

Roland Garros

Monday, 23 May 2022

Paris, France

Lesia Tsurenko

Press Conference

I. SWIATEK/L. Tsurenko

6-2, 6-0

THE MODERATOR: Tough first-round opponent. Can you take us through the match a little bit.

LESIA TSURENKO: Yeah, very tough opponent. Actually, she's playing just incredible now, and almost all of the shots are like very close to the lines, which makes fact to play against her very tough or to create something is very tough.

But as we see, she's winning all of the matches she's playing. And I felt wow, because the level is very high and she's serving like really good, almost speed like some men serving. So, yeah, the level is really high.

THE MODERATOR: Questions?

Q. I would like to ask you about the draw. How do you find about the draw when you had information that you would play against Iga?

LESIA TSURENKO: How do you think I feel to play two Grand Slams in a row against No. 1 seed? And Australian Open was two times in a row for me. So I did not feel great, I'll be honest. And especially getting Ash Barty when she's not losing a match and playing unbelievable, and the same story with Iga.

Yeah, but I felt like I like to play on the big courts, I really want to come back to good level of tennis and play some more matches. Unfortunately, the draw is not the best to do it, but at least I qualify and I won some matches. I want to continue playing and winning.

Q. How would you actually compare the challenge of facing Ash versus Iga? Because obviously Ash retired just as Iga started this run, so we never got to see them actually play each other. So you might be the best judge.

LESIA TSURENKO: I think they play quite similar, just Ash using more slice on the backhand, but the speed is quite the same, the speed of the serve and the placement of the serve is the same. Very solid baseline. Yeah, quite similar. I think there is a reason why they are



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No. 1.

Q. How hard is it to compete like you are competing given everything that's going on with your country? What was your thoughts about the Wimbledon decision and the way that all played out with the tour?

LESIA TSURENKO: I'll be honest, I don't feel great playing. My first idea was to go home when it all started, and I had a long conversation inside of me that should I stay and play or should I just go to Ukraine and try to help there in some way, I don't know in which way, but just in some way.

And it all affected Indian Wells and Miami a lot. And at that point I think when I played in Marbella and I finished and I had nowhere to go. It's just, you know, the life is very questionable now. And I get -- probably it's not the right word to say -- but I get a lot of questions. You know, I have where to go, where to practice, where to live, should I continue playing. Just because I'm not 20 years old any more and I'm old enough to understand a little bit more about this world and I understand that there is something much bigger than just a tennis match.

So, yeah, it's not very easy to be here. I just decided that I will continue playing and I will try to win some matches, I will try to enjoy. I don't want to put too much pressure on myself. I just want to enjoy every match.

But at the same time, I don't feel that I care too much, you know. So I'm trying to find this balance between just go on court and don't care versus try to care, you know.

In some cases it helps. Like, I don't really put pressure on myself, I just go and play. But in some ways I just feel like, okay, whatever, I win or lose, whatever. It doesn't matter really.

The Wimbledon decision, of course as a Ukrainian, I think that I should show as much support for my country as I can, and I think it was the right decision from Wimbledon just to show some support from the tennis world. Of course, I didn't like the decision about playing with no points. I hope that, I don't know, I just hope that something will change in the tennis world in the mind of the players and in the mind of our association.

But for now it is the way it is. Unfortunately for me, but what can we do with that?



Q. Is there anything you would like the tennis community to do further for Ukraine? Do you feel the awareness or response is sufficient? If you have any thoughts on that. Then could you share with us also, where is your home base as you continue competing right now? Do you have a home base?

LESIA TSURENKO: Yeah, I was thinking about few places, including Paris, to practice here. But then it was clay season and I thought, like, I need to find some good place with a good weather where I can practice outside on clay courts.

And thanks to my friend Marta Kostyuk, who told me about the place where she's practicing, Piatti Academy. It's a very nice place in Italy. So I practice there and their academy is taking very good care of me, and I really appreciate it.

It's just, you know, it's just thinking, saying something about tennis world, it's just sometimes I just want to feel or maybe to see that people understand little bit more about this life in general. Just to see that maybe they -- probably I just want them to think the way I think. I want people to understand that war is terrible and there is nothing worse in this world than a war.

I think when it's not in your country you don't really understand how terrible it is. Of course there are people that are not involved so much, they don't see all the news that I see, all the pictures, all the videos that I see.

I really feel that I hate what Russian propoganda is saying about Ukraine in general. I really hate it. I feel a lot of anger because there is a lot of lie about my country and it hurts me a lot.

I want the whole world to see that Ukraine is a beautiful country with beautiful people. I don't know if I can ask players to care more, but I would like to see that from the players, from the WTA, from ATP, I would like top players just to support more and to show more understanding of what is really going on.

Because it's just, you know, it's just life and life is, as I said before, is more than a tennis match. So, yeah, this is what I would like to share and, but it's three months of the war at the moment, so I think if, I don't know, I don't think that much will change, things will change, but...

Q. I was wondering if you noticed that Iga had a pin?

LESIA TSURENKO: Yeah, she always does. She's wearing it.

Q. Wondering, either from her or other players, you're just speaking about really public comments, but I'm wondering if privately you have heard much

from other players?

LESIA TSURENKO: No, no, that's the problem. That's what I'm saying and this is, well, it is, for me personally it's tough to be here, just because I don't get much words said about the support of my country and this is, yeah, it's just tough to be with people who looks like they don't understand. It's just tough. It's just because it's me, I'm Ukrainian, and there's a war in my country and it's tough.

I think five players spoke to me, maybe four or five. Maybe few more coach. So, yeah, this, for me, as, again, it's me, I would like to get more support probably, but what can I do?

And I really appreciate the support that Iga is showing and I know that Poland in general is doing so much for Ukraine and that, I mean, they are amazing in general, the people, the president of Poland, the politics, everyone, just amazing support for Ukrainian people for Ukrainian refugees and what I see on the TV, the friendship between Ukraine and Poland is, it's amazing.

Q. Just to follow-up on a question earlier about the tours saying they would not have ranking points. Have you, did you say anything to anybody at the WTA to express this?

LESIA TSURENKO: Yes, of course, a lot of times, a lot of times.

Q. And what did you hear back?

LESIA TSURENKO: Nothing that can make me happy. I think my personal opinion is that as we see a lot of sports, they banned Russian, a number of Russian players and in tennis it's only one tournament. I honestly think that this is not a very big price for them to pay or to accept. I think it's not too much, it's not much, really, it's just one tournament.

But, I don't know, for them they feel like they are losing their job. And I also feel many bad things, I feel a lot of terrible things and I think compared to that, losing a chance to play in one tournament is nothing.

Q. How do you feel about facing Russian players on court and do you think that it would be good statement if someone gives a walkover?

LESIA TSURENKO: I don't feel good to play against Russian and Belarusian players just because it reminds me what is going on in my country. I don't feel good and it was also another question that I had inside of me if I should play or I should just give up, you know, should I just decide not to play against them.

But my personal decision is to play, just because, as I said, I'm not 20 years old, I don't know how many more

month or years I'm going to play, so I just want to take every chance to play matches, because I did not play much, many matches in the last three years because of injury. For me it's a very, there are many things going on and I cannot just give up on some matches.

But it's painful, I'll be honest, it's very painful and I'm always hoping not to get them in my draw. This is another thing that I will, that maybe people should hear that being Ukrainian and trying to stay on tour and to continue playing is a big, big issue now, like we probably we are all working with psychologists now, we are all thinking a lot about the country and about our families.

So, yeah, it's tough, but, and every time you get some extra thing like playing Russian or Belarusian player, it's tough mentally.

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