

China Open

Saturday, September 30, 2023

Beijing, China

Iga Swiatek

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Iga, welcome to Beijing.

IGA SWIATEK: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: How does it feel to be playing in China for the first time in your career?

IGA SWIATEK: I hope it will be nice. I just arrived honestly, so we will see. But I'm excited to be here. I was just seeing all the facilities, and it looks amazing. So for sure it's going to be a nice week.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Having led the rankings for so long, I'm wondering in the last few weeks if you've had to shift your mindset in any way to being a chaser instead of being at the front of the line? Also, are you're doing anything a little bit differently now that that's happened as we move into the end of the season?

IGA SWIATEK: Well, I think it's a little bit easier to come back to the mindset of chasing somebody because that's what we've been doing our whole lives. There's only one person who's at No. 1. I think this was harder to get used to last season.

But honestly, it doesn't really matter for me because I kind of, after US Open, I knew I'm going to drop to second position. I kind of stopped thinking about rankings at all 'cause I felt like there's some baggage off my shoulders. I could focus more on just working and kind of getting back to the more, like, peaceful and normal rhythm of practicing, I would say.

I'm happy that, yeah, I have opportunity to not think about all of that because when you kind of finish the journey a little bit, you know it may happen in the future. It's different because you're just focusing on the future, not on defending something. I'm kind of using that.

But overall I'm also worried that it's last tournaments of the season, so I'm not going to be 100% fresh. My main goal is to kind of do some stuff differently on court in terms of

the technique and tactics to develop as a player, not really chase points or rankings.

Q. Obviously New York you said that you were really looking forward to getting a proper training block that you hadn't had a chance to do throughout the season. Did you get that training block? You just mentioned you wanted to use that section of the season to work on things as opposed to maybe having to win, protecting your ranking. How different is that? I don't know, how different of an Iga are we going to see on court?

IGA SWIATEK: I mean, it's not going to be a lot different because I feel like I'm going the right direction anyway.

For sure I used these two weeks of practicing. I realized also how much work I have to do in pre-season because there are a lot of things I want to improve. My coach also has a good plan. Sometimes it's not possible to do all of that in two weeks. But we kind of started doing it.

I don't know how it's going to look on matches obviously 'cause it's totally different story. I was feeling little bit rusty in Tokyo because, yeah, like after that reset, after three weeks without playing tournaments, you can feel like that a little bit.

But, yeah, it doesn't really matter for me. I'll just do my best no matter what. Yeah, I'll kind of focus more on myself and on what I want to do on court, yeah, looking at all these days of practice and what I could try new things.

Q. You always are repeating that being the No. 1, it's terrible stress. When you're chasing somebody, is it different? Is it less pressure for you?

IGA SWIATEK: I wouldn't say it was a constant feeling. It was more like at the beginning I was really pumped and I felt like still I need to kind of show people that I'm in the right place and I deserve to be No. 1. That feeling, I think I kept it until the end of the 2022 season. For sure when I started the next one, this year, I felt a little bit more pressure.



Well, you know, basically there are a lot of things. You have a lot more obligations, a lot more press conferences and media stuff to do (smiling).

Yeah, well, I wouldn't say this pressure has a lot to do with tennis. It's more like what's around it, you know? So, yeah, you kind of have to adjust to that and learn how to deal with that because, yeah, in modern world you're expected to do so many stuff besides actually playing tennis, that it can be a little bit overwhelming.

But I handled it for such a long time that I think it will give me a lot of experience for the future.

Q. I want to know what's your overall impression of Chinese culture and Chinese tennis. How much do you know about it?

IGA SWIATEK: Well, I honestly spent like five hours in China, so I don't know yet about the culture (smiling). But, yeah, I'll see. Ask me at the end of the tournament. Yeah, it hard for me to say right now.

But I have pretty positive mindset and I heard a lot of positive things about the tournament, the experience of playing here. Everything looks great so far, so I'll tell you more later, I guess.

Q. Just wondering what your reaction was to Coco winning at the US Open. I know you're obviously two years older than she is, but you're junior contemporaries in terms of playing a couple of seasons on juniors together.

IGA SWIATEK: But we haven't played against each other.

Q. Juniors, no, but you were around.

IGA SWIATEK: Yeah, kind of.

Q. What was your general reaction to her winning?

IGA SWIATEK: I mean, I was happy for her because I know she's a hard worker. She struggles sometimes. It felt like, yeah, she has done a lot of progress this year. She kind of just confirmed that during the US Open, I guess. No, I'm just happy.

But, like, yeah, I don't have any more exciting feelings. I know how she can play, so I can totally imagine her winning a Grand Slam. Yeah, she improved, in my opinion. I said that after our match. So she deserves it if she won.

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