

Brisbane International

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Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

Elena Rybakina

Press Conference

E. RYBAKINA/A. Sabalenka

6-0, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Must be pretty happy with that performance. Talk us through the week and the match today.

ELENA RYBAKINA: Yeah, really happy with the whole week here in Brisbane. Didn't expect that it's going to be like this, quite by the score.

Yeah, just looking forward for the next weeks, especially in Melbourne.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. You've always had really close matches with Aryna in the past. What were your emotions during the first set when it was going so quickly?

ELENA RYBAKINA: Well, I think the score doesn't show the reality because all the games were quite tight, to be honest. Couple of moments maybe I was a bit luckier. I knew that no matter the score, is going to be still difficult in the second set. It was just few moments again where it could turn other way around.

As I said, I didn't expect that the scores are going to be like this. In the end, I think it was still not as easy as it might look from outside.

Q. You're going to head to Adelaide or have you decided to pull out, given the win you have here? If you have, turning your focus onto Melbourne, you must feel really confident. Getting that little bit of revenge in a title-winning match against Sabalenka, you must feel confident heading into a slam.

ELENA RYBAKINA: Yeah, for sure it gives confidence, but as I said it's always tough battles against Aryna. This week is just the beginning for all the players. I feel like maybe not everyone catch still the best form. I'm playing well now, so hopefully, as I said, I continue.

Yeah, the plan is to go to Adelaide because I think this week I played really well, I feel physically also good. I didn't have enough, I would say, hours which we wanted



to do the week before coming here because I got sick again. This week, as I said, was a bit unexpected, like, with the result. It was still, like, getting back to the shape, to recover from the illness.

I think we see how it's going to be in Adelaide. Of course, it's different conditions. Hopefully, as I said, I continue to play well and feel good on the court.

Q. Inside five hours on court here. Is that part of it as well, you feel like you haven't had enough time on court before heading to Melbourne?

ELENA RYBAKINA: Well, no, of course matches and practices, it's different. I'm first time here in Brisbane and I really like the conditions. I know in Adelaide is different. In Melbourne is going to be different.

Of course, also it's a sensitive sport, I will say. Each detail matters a lot. If I can adapt to, let's say, first Adelaide and then how I'm going to feel in Melbourne, it's still different. Of course, physically is important for me to feel well.

I'm playing really good. I don't see the reason to stop and not to play in Adelaide.

Q. What were you most happy about your game this week?

ELENA RYBAKINA: We talked a lot actually with the coach. As I said, I was not able to practice enough the week before coming here. Also first few days here it was really tough with the jet lag and everything.

We actually talked and watched a bit of tennis. Usually we don't get as much time to do so. Also it was raining in the beginning of the week, so again I was ready to practice but because of the weather I couldn't really.

I just pleased with the way I started the tournament because I was not feeling the greatest physically still after illness and everything. Just the decisions on the court and everything we talked with the coach, I managed to bring it on the court.

Q. One part of your game that's a huge asset is the serve. How confident are you off the ground at the moment? How much of a difference does that make in your game when you're playing like that?

ELENA RYBAKINA: For sure, as I said, it gives confidence. I'm happy with the variety of my serve also because I think it changed a little bit. This is what we talked with the coach also, that sometimes it's not only about the speed, it's placement and the moments to see when to change. I think in this aspect, I improved a bit. Listen a lot my coach, which is also good thing (smiling). Yeah, I'm just pleased with this.

Q. Aryna was funny on court after the loss. The way she handled that, do you think that shows what happened today won't impact her if you are to meet again in Melbourne?

ELENA RYBAKINA: If?

Q. It won't play on her mind mentally the way she was able to laugh about it today.

ELENA RYBAKINA: Well, I don't know. She's really funny girl. I think all the time on the speeches she gives some funny moments.

I think, just as I said, first week of the season and not everybody catch the form yet. We also saw, like, when Aryna was not playing the greatest, she had many double-faults two years ago, but then she catch the form. Last year was amazing.

I don't think one result can affect much.

Q. A year is a long time in tennis. You left Australia last year having lost the final. You spoke about taking some confidence out of taking the title here in Brisbane. What can that do for your game if you think back to the memories of getting on the plane falling that little bit short last year?

ELENA RYBAKINA: Well, I think when we played in Melbourne, Aryna, she played really well that match. She risked at some moments and it went her way. I cannot say much about that.

Also we didn't play as many times as we did after this final in Melbourne. I think we just got each other know even better on the court what we like, what we don't like, so on.

Well, I lost my thought, guys (smiling).

Yeah, I think no matter, as I said, the score and everything, it's always tough battles.

Q. With a win like that today, you'll go into Melbourne as one of the favorites. A lot more people will be talking about you, writing about you, media. Do you enjoy that or do you prefer to be not so talked about?

ELENA RYBAKINA: Honestly, guys, I don't enjoy this part of our job so much. First of all, I maybe didn't get as much attention as other players. Still if I have to do some kind of stuff outside of the court, it's something I'm trying to improve as much improvement on the court. Same with this kind of stuff.

Q. Last year's Australian Open you started on Court 13. There was quite a bit made about that. Do you expect to be moved over to center court this time around?

ELENA RYBAKINA: Well, I hope I'm going to start on the big court this year. Of course before I was a bit upset why I'm playing on that court, not on another one. By now I don't really care on which court I'm going to play. I just try to focus on my game and go so far in the tournament that I'm going to be playing always on center court.

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