

Roland Garros

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Paris, France

Anastasia

Pavlyuchenkova

Press Conference

A. PAVLYUCHENKOVA/E. Mertens

3-6, 7-6, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations. Back into the quarterfinals at Roland Garros. Just tell us about your emotions after the match, and what were the keys today to getting the win.

ANASTASIA PAVLYUCHENKOVA: Actually, emotions, I didn't have much left after this match. I think I was still in the match when give an interview on court and after now, just a bit relaxed, and honestly really tired.

But really proud of myself, because couple of people reminded me that I was 6-3, 3-1, Love-40 down, so actually felt like a lost match already, but I kept on fighting every point, believing, and here I am here.

Q. Was this your first time on Chatrier since the final even to practice?

ANASTASIA PAVLYUCHENKOVA: Yes, first time. I didn't even practice. Lower players don't really get a chance to practice on those courts.

Q. What did you make of the atmosphere out there? Did you feel the memories of the last time you were there?

ANASTASIA PAVLYUCHENKOVA: Yeah, I mean, obviously a very nice memory going up the stairs, and that is very special.

But also, not easy, because I was playing three matches on small courts, so actually just felt a little bit strange at the start.

Also, today was really tough conditions. Was a lot of wind. On one side we didn't even have the clay left actually, because with the wind it was flying away. I couldn't really slide on that side anymore, and so it was not easy.

Q. You have told us that you love to compete, and you love to win. Where do you get your competitive



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spirit from? Do you think that sometimes when you are behind in a match, your competitive spirit is at its highest? How competitive do you think you would be if you were not allowed to drink coffee?

ANASTASIA PAVLYUCHENKOVA: (Smiling.) Well, I think without coffee I wouldn't wake up today. I would be still sleeping on the court.

I think my fighting spirit and competitive spirit comes from being back in Russia as a little girl. I didn't have much of support and sponsorships, there was nothing, so I was just growing up playing on some bad courts and my dad was coaching me.

So since then, I felt like every match I was playing or practice or whatever, I just felt like I want to win, and I have to win to kind of keep surviving and keep going and continue playing tennis that I love.

So I think it comes more from that, since being a child, I think I have just, yeah, grown up with this.

Q. Mirra Andreeva was in here yesterday, and she was saying that there was a slight concern about her visa for Wimbledon because there has sort of been delays on it. Wondering if you have had any worries about your visa or if you're still waiting or if you don't need one at this point?

ANASTASIA PAVLYUCHENKOVA: First of all, I have one. Second of all, I'm not worried because I'm not going to Wimbledon this year, because my protected ranking allowed me to play only two Grand Slams, and Roland Garros is my second Grand Slam.

So since the deadline was close before Roland Garros, even with the new ranking points that I got from Roland Garros, I'm not qualifying for Wimbledon. Because they are using my old ranking which is like 400, so there is no way I can get in. So no grass season for me this year.

Q. I just wanted to ask you a little bit about your injury and your comeback from there. Was there a point in this journey back, surgery and your comeback from there, was there a point that you thought you may not come back, you didn't want to come back, and how hard was that?

ANASTASIA PAVLYUCHENKOVA: Yeah. I for sure wanted to come back. There was no doubt about it. But

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of course there was a fear and doubts that I knew I would come back but how I would come back I didn't know.

I had a fear that and doubts that maybe I will never win a match again. Maybe I will never get my good form back or I will never be fit again. What if I start playing again and the pain comes back and my knee is bad again?

So of course I had a lot of thoughts and fear. But I guess this motivation and this desire of coming back and competing again and being on these big stages again and playing three-hour matches like today, you know, there was a lot more weight on that. So that kind of pushed me.

I believed, I worked so hard, and even with all the failures that I had this year, earlier this year, and there was like sometimes ridiculous matches that I lost, still kept on believing, working hard, and just persistence and patience.

Q. Earlier in the tournament you said you weren't here to just like fill a draw. You weren't here to just participate. That you wanted to come back being better than the player that was before the injury. So three seeds knocked out. Two three-hour matches. Back in the quarterfinals. How do you rate your level in Paris this week so far?

ANASTASIA PAVLYUCHENKOVA: So far, I mean, of course I'm not gonna complain. I'm into quarterfinal. But I feel like today also there was not much, especially at the beginning, I wasn't quite satisfied with my game, because I think I had a slow start and some unforced errors.

But so far it's just thanks to my fighting spirit I think, and patience and persistence, but I want to combine this with also like good quality game with next one. I would love to have some good quality match just by really enjoying my shots and everything. Because today was more than half the match there was a lot of frustration, almost after each point.

Yeah, but a win is a win, you know. So I'm happy to be here. Then I will try to, again, I try to be a better player than I was before.

I'm happy, healthy. Physically I'm still holding up and pushing myself. I'm excited for more.

Q. Obviously tired right now, but it's been a long time since you have played, you know, this many matches in this period of time. Are you totally confident in your ability to recover in the next 48 hours or is that at all a concern?

