

Roland Garros

Monday, 31 May 2021

Paris, France

Iga Swiatek

Press Conference

I. SWIATEK/K. Juvan

6-0, 7-5

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. How does it feel to get your title defense up and running? What happened with that second set? It really tightened up. Were you concerned?

IGA SWIATEK: Well, first of all, you never know what's going to happen when you're coming out on a court as a defending champion. I've never been in a situation like that. I'm really glad I could handle that pretty well and just play tennis, play a normal match without having in the back of my mind that I'm defending the title.

Yeah, first set was really, really good for me. I was really offensive. I didn't let Kaja find her rhythm. In the second, I feel like I backed out a little bit. I gave her some chances, and she used them pretty well. I kind of lost a little bit my confidence.

But I knew as soon as she's not breaking me, everything is under control. Just probably two important balls are going to be the most important for that set.

Q. I remember the match you played against Kaja in Australia when you couldn't hug her. How important was for you to see that things are getting normal?

IGA SWIATEK: It's never easy to play against your best friend. I have some experience because I played with Kaja for a few times. I play with my other friends on junior level.

You just try to block this friendship for two hours, just focus on the game. I think I'm doing that pretty well. It's nice to have that skill. So I was just trying to treat Kaja as any other girl, as any other opponent, because in sports when we are on court you can't have, like, thoughts that are you going to make your game more soft.

Yeah, I'm pretty happy that I could handle that.

Q. It feels like from Madrid to Rome to here you've gotten better with each tournament. Does it feel like



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that to you? Do you feel like you're in a zone? How does this level compare in your mind to when you started the clay court season?

IGA SWIATEK: Yeah, for sure, I feel like my game is better and better. My coaches were planning everything for me to have the peak of my shape right now. Hopefully it's going to be here.

But still even though I have, like, big confidence and I'm feeling really good, we still have to remember that every match has a different story and many things can happen on court. You just have to be careful all the time, not let yourself think that you're better or something because everybody is equal on court. It doesn't really matter what is your ranking or if you won last tournament because it's tennis and it's pretty unpredictable.

Q. What did it feel like going out on court to defend something as big as this? It's not something you've done before. Were there nerves? What were the emotions like? Did you try to put behind you what happened in October?

IGA SWIATEK: I tried to put it behind me and kind of use it in a positive way because I just know that I'm feeling good here. I love playing in Paris. My game was here for last couple of tournaments, not only last year.

Yeah, I mean, obviously it's different. It's more stressful a little bit. But still first rounds are always tricky, so I wouldn't say that the stress level was much, much higher. I had to basically just do little bit of more work mentally to stay focused just on tennis and on tactics and on the things that we are doing on practice.

Yeah, it was good. Hopefully next matches are going to be easier from that mental side.

Q. You said during your last press conference that doing your mental work, you have tried to have lower expectations. With your psychologist, are you also trying to work the media relationship and the press conferences, especially since you won here?

IGA SWIATEK: I didn't hear the last part of the question, the most important one. Sorry.

Q. If you work on your media and press relationship with your psychologist.

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IGA SWIATEK: I've never felt like I need to work on that because that is pretty natural for me. Since I was even like 13 and 14, we had some Polish media that was always interested, that always wanted to talk with me.

Step by step I was getting more and more experience and I was kind of learning how to have a good relationship with media. Also do it that way, it is not bothering me. I think the process should be the same for every tennis player because when you are, like, I don't know, top three in your country as a junior, there's going to be probably some expectations from the outside, and you're just learning how to do it.

But, of course, it's much, much different when you suddenly get a success. It's just important to find the balance. We are actually working on that, find a balance to sometimes just go fine and not have too many factors coming in. Sometimes enjoy little things and not think about expectations or, yeah, other obligations.

In my opinion, just having a good relationship in media, it can help you. If I'm going to have a problem or something, I'm going to tell you that I'm not comfortable talking with that. If we're going to treat each other with mutual respect, I think everybody can benefit from that, so yeah.

Q. A few weeks ago you said you were still working on hitting with Rafa. What was it like to hit with him the other day?

IGA SWIATEK: It was great. It wasn't a surprise because I had to prepare (smiling). Write some small topics, not to have awkward silence. But Rafa is really, really great. He's a really nice guy. Even though I am pretty introverted, it was really fun for me.

Obviously I got to feel his forehand, which was great, and his topspin. That was a whole new experience for me. It gave me, like, a lot of positive energy. It was really a huge inspiration for me.

It's really nice to see such a champion being normal off court, and also telling jokes and being a little bit sarcastic. It's really, really nice. He's the guy that everybody can take someone for themselves -- something for themselves, sorry.

Q. I would like to ask you a question about night sessions. There is going to be, as you know, night sessions as of today in Roland Garros for the very first time in the history of the tournament. I want to know if for you players, when you're designated to participate in a night session, is it added pressure? You know that all the eyes are on you and nowhere else. The spotlights are on shining bright. Is it added pressure? Is the pressure positive or negative? Do you not like it?

IGA SWIATEK: I like it. I really like it because it's like a totally different vibe on the court. I like playing, like, match of the day or something, so it's okay for me.

The hardest thing for me is changing my routine, waking up later, then resting for the whole day because you don't want to get too tired, you don't want your mind to be too busy before the match. This is the hardest part for me.

I've played some night sessions, but still comparing to all the matches that I played, I don't have like a huge experience in it. I'm still finding my, like, perfect solution to be in a best shape in the evening.

But, yeah, I think it's great. Especially I felt that on Australian Open because I think I was playing, like, 10 p.m. My energy level was little bit down. Then when I heard the people cheering, there were actually many Polish people, they were really energetic, it gave me a lot. I really like night sessions.

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