

# Roland Garros

Friday, 2 June 2023

Paris, France

## Elina Svitolina

### Press Conference

E. SVITOLINA/A. Blinkova

2-6, 6-2, 7-5

THE MODERATOR: Elina, congratulations. Into the fourth round for the first time since 2020. Can you talk about your emotions after you hit that winner to win the match today.

ELINA SVITOLINA: Yeah, it was a crazy match today, and really happy I could close the match on 6-5.

Yeah, it was a really big battle today and really, really pleased I could hold the nerves and finish that match with a win.

THE MODERATOR: Questions in English.

**Q. There's a very strange situation that developed while you were playing where Aryna Sabalenka didn't do a post-match press conference, and the tournament released some statement. She said she had felt unsafe during a previous news conference when she was asked about the war. I'm curious what your sentiments are about this, if she should have to continue to answer questions or is that okay to take a pass on this? Curious where you come down on all this.**

ELINA SVITOLINA: Well, it's tough to say from my side, because obviously I have been for couple of hours on the court. Haven't really seen anything from that, from her situation.

It's her choice to do that. Yeah, it's tough for me to judge, and I'm just literally had no time to see what happened outside of the court. I guess like it's not my business.

**Q. Are you aware of maybe how you going to inspire so many other women athletes, because coming back at this level so soon after giving birth is a massive performance. Is this something you're aware of, do you feel it's important to have as a narrative?**

ELINA SVITOLINA: Well, I hope so, because I take inspiration also from other women who gave birth, came



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back to the sport and tennis, or different sports as well. For sure, it takes a huge effort to do that. Even like we have Tatjana Maria who came back after two kids. It's really inspiring, to be fair. I'm not sure I would come back after the second baby (smiling).

It was already quite tough to come back, even though everyone tells me that it's quick, but I feel like it's been ages. But, yeah, I admire all the mothers who are working, who are, you know, have life besides, you know, taking care of the baby. Because, you know, I have a team for Skai full time taking care of her, and then I have a chance to play a little bit of tennis.

So, yeah, I admire the mothers who are doing everything by themselves. Yeah, it takes a lot of effort. Really inspiring.

**Q. On the court interview, you said that Roland Garros is kind of the only Grand Slam which is broadcasted in Ukraine. So do you have any kind of childhood memory of watching Roland Garros on TV and kind of an oldest memory regarding this tournament?**

ELINA SVITOLINA: Yes, I said when I was a child, you know, it was broadcasted. Right now we have more tournaments broadcasted in Ukraine. Not right now exactly, but before the war we had lots of matches broadcasted.

Coming back to the childhood, I remember watching Andre Agassi against Medvedev, Ukrainian one, playing a final. It was a huge final. I remember that match. I remember watching, cheering for Medvedev. Unfortunately he didn't make it. But, yeah, stands out in my mind.

There was also like couple of other matches that, you know, inspired me to dream big, to want to compete here, to want to play in front of so many people and great fans.

So, yeah, this was motivation for me at that time to push, to practice, to do my best as a child.

**Q. Most married couples have different day jobs. They go off to work. When they get back, they say, How's your day been? What's it like being married to someone who has the same job as you? What are the good things about it? What are the not-so-good**



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**things about it? If you weren't both tennis professionals, what sort of job or work do you think you could do together, and who would be the boss?**

ELINA SVITOLINA: You always have so interesting questions, you know, (smiling) like out of this world (smiling).

What is good? Let's start what is bad. What is bad is maybe we speak quite a lot about tennis. You know, tennis is like 95% of our life. Sometimes you just maybe want to rest. But to be fair, you know, a person like Gael, he's quite easy, quite a really easygoing person. Does also like million things around tennis.

So that's why it keeps our life fun. So I guess this is good as well that he's very entertaining in a way and very supportive, of course. Understands what I'm going through. He understands how tough it can be. You know, we both really support each other because we go through similar problems, similar tough times.

Regarding what would be the other job, I don't know. I wish I could maybe do like singing or something. I'm not sure I would be good at it.

So in the end, I'm just really happy that I chose tennis and I have these unbelievable moments on the court. Like today, for example, you know, with all the crowd and just these moments really worth, yeah, everything.

**Q. Obviously Gael was on the front row today. How sort of uplifting is it to see him, especially in that tight final set? How is he after his injury?**

ELINA SVITOLINA: Yeah, his wrist is not great. It will take a couple of weeks to recover. Hopefully the recovery will go well. He already start doing some stuff to speed it up, to be ready for Wimbledon hopefully.

For sure it's great to see him there, supporting, and, you know, getting nervous for me as well. Even though he looks very chill and very relaxed, he told me he was quite nervous on that last game.

Yeah, as I said, it's really special to have someone who understands what you go through to get these kind of wins, and that's special to share these moments together.

**Q. Great run here. I'd like to ask kind of a straightforward question, but would you like to see the Russian and Belarusian players speak out and say, Yes, I would like my country to end this war? Do you think that's something that would be helpful and that they could do?**

ELINA SVITOLINA: Yes, I would love that. That's for sure. I think pretty much all of Ukrainians would love to

hear that from their side.

**Q. To stay in this matter, can you explain us why you didn't shake the hand with your opponent today? What do you think about the boo from the public while you have been supported, the public was behind you during the match?**

ELINA SVITOLINA: Well, you know, it started, you know, with the government, Ukrainian government, that went, you know, to the meetings also with the Russian government. They were against shaking the hands because they're not sharing the same values, obviously, and what it's doing, what the Russians doing to our country.

So that's why it follows. We are Ukrainians, we all unite for one goal, for the goal of winning this war, and we do everything what is on regarding this topic, you know.

So I'm Ukrainian. I'm standing for my country. I'm doing everything possible in the way to support, to give a good spirit for the men, for the women who are right now in the front line who are fighting for our land, for our country.

So can you imagine the guy or a girl who is right now in a front line, you know, looking at me and I'm, like, acting like nothing is happening. I'm representing my country. I have a voice. I'm standing with Ukraine. I'm standing, I have my position in this war. What is Russian government or Russian soldiers are doing on our land is really, really terrible.

For us, it's just our position in this, and it touches many different areas. It touches sport, it touches acting, it touches all different areas. So, you know, we are all united, Ukrainians. And this is our position.

**Q. In the next round you play Kasatkina. She's been very opposed to the war in Ukraine. She's been very vocal, I'd say the most vocal player from Russia. I wonder your thoughts on her and her doing that? Yeah, what you think about her taking that position, I guess.**

ELINA SVITOLINA: Yeah, I'm thankful to Dasha for taking this position. That's what you expect from others, as well. It's really brave from her.

**Q. On your run here, it's pretty phenomenal. I just wonder what did you expect of yourself coming into your first Grand Slam after your time off?**

ELINA SVITOLINA: Just, yeah, I'm trying to take one match at a time, try to give everything what I have each match. Sometimes, you know, like last two matches didn't go my way in the first set, but I tried to fight back, tried to find my way into the match. In the end, you know, I could push through, could push through these

tough moments to find my rhythm back.

In the end, you know, I'm working really hard just to find back my game. And, yeah, as we can see, I'm moving slowly with wins, and this is good sign that I'm doing something right.

**Q. Obviously for any woman it's difficult being a mother. It's all a new experience and juggling things. How long did it take you to get into a rhythm with the baby and traveling and practice, or is it still like a work in progress?**

ELINA SVITOLINA: Yeah, it's still work in progress. We are, with Gael, trying to schedule our practices, our traveling, our time at home.

It's, you know, about just adjusting everything. Skai, she has a nanny full time. Then our moms are helping a lot.

It's adjusting to everything. It's new enough for us. It's our first baby, and no one told us, you know, how it's gonna be, because we are both, you know, full-time traveling, full-time working. It takes adjustment.

You know, here it's our first week when we are both playing. Unfortunately Gael, you know, he didn't go that deep in the tournament, and he has more time right now to spend with Skai.

But, you know, it's like this. It's about adjustment. And I'm happy that, you know, we have trusted people around us who we can trust Skai with, and sometime when we are preparing for the matches, when we are playing matches, so then our minds are calm and we can leave Skai with them.

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