

Roland Garros

Friday, 26 May 2023

Paris, France

Iga Swiatek

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Iga, welcome back to Roland Garros. How does it feel being here as now a two-time champion?

IGA SWIA TEK: Well, honestly it feels the same. I just love coming back here no matter, you know, what my ranking is or no matter what my previous results are.

It's a great place to be, and I feel, you know, really happy that I can compete and I will be healthy for my first round. So yeah, it's just pretty exciting time no matter what happened earlier.

THE MODERATOR: Questions in English.

Q. Could you tell us about the process of your recovery and how comfortable you're feeling at this stage?

IGA SWIA TEK: Well, luckily nothing serious happened, so I had couple of days off. You know, I'm still recovering from the thigh injury, but I'll be good for my first round. That's the most important thing for me. Yeah.

Q. A question about the season so far. Just wondering if the way things have gone, a little bit of trouble with injuries and some stiff competition from Aryna, Elena, and the like. Have they provided you with perhaps a sense of extra motivation or different motivation heading into this tournament?

IGA SWIA TEK: Well, for sure, like I said, totally different situation than last year. It's nice to have, you know, somebody constantly like kind of watching you. We played so many matches against each other that tactically we know our game pretty well.

But we also have to kind of come up with some different solutions sometimes, which is pretty exciting, because I never had that yet in my career. I think this is what like big three had to do for sure when they played like, I don't know, 30 matches against each other or even more.

So I'm happy to learn some new stuff. And also, for sure, you know, we are all working really hard to kind of play better and better. It is an extra motivation, for sure.

But the thing is during the season we don't have much



ROLAND-GARROS

time to practice at all. So I'm really using this time right now, because it's my first week since I would say even Indian Wells when I have time to like take everything slowly and just focus on my technique a little bit more. And, yeah, I think it's going to give me a lot of confidence going to the tournament.

Q. This is the first tournament for nearly a year where there is the chance that you might lose the World No. 1 ranking. Is that something that's on your mind at all?

IGA SWIA TEK: Well, I didn't even know about that (smiling).

Q. Sorry.

IGA SWIA TEK: So no. (Laughter.)

No problem. It doesn't change a lot for me.

Q. You mentioned that you took some time off after Rome. Just wondering how you're feeling then mentally because you played like five weeks in a row basically.

IGA SWIA TEK: Well, honestly on one hand, for sure, it's not easy getting injured and having no kind of time to, like having it in the back of your mind that you have a tournament next week, you know. But on the other hand I'm pretty happy that I have these extra few more days off because for sure I needed time to reset.

Since the beginning of Stuttgart I was in a constant -- I was just doing everything to, you know, play matches the best way, and that was the only thing I focused on. Having this time to reset and think about other stuff and just, you know, calm down for a couple of days was really helpful. And to also analyze what happened during the whole clay season. It's a nice way to kind of going to the last tournament of the clay season with all the knowledge that I gained.

Yeah, well, I'm trying to take positives from that situation. So I feel like I have more time for sure than last year after Rome. I can more calmly prepare to Roland Garros.

Q. You mentioned how you and Aryna and Elena keep playing each other. What sort of emotions are involved in those matchups, given what's going on in the world today, given the war, given your feelings

ASAP . . . when all is said, we're done.®
sports

and your activism, you wear the Ukraine pin when you're playing? How does that enter it and how does that affect the matches and your relationships with them?

IGA SWIA TEK: Well, honestly I can't say like I have any deep relationship with them. We respect each other, and that's all I would say.

But on matches, honestly I'm not really thinking about all the stuff that I'm doing off court. I want to play the best game possible. Usually when I think about, you know, the player like personally, it doesn't help. So I just think what I have to do tactically against them, and that's all. We don't really have time on a match to overanalyze all the other stuff. I just try to play my game as best as possible. So I don't really think about all the off-court stuff.

Q. You have spoken often in the past about your fondness or fandom for Rafael Nadal. Just wanted to ask your thoughts on is it a little strange being here this year without him in the field? How do you think that changes the tournament?

IGA SWIA TEK: Well, right now I don't really know, because the tournament hasn't even started yet. But for sure, you know, I always cheered for him. This time he's not going to be here, so it's going to be a little bit harder for me to find my favorite, you know.

On the other hand, obviously it's sad and we all wish that Rafa would play here. But on the other hand, if he would, you know, suffer a lot and feel a lot of pain, I like kind of athlete to athlete, even though I don't have as much experience as he does or I haven't had, you know, like many serious injuries, I just know that sometimes it's better like not to feel that pain and to recover.

Hopefully he's gonna play next season or next tournaments and he's gonna feel better. That's the most important thing for me. Because, you know, I don't want to focus on statistics or what he could achieve by playing here. For me, like the most important thing is if he's just healthy and happy and, yeah.

Q. You mentioned a few answers ago about the limited time that there is for practice in your schedule. A couple weeks ago you talked about how the extension of the combined 1000 events to be two weeks long, it's sort of affected the rhythm of your season. Has it changed quite a lot the extension of those events? Are you a fan of the format change?

IGA SWIA TEK: Well, obviously, for sure, as you said, it changed the rhythm a little bit, but also not playing Miami and kind of knowing that I should play all of these tournaments in a row also changed it.

If I would have the same schedule as last year, it would be easier for me to compare. But for sure, yeah, like after Stuttgart I had two practice days, after Madrid as well before Rome, so when I started both of these tournaments I felt like I still need to get the feeling of the courts and get the conditions.

So it wasn't as easy as last year, because I remember last year I only had to do that after Indian Wells before Miami, and it was like, wow, I managed to, you know, play like that and kind of improve during the tournament.

This year I had to do that on every inch of that tournament, which for sure was hard, but on the other hand at the end it shows, you know, if we are using our experience from also previous years if we can adapt quickly and who's the best at it.

But, yeah, it's harder, because there is no time to like properly rest. Right after you finish the previous tournament, if you play well, you have to immediately think about the next one, you know. But that's how the tour is, you know, done and we have to adjust (smiling).

Q. The French Open published that it will be the first tournament that provides technology, an app, I believe, to secure players from hate speech on social media. The French Federation was also telling me that your sports psychologist is very positive about this idea. I want to ask you, what do you think about the idea? Will you use the app? Do you have any comments on it?

IGA SWIA TEK: I will use the app, and I think it's a great idea and a step forward to the right direction, because honestly, you know, like social media was also in my life because I'm this generation who had it even when we just learned how to use our phones.

So it's just sad to kind of see that the thing that was supposed to kind of make us happy and make us socialized is giving us more negative feelings and negative thoughts. So I think these kind of apps maybe will help us to, I don't know, use social media and not worry about those things.

But I will see also how the technology develops, because every hour we are seeing like more and more of these innovative things that can help us, but on the other hand I feel like there is more and more hate. It would be nice to be able to use social media and not think about things like that.

For example, after tournaments I had this ritual of going just to see what people thought about my matches, you know, a little bit. But right now I stopped doing that, because even when I had, I don't know, two tournaments, one I won, the other one I was in the final, I went on social media and people were unhappy because

they kind of after last year they thought that I should win everything, you know, that I'm getting worse because I'm not winning, you know. So it frustrated me a little bit, and I realized that there is no sense to read all that stuff.

So the app, I think it's a great idea, and the French Federation made a really great job.

Also I feel like every year we go on-site there is more and more space actually to rest and quiet rooms and places where you can take a nap, for example. I think like they care about our well-being, so that's great.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports