

# US OPEN

Thursday, August 31, 2023

New York, New York, USA

## Elina Svitolina

### Press Conference

E. SVITOLINA/A. Pavlyuchenkova

5-7, 6-4, 6-4

**THE MODERATOR:** Tough three-setter. Your thoughts on quite a match.

**ELINA SVITOLINA:** Yeah, was not easy match, conditions. Didn't play as well as I wanted. But in the end I had to really put my head down and work for this win.

Some days are like this. I'm happy that I got a win in the end.

**THE MODERATOR:** Questions, please.

**Q. It seemed like in the first set Nastia was trying to play longer rallies. You were trying to be obviously very aggressive. As the match went on, the rallies started to get shorter and seemed like you were able to control. Is that what it felt like on the court?**

**ELINA SVITOLINA:** To be fair, today was like lots of things going on. I don't know. I couldn't really control as much as I wanted because there was lot of mistakes, lot of fault from my side, her side. It was, like, up and down.

Yeah, I mean, the quality of the match I wouldn't say was the highest, so that's why there was no rhythm really. It was tough to find a good game because you're like a goalkeeper (smiling).

Yeah, just in the end I'm happy that I could stay in that second set, served well in some good moments. For sure to get through these kind of matches is great because not playing so well, almost thinking you're not going to win. Finally get that win, it was nice feeling.

**Q. Since you've come back, you've made such an effort to be that much more aggressive. The way you're able to see the ball now, seeing opportunities better perhaps. Over the course of your career, did you see those opportunities and were making different decisions or maybe your work with Raymond has**



**taught you more to be cognizant of when to go for the ball?**

**ELINA SVITOLINA:** I think different things changed. I changed pretty much. I have this experience from all the years that I played on tour. I always was looking to improve my serve, to improve the power on my shots, to strike the ball more cleaner, some technical things on my forehand. Now I had time. I had three months starting from January until my first match where we were just working on my game.

Also fresh opinion. Raymond is a great coach. He explains very easy. Almost feels like he's not doing anything, but this is like in a way really natural and very good. I was just analyzing, trying to think what he really brought into my game. This is, like, really natural because we talk about the game, we try to analyze few things here and there.

In the end it really comes naturally. So I'm happy that there is improvement. I always have really high standard of in how I see my game, how I want to play. Sometimes maybe it's not playing on my head because I'm too hard on myself and getting down.

Now I'm happy with the balance that I have. These matches, like today, didn't play well but I fought and got the win.

**Q. At the end, needed a few match points to close it out. Can you take us through both strategy-wise but also emotionally and mentally what it is like when you have a few match points and you're not able to convert the first couple? How does that play in your mind? What is that struggle like of being that close but not quite able to shut the door?**

**ELINA SVITOLINA:** Yes, for sure it's really difficult. Especially when it's like 5-4, 6-5, sometimes you think this is like the opportunity.

You just have to fight, have to accept that sometimes the player, the opponent, can play well. You have to try next time to play better, to serve smarter or return smarter.

This is tennis. That's why few points here and there can change the momentum. Have to work with that. Have to



really restart yourself. You have to again start the new point with a fresh mindset, and go again.

**Q. Is there ever a feeling of increased pressure because I don't want to let this slip away?**

**ELINA SVITOLINA:** For sure there's thoughts coming in, but is normal. We are humans. We are thinking about the worst scenario sometimes, and it happens. But you have to work with them, not even try to block them. I try to really work with them.

Okay, somewhere you have a voice telling you, Oh, you're going to lose maybe. But then you have to convince yourself, you have to speak to yourself. I speak to myself. I convince myself that I got this. I'm confident in my serve, confident in my return, my shots.

Yeah, this experience, this just self-control is really important. That's why, like, some really top players, they know how to do it at the very important moments when they are down or when they're up. In the important moments, they take this opportunity because they're very focused, very strong.

I also try to aim for this.

**Q. On the prospect of potentially playing Pegula, what do you make of her in terms of as a player and as a challenge? I saw the ankle brace on your leg. Is that the physical issue that you've been trying to manage to get yourself ready for the Open?**

**ELINA SVITOLINA:** Played with Jess in Washington and had a great battle. That match was really good, good level. We both played really well. Unfortunately didn't go my way. I watched the match. We analyzed with Raymond, saw what I did wrong.

I just try to recover right now. The foot, we are managing it right now. We're going to see how it's going to react tomorrow and how I'm going to feel.

But, yeah, of course not playing in Cincinnati, was not as fresh as I wanted to be. For Montreal, as well. Managing since that time this injury.

Yeah, for me it's just important to recover, take time off. I'm happy there is one day off where we can really rest and do some treatments and prepare.

**Q. Back to the three months off. A lot of tennis players, it's hard for them to make any changes, take that kind of time off. Is that time you wish you would have taken when you were younger? Is it time you**

**would recommend young players take?**

**ELINA SVITOLINA:** Yeah, definitely it's really important to take time to practice. Many times during my career, before the pregnancy, I had no time to work on my game because the season is very long, and when there is no WTA tournaments, you have exhibitions, you have different kind of things happening. You're not really resting. You're not really working on your game. You're all the time traveling.

I would definitely recommend the juniors or players who coming back after the injury to not rush so much because really helped me.

I try to take time when I can right now. I'm going to see what I'm going to do the rest of the season right now. But it's important to be healthy, to work on the game, and be fresh mentally.

There's so many tournaments right now happening, you can play every single week. Sometimes you need to take step back to take time for yourself, to stay at home, to rest, mentally reset and work again, then go.

This I think is really important for a tennis player.

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