so many people are coming. It's really nice. Yeah, looking forward to start the matches and hopefully to see everybody on the matches.

Q. Today is China's Mid Autumn Festival. For this festival we usually spend it with our family members, eat moon cakes together, enjoy the moon. This time, do you have family members together and are you going to eat moon cakes together tonight?

ELENA RYBAKINA: Great question (smiling).

Unfortunately I'm here only with my coach this week. I knew that now it's kind of a holidays here in China. I think it's really nice. But maximum I can celebrate only with my coach I guess this time (smiling).

Q. I would like to teach you something in Chinese.

ELENA RYBAKINA: Okay.

Q. (Speaking Chinese.)

ELENA RYBAKINA: Can you repeat?

Q. (Speaking in Chinese.)

ELENA RYBAKINA: (Repeating in Chinese.)

Q. It means 'Mid Autumn Festival' and 'happy'.



ELENA RYBAKINA: Nice. Thank you (smiling).

Q. I'm very happy that I can see my icon, which is you. I play tennis in my everyday life. I want to be a champion like you. So the question I have for you is that the coach that I have now is gentle to me. I wonder what's your coach like in your childhood?

ELENA RYBAKINA: Wow (smiling). You guys are amazing.

Well, when I was young, I was practicing mostly with the other kids. Of course, because we were many, sometimes the coach was tough. But I think it's good you have a coach who is nice to you and you can always speak with him. I think that's important.

So don't worry, everything is going to be good.

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