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same situation during the practice time where you can be aggressive, angry, you want to go home or you want to cry, whatever. All kind of emotions. That's where you can build your mental toughness. As like Nadal said the same, you preparing yourself on the practice. So it all start with the practice.

I think when she start to recognize this during the practice, it's easier for her during the match. It's still tricky, it's a lot of stress and emotions, but if you're doing it during the practice, at least prepare for this one.

THE MODERATOR: Gentlemen, welcome to the room. We will open the questions up to the floor.

Q. Anton, and the rest of this great team, I just want to ask you, what was that bond that has you guys all together to assemble now being part of the team that represents the No. 1 player in the world? How did that story come to be?

ANTON DUBROV: Well, yeah, a lot of ice cream before the matches, a lot of talks (smiling).

Last year was not a great one for us, but I think it was a tricky one, but at the same time, it gave us some kind of toughness. We got through. We found our weapons, we know our weakness, we worked through. We can open up more and speak about things we should do or we're not doing right now and everything. So we are working more to be open to each other, not just with Aryna but to each other.

I think that was a big part also so we can be stronger and she can grow with us together. I would say this one gave us the most advantage.

Q. She is still locked in on this tournament and staying focused on the next match and then everything else will happen, everything else. How have you been pleased with her mentality of just staying focused and locked in?

ANTON DUBROV: I think the best about focus said Novak during Wimbledon, that it's normal for people to shift focus around, back and forth, everywhere. It's more about when you recognize it's okay, I'm somewhere else, and I have to focus on myself again.

She understand it. She trying to work through. We trying to speak with her more and more during the practice also, because practice it's the same as matches. You have the

Q. Aryna was obviously able to really hit the ground running at the start of the season. Can you tell us about the offseason and the work you did, whether it felt any different coming into the season as compared to previous.

ANTON DUBROV: I will start and I will then give some words to Jason also.

I think it was the same as I said before, we spoke about to prepare yourself here on the practice court. It's the body language, is going to be, like, strokes, it's going to be emotions, what are you feeling and everything. Accept everything that's going on in the court, accept this and try to be best you can do today.

You can feel really terrible right now, but it might be the same on the tennis court during the match. It's not, like, okay, it's just practice, it's three weeks is going to be the first tournament so I can do nothing right now. It's like here right now you're preparing yourself for the battle. "Battle" not "bottle."

JASON STACY: I'll just translate. That was "battle."
(Laughter.)

ANTON DUBROV: That was a pretty good offseason. I will say the body language and her focus was on the court, yeah, I have to build myself to be better and better and better every day.

And then during the match she even said that this was easier for her to understand even when she's feeling something not great today, she still has a lot of weapons that she can use.



Some words to Jason with his English. (Laughter.)

JASON STACY: I don't know what to add. I agree with Anton the big focus was, one, just continuing to help her build a sense of control, understand what she's doing, why she's doing something, whether it's a specific thing like a stroke, a serve, the technique, some tactics. Just helping her continue to build that awareness of herself and how she's responding to certain emotions.

She's continued over the last so many years more and more and more opening up to be more vulnerable, to be open to try new things, and to be able to do the things that make her very uncomfortable rather than try and avoid it or go around it or pretend it's not there. She's like, okay, just turn around and face it.

That was probably the biggest part mentally from the preseason training. We had a few specific things to work on and she was really hyper focused on it and just went for it.

But I think it was just giving her that sense of control so when she's out there and she's stressing out or things are going on, she has a better understanding of herself, a better understanding what's going on around her, and that gives her a bit of calmness to make better decisions, and then obviously you can see the result from that.

Q. How much direction does Aryna want from you guys during the match? What's it like, especially, like, on Ashe where the microphones are picking up everything that's being said.

ANDREI VASILEVSKI: Like everything? Not good... (Laughter.)

Q. But I'm sure you have watched that in some of the matches you can hear a little bit of the talk from the box.

ANTON DUBROV: How much will it help her during the match?

Q. Yeah.

ANTON DUBROV: We trying to, but sometimes she just screaming that she's not hearing us.

ANDREI VASILEVSKI: It depends how much she allows us from time to time. That's kind of true (smiling).

ANTON DUBROV: No, I think sometimes it's more about, like, emotions, so sometimes she can be, like, melting on the court. She just needs some firing up. We can even

argue with her during the match. But she understand somewhere she is, like, too passive, somewhere she's too aggressive and we're trying to tell her just to find her own rhythm, to be more calm, breathe, and, like, just to go with your own rhythm, just not to rush too much with emotions and think in front.

And during the match about, like, direction, where she has to play or not, it's more about, we try to keep it simple as possible. She has already a lot of emotions and thoughts on the court. You cannot talk too much with her, because again, it's so loud and you have just few seconds you can tell just one, two words.

