

# National Bank Open

Saturday, August 13, 2022

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

## Simona Halep

### Press Conference



S. HALEP/J. Pegula

2-6, 6-3, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Simona, through to another final here in Canada. What was your assessment of the match?

SIMONA HALEP: Definitely it's been a very difficult match. She's a top-10 player and super solid.

We never played against each other. So I didn't really know what to expect. But it was a great fight. I'm really happy that I went through.

THE MODERATOR: Questions?

**Q. There were so many boisterous Romanian fans today. They were waving flags, screaming your name. Just what did the crowd's energy do for you today? Particularly in those difficult moments in the match.**

SIMONA HALEP: Actually, it felt like in Romania today. Many people were supporting me. Actually, I felt like everyone was supporting me. They sent a lot of energy. In the tough moments they really pushed me.

So I would like to thank them for that. And I'm waiting for them, actually, tomorrow.

**Q. This is your third time in this final. How does it feel to be back in the final here in Canada?**

SIMONA HALEP: It feels good. It feels great. I'm really happy that I can play final again.

I love playing in Canada. I think I had very good matches through the week. I'm really pleased with the way I fought today and every match with the way I play.

Of course, I can improve. But I'm building the confidence, I'm building the game, and I'm really happy that I'm in this position.

**Q. You won two times in Montreal. Do you note some**

**difference between the two tournaments? Like there's same ambiance? Or for you it's not the same tournament?**

SIMONA HALEP: It's the same and feels the same. Also the court feels the same. And all of the club. So I don't see something different.

People are nice to me also there. I had great support in Montreal too. I think I can say that here it's a little bit more. Like more people in the crowd Romanians.

But I felt great also there. I won two times there. So probably tomorrow I will just push a little bit more. Maybe I can win here also.

**Q. You threw your racquet or smashed your racquet at one point. We haven't seen that kind of reaction from you in a while. Is that just the frustration that took over or the passion or what? How do you explain that?**

SIMONA HALEP: The fire is back. It's a good sign if I do that. Like, yeah, it looks like I fight.

I can say it helps me sometimes. I don't know always if it's good or not. But it helps me. Yeah, it doesn't look good. But it's a tough subject (laughing.)

**Q. You saved 12 of 17 break-point chances today for Jessica. How did you stay very strong mentally in those moments? And do you find you change anything at all when you're facing those break points?**

SIMONA HALEP: Well, it's always extra pressure when you face a break point. But normally I'm trying to not think about it and just play normal.

Yeah, many break points. I didn't know that. But today it was really, really tough. She was returning strong. The game was super solid. I felt like every point was a break point. So every point was a lot of pressure.

I feel like, as you said, I've been a little bit more stronger mentally.

**Q. You play many years. Who is your tennis idol?**



SIMONA HALEP: When I was growing up my model was Justine Henin. I was following her because we have the same height. And, yeah, I liked her game a lot.

**Q. Back in the days, in the 2015, against Bencic here in Toronto.**

SIMONA HALEP: I remember.

**Q. Was it one of the toughest final that you took part? It was your left knee and the heat.**

SIMONA HALEP: If I remember well, I stopped that match. Because I couldn't finish it. I felt sick. It was super hot. And, yeah, I couldn't handle it.

But it was a final. So I can say that it was a tough, the toughest final. Because I had to stop. I don't like to stop. But I have great memories from since when I came here first time. So I take only the positives.

**Q. I was reading a magazine story about you the other day. Saying that you were so shy growing up that you didn't even like to talk on the phone. I was wondering how somebody like that survives in this world of professional tennis where you're performing for the public.**

SIMONA HALEP: Yeah, I have worked a lot with myself to get better. Tennis helped me a lot. It pushed me to face tough moments, difficult moments.

I think I always been open to learn. This aspect helped me to just improve every day. I accepted that I was shy and I just faced everything like I've been.

I started to push myself to do some things that are out of my comfort zone. Yeah, I think now I'm much better. And I'm happy with myself.

**Q. You said earlier in this conference that the fire is back. I'm curious, what brought the fire back? What's the sort of new passion?**

SIMONA HALEP: The person next to us. Patrick. He brought it.

And the vibe from the academy gave me the energy. To see all those kids fighting every day to touch the dream that they have.

I felt that I still can do it. I still have it inside myself. So that's why I'm still working hard.

**Q. In the second set it looked like you made some adjustments on your serve. I know you can't get into too many details with a match, obviously, to play tomorrow. But what were some of those adjustments and why did you make them?**

SIMONA HALEP: Sometimes it's just about relaxing my hand and just hit the ball. Sometimes I'm too tight, so the serve doesn't work. But I've been much better today than previous days. So I'm hoping tomorrow is going to be even better.

**Q. What key moment brought you back after the first set?**

SIMONA HALEP: I think after the first set I just calmed myself down. I changed the tactic a little bit.

It was super fast, the first set. I didn't play right. But then, yeah, as I said, I calmed down. And I just wanted to fight.

And I believed that I have a chance. Even if she was playing great in the first set.

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