

# Australian Open

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## Elina Svitolina

Press Conference



L. NOSKOVA/E. Svitolina

3-0 (ret.)

THE MODERATOR: Elina, bad luck today. Perhaps you could begin by telling us what the physical issue was for you today.

ELINA SVITOLINA: Yeah, I got a spasm, or I don't know exactly what it is, but like shooting pain in the first game, the last two points. Yeah, couldn't do anything. Completely locked my back. Just very sad, of course, so yeah.

THE MODERATOR: Open it up to questions.

**Q. Just wondering, you said it came in the first game. Did you feel anything before, or did it come kind of out of nowhere?**

ELINA SVITOLINA: I felt little bit, but it's quite normal. Been playing some tennis in this tournament already. You know, fourth round, you have a little bit stiffness somewhere.

Nothing really special. Like not a big issue before. Yeah, this one I think I never had that before, the shooting pain like this. I had some injuries to my back before where it just was tiredness the next day of the match, but this one was really out of nowhere. I felt like someone shot me in the back, so yeah.

**Q. Just in terms of obviously the disappointment and everything, do you have any sense as to what going forward is? I guess it's only been a few minutes. Whether it's a short-term thing, a long-term thing on the issue?**

ELINA SVITOLINA: Yeah, hopefully it's short-term. I don't know. Maybe a spasm or something. But, yeah, hopefully I will be back training maybe in one week.

Of course, long flight I had. That's not going to help. In a way I will have to take one day at a time, have to do my recovery, do the scan as soon as I get back home, and go from there. Hopefully I don't have something serious.

**Q. How does it feel now now that you're off the**

**court? How is your back?**

ELINA SVITOLINA: Bad, yeah. It really locked. My low back completely locked. So, yeah, I'm really in pain even walking, turning. I cannot move side-to-side. Yeah, very strange.

**Q. Were you able to take any satisfaction from Dayana's win? Will you be watching the other Ukraine players?**

ELINA SVITOLINA: Yes, of course, I've been following throughout all this one week that we all have been playing really well. At the beginning of the tournament seven Ukrainians in the main draw, and going that far so many of us, it's nice in the second week as well.

It's great for Ukrainian tennis. Of course, now I feel very old (laughing) because of my health, but I'm happy that they are doing great. It's great for Ukrainian tennis. It's great for the upcoming generation as well, especially now these days when Ukraine in such a tough time.

It's good that we have strong Ukrainian girls. Yeah, hopefully we can continue to build on this. Also, it's great for Billie Jean King Cup as well. I'm looking forward to play in April the tie and hopefully get a chance to play in the main group as well as a team event. It's good to finally get a chance to play there with such great players, so many good level players. It's exciting.

**Q. What moment has stood out for you throughout this tournament?**

ELINA SVITOLINA: Well, in a bad way stood out for me the shooting pain (laughing), but I had good matches here. I was in good form. That's why it's even more disappointing.

It's tough now to find positives really, but I feel like I had good matches, good wins, and I enjoyed my time on the court. Not today, unfortunately, but the matches before I did really.

**Q. You mentioned your good form, and people have said they think this is some of the best tennis you've ever played this year. Is that something you would agree with? What's your assessment of your level?**



ELINA SVITOLINA: I don't know. Tough to compare if it's the best or not the best. I don't know what was before really. I try to not think so much.

I have the experience from before of being top 10, like playing good matches against great players, winning titles. Now I take every opportunity that I have on the court, try to enjoy, to fight, and bring this new energy that I have.

So for me it's each time I have the opportunity to bring my best tennis, to enjoy and try to win for myself, for my country. I feel like also I get a lot of support from outside, which is great as well. Really this motivates me to work and do everything that I can, be the best version as a tennis player, as a person as well.

Yeah, it's very different. I cannot compare from the years before, but I feel like I'm in a good place. Just have to really prioritize my health. Of course, really disappointing as well to not play after US Open because of my stress fracture in my ankle and now this. So, yeah, really sad.

**Q. Not to try and make you feel worse, obviously this has been quite an unpredictable tournament. Did you feel like there was a real opportunity there to go all the way?**

ELINA SVITOLINA: I mean, the players are there. Everyone is strong. Everyone is playing great tennis. If they beat top 10 or if they beat some good players on the way to quarterfinals, semifinal, or the final, that means they are meant to be there.

Opportunity, of course. Ranking-wise maybe and maybe not in a way. Even if you take my opponent today, Linda, I know she beat Iga. She's a good player and played really, really well the matches before as well, so she's in good form.

So, I mean, I cannot say that this was like an open draw in a way. Also, if you take other players, they are meant to be there. You have also in the other side of the draw very strong players who won slams and played really consistent throughout the year last year.

So I don't want to look this as a missed opportunity, especially right now when it was not about my tennis today. It was just my body just shut down, unfortunately.

**Q. I think you've only been back playing maybe eight months, and you said about didn't play after the US Open. I think the rankings say you're already back in the top 20 after this result and what you've done at slams. You've gone deep in three of them now in your comeback. I know it's hard now, but are you proud of that kind of rapid progress, or have you been surprised by how well you've come back?**

ELINA SVITOLINA: Yeah, I'm proud of the work and of the situation, stressful situations, and how I've been handling them on the court because this was the most I would say difficult for me as a comeback.

I was at the beginning not dealing really well with the stressful situations like the score-wise. Now I feel like I'm much better. I've been playing good matches, beating good players. I feel like I'm at a good place and been playing really well when I was down.

Yeah, coming back, fighting spirit, you know, everything is back. I feel like I'm striking the ball well. Yeah, as I mentioned for me the only thing I wish is my health would be better. Before my health was quite stable. I never really had a long-term injury. Now, yeah.

**Q. Following from that, obviously your level has been so high that it's easy to forget I guess how soon into your comeback it is. Do you think that it may be with this injury, with your ankle that maybe it's just your body getting used to playing at such a high level and frequently again, or do you feel like physically... on the court do you feel normal?**

ELINA SVITOLINA: I felt good physically. Yeah, I feel like I was doing everything right. I had good offseason. I've been training really well. Yeah, it's just things like this unexpectedly happen. It's not like a build-up where I had a huge pain in my back and I was expected this one. It really came out of nowhere.

Yeah, just have to take now time to see what was the possibility for the next tournament. I have to take care of my back, of my ankle as well because ankle is still -- I mean, it's good, but when it's fresh off the injury, it takes little bit of time. Then, you know, your body starts to compensate little bit, so I don't know. Maybe it's all connected in a way.

So I have to really learn more about my injury in the back, and tough to say. But, of course, I wish I can come back physically as strong as I was, and I feel like I'm doing everything possible. The injuries, of course, they're coming and going, but yeah, I just hope that not going to be long-term.

For me now just going to go home, do the scan, and hope that it will be nothing serious, that I can come back hopefully very soon at the tournaments.

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