

Roland Garros

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Elina Svitolina

Press Conference

A. SABALENKA/E. Svitolina

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THE MODERATOR: Elina, bad luck today, but congratulations on a great run. What positives do you take of this Roland Garros?

ELINA SVITOLINA: Yeah, it was great, Strasbourg and Roland Garros for me, obviously didn't expect to go that far. So it's a great, lots of great things to take out of this time.

Yeah, playing good tennis, lots of good matches. Yeah, just really happy with the way that I could find my game.

THE MODERATOR: Questions in English.

Q. There are two things that we all I think noticed at the end of the match that Sabalenka was waiting for you at the net. What do you think she expected? Also, as you walked to your bench without shaking hands with her there were some boos coming down from the stands.

ELINA SVITOLINA: I don't know, to be fair, what she was waiting, because my statements were clear enough about the handshake.

Secondly, no, it was quite expected. I was expecting that. Whoever in this situation loses, I guess, gets booed, so I was expecting that. It was not a surprise for me.

Q. Do you think that by standing at the net like that, Sabalenka sort of inflamed the situation a bit? Obviously your previous opponents have shown respect to your position in the way that they have acted.

ELINA SVITOLINA: Yeah, I think so, unfortunately.

Q. I was wondering, what part of your game did you have to work the most after coming back from maternity? What was the most difficult part of getting back to the current level and possibly to a higher level?



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ELINA SVITOLINA: Well, to be fair, a little bit of everything. Physically I was trying to come back because of obviously not playing. Not taking the racquet for eight months, you need to work on everything, to play again at a good level, to be able to compete against top players, try to, you know, to improve everything, starting from the serve, and ending with physical, mental conditions.

Everything has to be started again, and that's why I'm really proud of these past days that I have been playing lots of intense matches, a lot of matches where I showed good level of tennis. Yeah, just lots of things positive from these matches that I played in Strasbourg and here, of course.

Q. You have come here and talked about some difficult things. Aryna chose not to for the last two matches. Do you think that gives a player an advantage if you have one player having one set of rules and the rest of the field having to go by another set of rules?

ELINA SVITOLINA: Well, definitely I think it should be equal for everyone. Like, for example, why Naomi got fined last time and this time there is no fine for the player, which also skip the press conference.

So this is like if there would be no fine for Naomi, maybe it would be different, but, you know, it should be equal for every situation.

Yeah, just I faced difficulties, I faced difficulty also with the question about Novak, about his statement about Kosovo. So, you know, I'm not escaping. I have my strong position, and I'm vocal about that. I'm not gonna try to win likeness of the people by betraying my strong belief and strongest position for my country.

Q. This was such a significant match for so many reasons. Can you tell us how stressful you found it coming into this match and playing it today? Just sum up your emotions now around the match and what happened at the end of the match. How do you feel?

ELINA SVITOLINA: Well, in one level, for sure, it was very significant, but I tried to put it like I have nothing to lose. You know, I was coming to this tournament with zero hopes, with zero expectations for myself.

Then, you know, I find myself ready in the quarterfinals. So I just try to take it as another match, not a tough battle. Of course disappointed that I didn't go further today, but I did my best. Yeah, it didn't go my way today. But I left everything out there.

Q. You were just saying about the positives and what you can take away from here, but is there one specific thing that will stick in your mind from the experience of this year?

ELINA SVITOLINA: Facing difficulties. This year was difficult and different on the court, off the court, with you guys here, you know, with your difficult questions (smiling). And overcoming difficulties, as well.

You know, even though I'm sitting here dealing with it today, but I feel like I won in so many ways.

Q. Congratulations on your run. There are many, many top Ukrainian women tennis players. The Ukrainians on the battlefield have been really strong and have surprised many. What makes the Ukrainian people so strong?

ELINA SVITOLINA: I think the spirit, the spirit that we are united together and the spirit that nothing comes easy to us ever. I already said that like years before, that all of us, like, if you take all the girls that are right now like Tsurenko, Kostyuk, Kalinina, we all had to overcome difficulties with the money, with the place to practice, with the coaches, when we were growing up. It was really not so much -- no one really knew tennis at that time.

So I think this fighting spirit that we have, and right now I think the power of being unite all together for one goal to win.

Q. Congratulations on your great run here. Everyone has said how much you have inspired people around the world. How much do you think you have inspired yourself?

ELINA SVITOLINA: Definitely this one, Strasbourg and Roland Garros, inspired me to work hard, to continue working hard, to continue doing steps on the practice court, you know, that I'm doing, right things.

Of course I want to win every time I step on the court, but sometimes, you know, from the tough matches, you can see what you need to improve, where are you with your game. Yeah, just lots of good things that gonna push me and give me the confidence to move forward for the next tournaments.

Q. Do you feel the tour and the Grand Slam should solve that handshake issue by just saying to your opponent from Russia and Belarus to not expect anything and just to move on? Have you asked for

them to spread the word or do you think something can be made so you don't have to get booed in the stadiums?

ELINA SVITOLINA: Well, definitely this would be I think ideal from them to do that. I already was thinking about that before. But yeah, I should have probably, yeah, tell them about this, because will be just easier for I guess for everyone.

Q. What was your internal thought and reaction when you saw Aryna standing up at the net the way she was? Did you consider going over, obviously not to shake her hand, but to say anything to her?

ELINA SVITOLINA: My initial reaction, don't know, was like, what are you doing (smiling)? Because, yeah, all my press conference I say my clear position. So I don't know.

Maybe she's not on social media during the tournaments, but it is pretty clear. I made multiple statements that I'm not shaking hands, and she played obviously Marta as well the first round. So is quite simple, you know.

Q. I believe you're playing Birmingham. You have got a wildcard. Just wondering, regarding the booing when you went off court, wondered, you said you expected it. I was wondering, A, how you felt about that, and B, are you expecting perhaps anything similar when you get to the UK or do you think the reaction will be different?

ELINA SVITOLINA: Well, the support that we got from UK was massive, and especially taking the case of Wimbledon last year and great support for Ukrainian people in the UK and really thankful for them to taking the position.

But to be fair, no, I'm not really focusing on this. You know, as I mentioned before, I don't want that everyone likes me. You know, I'm not a dollar that people gonna like me in every way.

As I said, I have my position. I'm standing by this position. Not gonna sell my country for the likeness of people.

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