ANASTASIA PAVLYUCHENKOVA: I try not to think about it yet, but my second-round match, it was also

more than three hours. So I have recovered quite well for the next match, and I felt good on my third match on court. So I don't think about it, so just trying to enjoy this win today, and then take it step by step.

Q. Before the injury, you were basically at this week in, week out since you were a junior. Never really had any major layoffs. Was there ever any burnout that you dealt with during that period? Now that you're back, do you feel fresher, a new perspective?

ANASTASIA PAVLYUCHENKOVA: Yeah, well, absolutely, I think it's even normal to have a burnout, and I think a lot of people have it.

It's not only in sports. I think in life in general, because I think people, we always like rushing and we are never satisfied. Whatever you have you probably always look around and you want to be better or this is not enough. You need this and that and that and always going for more. I think it's constant race in life, and in sports especially.

Of course I also had a burnout couple years ago before the injury, and I think now I just try to evolve and look at this from a different position and really appreciating what I have.

That's why, like, I'm not giving up on every point when I'm on court, because I think this is great what we have, and I appreciate that more and more. So just fighting for this.

Q. You talked about the losses and, you know, the difficulty. Wondered how you bounced back from the loss to Iga and how you adjusted after that match and came back stronger? Another question on the visa, in 2021 you missed Cincinnati because of your visa, too.

ANASTASIA PAVLYUCHENKOVA: Yeah.

Q. What was that like and have you had any visa issue since then?

ANASTASIA PAVLYUCHENKOVA: So first on Iga, well, as I mentioned before, it was a hard loss. Even though, I mean, she's Iga and she's No. 1 in the world, you know. But you still don't want to lose 6-Love, 6-Love. I felt like I deserved and fight and take more than one game.

Actually, it felt so good in Rome, after first match and on the practice courts, and I actually had a lot of confidence going into that match. Then I just went off court and I said to my coach, like, Am I really that bad? I just didn't understand what just happened.

Then I watched that match again, and then I adjusted myself, and I said to my coach, Okay, we're working on this and this and that and that. I don't like how I move,



serve, how I defend, this is all ridiculous, and if I want to be on that level, we have to work a lot, like right now.

So all those adjustments, like, I just only had like one week before Strasbourg, and we worked so hard. Also with my fitness trainer, I told him, like, Just move me around.

Then I tried to already use that in Strasbourg on my matches. It's getting better. But still a lot of things I can improve, which is positive.

The visa topic, it was ridiculous, frustrating, because I was coming into Montreal after winning gold in Tokyo, so I was so excited to play Montreal and Cincinnati and US Open. I felt actually good and confident.

That visa problem where I was stuck for three weeks in Canada waiting for my U.S. visa, and then they only gave it to me Thursday evening, I could fly to US Open. Friday was my first practice, basically, and then in two days US Open was starting, because I was saying to them, If you don't give me Friday, then I'm out of the US Open.

So then, I don't know, I lost like two kilos probably because I was so nervous. That was really frustrating. It's actually so frustrating when you are ready and I want to play, but you can't because I couldn't control that situation.

Q. Just on the Wimbledon topic, is there not kind of, do you not think, based on your run here, was there not a chance of you potentially getting a wildcard? Is that not an option?

ANASTASIA PAVLYUCHENKOVA: Are you serious? (Laughter.)

Do you think after the situation last year they would give me a wildcard this year?

Q. (Off mic.)

ANASTASIA PAVLYUCHENKOVA: I can try and ask. Actually, you're right, thank you. I will try and ask, and I'll let you know in the next press conference. Fingers crossed.

Q. You said earlier about not being able to practice on the big courts. I just wonder what's the difference in experience at a Grand Slam as a lower-ranked player is as compared to a higher one? How much more difficult is it to perform at your best?

ANASTASIA PAVLYUCHENKOVA: Sorry, I wasn't listening to you. (Laughter.) Sorry. Could you repeat? Actually, this happens to me a lot, but usually I do it with my coach when he tells me what to do on court. Sorry.

Q. I was just saying, you mentioned about being a lower-ranked player and not being able to therefore practice on the big courts. What is the difference in experience as a higher-ranked player compared to a lower-ranked player, and how much more difficult does that make it?

ANASTASIA PAVLYUCHENKOVA: I was thinking about it, and I think it's difficult. But again, I'm not in the position to complain or to ask for better courts. I just, you know, feet on the ground, working hard, fighting and trying to get my place there, sort of, you know.

Unfortunately, like, when you're lower-ranked player you don't have much choice. Most of the time I practice off-site actually here. Again, I'm not complaining, since you ask, so I just reply, but there is a slight difference in courts for sure. Especially, as I said, just the space, because center court obviously is way bigger. So even the sound of the ball and everything, the bounce just feels different.

That's it. It's not easy, but again, I don't have much choice, so...

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