So we try to make it as simple as possible. We are more talking with each other, communicate, like, what we can tell her. But mostly just one, two simple words just to keep her, like, maybe shift her focus back on herself and focus on herself more.

Q. In terms of just this year, so let's set aside last year, but just this year, what's the toughest match that she's had to play?

JASON STACY: Define "tough."

THE MODERATOR: You have ten seconds to answer the question.

JASON STACY: Well, I'd say how about all of them and none of them. Every match is tough. I mean, she's not playing, like, juniors. Like, it doesn't matter on paper overall Aryna has won more matches this year. Every girl that shows up, they're a competitor, they all have the ability to perform.

So, I mean, just you have to take every one of them serious and respect every opponent no matter what their ranking is today or what it is now. I know it sounds cliché but it's true. Every match is tough for different reasons.

ANTON DUBROV: I'm still trying to scroll through. I would say it's always different, because we'll say beginning of the season, might be, like, final of the Australia because of the emotion stuff there. After is expectation from herself in all other matches.

Like, I would say it was great final in Stuttgart against Swiatek, and then the same great match in Madrid, both really good quality from my side. But at the same time, if I will remember all other matches in Madrid, she couldn't find her own rhythm during the week but she still got through. So it's like for me is also like all of them were really tricky over there.

They all so different, but I don't know. There were some tough losses but some great wins. It's hard to say just one match.

Q. On these big stages and these big tournaments, Australia aside, she seems to have these moments in semifinals. I'm wondering, is that something you guys talk about, that match, and what do you think happens there? Whether it was Fernandez here two years ago or, you know, Wimbledon, Paris, all situations where she's really in a winning position and seems like in any other round she gets across the finish line. Is that something you address, you talk about expressing yourselves, and what do you do? What do you tell a player like that or what does she tell you?

ANTON DUBROV: She tells a lot about it (smiling). No, we spoke definitely. I think the big part is that she's thinking about, like, what she, how to say, what she can do or what she has to do and everything, but she's not in the moment during these matches.

She's more thinking too much in front sometimes. As you said, she can be in a winning position and she's thinking like about how to finish and not about what she has to do to have control over the match. So definitely we speak about more and more.

We try and find this spot where she can actually control the situation and not thinking about, like, Oh, my God, I'm, like, winning and it's like semifinal. No, it's like next balls, next stroke, it's all about this moment right now. So we're trying to, again, it's about the focus, just shift the focus back on herself, to think about herself what she can do right now.

And yes, semifinal, it should be semifinal for you to be in the final. It's not about afraid to be there. You have to actually think about to be there again one more time and to show the best what you can, and that's it. Not thinking about, like, what's going to be the result or afraid about the results.

That's from my side. Jason can add something or Andrei can add something.

JASON STACY: You said most of it. I think a big part is it's almost like one of the things we have noticed, it's like she puts more emphasis and pressure on a semi than a final. She gets to a final and she's like, Okay, I'm here. Let's go. She wants to fight. She's like, This is mine. I'm going to take it from you, it's mine, go away kind of attitude when it's like in a final.

But it's like that step to get to the final. It's almost like that's a bigger step for her. When she gets there, she's like,

Okay, I made it, I'm here.

It's a weird situation, yeah. It's interesting. I don't think it's, like, a huge -- people get this stuck in their head like, Oh, my God, it's a semi again, I'm going to repeat the whole thing. We're just helping her understand what she is capable of. Help her understand what she has control over, and keep just letting her come up with these solutions on what to focus on during those moments.

We'll see how it comes together. It's just there's always a hurdle. Everyone is talking about how well she's done and now everyone is talking about this No. 1 stuff, which is kind of irrelevant for us right now. At the end of the day, it's, like, every match, like I said earlier, is different, there's lots of challenges. It's just the next little phase for us to break through and figure out so then she's at that level and more consistently.

Q. Anton, when did you first meet Aryna, where, and what did you think?

ANTON DUBROV: I think she was, like, 14. Even maybe less. I don't know.

Because we are from the same town, from same city, from Minsk. I met her somewhere on some of the Tier tournaments, I think. She played something, maybe it was something like a European championship, something, was in Minsk. The first where I saw her she was hitting the ball so hard, sometimes straight to the fans, but she always play, whenever she's playing, she's always like fighting no matter like it's going to be like No. 1, like No. 100 or 1000 or whatever. She's still fighting.

She's more, even back then, she played with herself more with the opponent. She's trying to be really aggressive, screaming hard. It's something really, really similar for a moment, but right now she's playing with more spin, I would say. (Laughter.) She's trying to.

Q. Following up on what you were saying about the coaching you're able to do during matches, since you can do that openly this year, do you think many players have benefited more from it than she has?

ANTON DUBROV: So compared to other players?

Q. Has she benefited maybe more than other players have? That you can continue talking during a match that you can sort of gauge...

