

Brisbane International

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Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

Elena Rybakina

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Welcome to Brisbane. Obviously the first tournament after the offseason. Are you rested? How are you feeling? Are you ready to start playing?

ELENA RYBAKINA: Yeah, really happy to start playing and happy to be back in Brisbane.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. You had a great season last year, but already there are a lot of people tipping you for big success this year. How does that feel? Is that any pressure or is that something you already have planned for yourself, I guess?

ELENA RYBAKINA: Well, of course I want to do better each season. I'm happy that last year I didn't start well, but I finished quite strong, so it gives some confidence. Even if you have a little time to work on some things, you can still improve.

So this definitely gives you more motivation, and yeah, of course I will try to do my best this season. The most important to keep on being healthy, play from beginning to the end. The goal is always the same: Be healthy, happy of course too, but yeah, win big titles.

Q. The field here in Brisbane, 7 of the world's Top-10 women. Outside of a Grand Slam, you're rarely going to get a field like that. What sort of preparation do you do coming in? What do you feel like about a caliber of tournament like this ahead of a Grand Slam?

ELENA RYBAKINA: Yeah, it is a strong tournament. I think we have probably only two 500 events during the year which is that strong.

Well, it's not easy always to start season. You're just coming from preseason. You have been working a lot. I think it doesn't really matter how you start this tournament. Of course you want to do well, but the most important to show good tennis afterwards, and of course the slam is always ahead.

I think we did quite good job a couple weeks. Of course it's not ideal. We can always do better. I also had some issues, so we had to take some days off, more recovery,



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but overall I'm happy with what we did, being in that condition.

So I think I'm ready, and we just will see how it's gonna go.

Q. You have an outstanding record in Australia. You obviously love the conditions and the surface. Particularly in Brisbane, you obviously won the title with a very big win over Sabalenka two years ago. Is there a little added confidence when you come back to a place that you have done so well against big names like that?

ELENA RYBAKINA: Yeah, definitely. I know the courts well. I know the conditions. It's quite fast here. So I really like that also we have a roof, which helps on couple of courts.

So, yeah, I really enjoy always my time here. I think the courts, since it's fast, it's good for my game, so I'm just looking forward to start.

Q. Is it the surface, the conditions, the fact you're coming from a Northern Hemisphere winter perhaps? What is it you love about playing in Australia the start of the year?

ELENA RYBAKINA: I think you are a bit tired of always working, practicing, so you really want to start finally playing some matches. It's big difference from just working from morning till evening couple weeks in a row.

So I feel like you're more motivated, fresher, at least in mind. Yeah, I love Australia. Always have positive memories and very good memories. So, yeah, I'm always happy to come and start the season here.

Q. You talked about how much you want to win the big titles. How significant was that win at the WTA Finals for your own belief and to let the rest of the tour know that you're right there contending again right at the top?

ELENA RYBAKINA: Well, yeah, I didn't expect much coming to Riyadh, because I have played in China a lot, and I came kind of last moment. I was just going match by match. But it brought to this kind of result, which I'm really happy.



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As I said, in this minimal time we had, it was end of the season, also you're tired, but we still managed to improve some things, my form, and played really well. Was really focused. So I think it's great achievement, and I just want to carry it throughout this season.

Q. What do you think that will do for your belief now at Grand Slams? You have obviously been there before and gone all the way, but it's been a little while. So to win that again and show you can beat someone like Sabalenka in a big match, what does that do for you?

ELENA RYBAKINA: Well, it's all about stability. I feel like I always can play some good matches, but it's never stable enough.

I had some challenges also last year. So I'm happy that now I'm healthy and is just matter of time, and hopefully we can continue working like this and I will achieve my goals. It can happen as much as it's going to be soon or later on, but I definitely try to work on that. Yeah, we'll see what's gonna happen, but definitely that's my goal, and hopefully I will achieve it.

Q. I think I know what you're talking about when you talk about the challenges. Are you comfortable talking about that and how you were able to move on from that to get such a great result?

ELENA RYBAKINA: Well, depends what challenges you're talking about, because I'm not getting younger, so I have also some health issues, let's say, let's put this way, some little injuries which we always need to work on.

I think it's just overall a lot, like, difficult schedule, as I said some little injuries which we need to take care of, and if everything lines up and everything is fine, I think this is where you can achieve these big goals. But everything should be kind of on point from all the aspects.

Q. You mentioned earlier in one of the earlier questions that you had had a few issues over the offseason and had to take some time off. What were the issues, and how do you feel now?

ELENA RYBAKINA: I feel better now, but I'm struggling a bit with my foot, but it's honestly, like, throughout already couple of seasons, but it's just on and off. We are trying, like, manage it. And some weeks it's better; some weeks it's not. For now it's been well, so I'm happy that it definitely didn't get worse, and we just keep on working.

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