ANTON DUBROV: You think she is getting more benefits or other...

Q. She is.

ANTON DUBROV: She is not the one who will take more during the match. So she's more about, again, as I said, like some simple stuff, because she's not like we'll talk with you about a lot about strategy, like, two backhands like to the forehand and do some dropshot.

No, she's more focused on herself, because she understand that she can be really aggressive and dominate on the court, so she doesn't need to be, like, really something really tough with strategies. Should be simple but it's more about where she can find this moment where she can control herself with emotions and then she can control her body better.

So again it's more about focus, simple, but nothing really hard for her to think about during the match, because she already really emotional. So today like this one, where, how to play, is getting even more frustrating for her.

Q. Looking ahead, I know No. 1 isn't an issue at the moment because you're in tournament and that's the focus. There is a difference between hunting and being hunted. She has been very good at chasing the rabbit in front of her. Do you have a sense as to how different it will be for her to be the leader of the pack? How are you going to kind of help her? What do you say to her? How do you balance that?

ANTON DUBROV: We spoke with her before, I think a year ago. I am, as a fan of Formula 1, I always try to talk about champions, like Lewis Hamilton or Max Verstappen. I'm a huge fan of Hamilton. He won, like, seven championships.

I told her, give her this in her mind, Just imagine, he's champion and everyone trying to get him. He's still winning. It's not like something like -- I don't know how to say. This is, like, really great that he is in this kind of position that he still can win, because everyone trying to get him.

This is, like, a world class, when you're a leader and you still fight and win, this is what this kind of mentality should be like, wherever you are, No. 1, No. 10, you are your own opponent all the time and you try and be the best version of yourself every time.

This is the difference between, like, I would say No. 2 and No. 1. There is always someone in front if you're No. 2 and you have something you have to work through, but when you're a leader, it's more about you have to focus even more on yourself about, like, okay, I have to work even more on myself to get better and better. That's how I can

keep fighting and where I can have chances to win.

If I will stop and, like, I'm so grateful that I'm No. 1, that's where you're going to just slowly dying on this position.

JASON STACY: Nice answer. Good job. I'm just going to add one little thing to that really quick.

I would say just be mindful, be careful when you try and put a predator in the corner. It's not going to turn out well. You know what I'm saying? Try and chase a predator. See what happens. That's all I'm saying.

Q. Talking about semifinals, yes, she's had these difficult losses in those stages, but she's also been able to recover and play really great the next tournament, where maybe in the past that might have been difficult to recover emotionally. Talk about the mental work you have been able to do after these tough losses that have allowed her to come back just as strong.

ANTON DUBROV: Everything's the same: Simple as possible. Again, about focusing on everything. Just because it's the sport where you're gonna, like, normally you're going to lose, I think Wawrinka told us before, you're going to lose every week. That's where you have to come back and bounce back all the time. That's great about the sport that you have every week to perform.

And you have to understand, okay, yeah, today I cannot do it but there is like a next day where I can actually be better and I can take something from it.

It's more about, like, we really like TV show "Ted Lasso" and this phrase about to be a goldfish. A great one, like, okay, that's it. That's already past. What about the next one? Just believe and do your thing.

Q. I wanted to ask you, what is your favorite nonmatch Aryna Sabalenka story or funniest Sabalenka story?

ANTON DUBROV: I go to Andrei.

ANDREI VASILEVSKI: It's always fun. Always fun. All the warmups, all the time we are spending. I can't, like, find just one story, because it's all over there.

ANTON DUBROV: Every day something happen.

ANDREI VASILEVSKI: Every day something really funny and hilarious. It's always fun. The whole team is, like, just trying to sometimes avoid the pressure, like, avoid tension and we are trying to make it through, like, some jokes and some good time. So probably that's why everybody is

enjoying it over there.

Q. Any recent one that comes to mind for you all that you enjoyed?

JASON STACY: I don't know if it's appropriate.
(Laughter.)

ANTON DUBROV: It's definitely not. (Laughter.)

JASON STACY: I'm joking. I don't know. It's one of those questions where there is probably a hundred different things we can think of, but on the spot, I don't know. Every day is an entertaining adventure. We kind of rotate through.

ANTON DUBROV: It's like a lifestyle for us. It's more about just try to find something like opposite, not funny one.

JASON STACY: We try not to take things too serious even though we are serious. We have to enjoy it.

Q. Ons feels the same way. That's why she was so happy for it. Hearing that message, it's just part of the charm for her.

ANTON DUBROV: When you're on the tour, you play like almost every week. You have to remember it's actually the end of the days like your life: you have to enjoy it.

So that's great when you have this kind of character outside of the court where you can actually enjoy some jokes. Even during the practice it's even better for you just to get some relax, some recharge, and go back to the work.

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