

Porsche Tennis Grand Prix

Stuttgart, Baden-Württemberg, Germany

Friday, 19 April 2024

Elena Rybakina

Press Conference

E. RYBAKINA/J. Paolini

6-3, 5-7, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Elena, well done on the result today. You're into your first semifinals here in Stuttgart. Just talk about how you're feeling right now.

ELENA RYBAKINA: Yeah, really happy to be in semis, playing this tournament third time. For now happy to reach semis and hopefully can go far till the end.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Congrats. You know you can play a two-set match, right? You don't have to always play three?

ELENA RYBAKINA: Yeah, of course (smiling).

Q. But in terms of getting these three-set wins, physically having played two of them here in Stuttgart, are you feeling okay physically after them? Because I know obviously in Miami it was starting to compound.

ELENA RYBAKINA: Yeah. Well, the preparation for clay was quite short for me, but I mean, I'm feeling okay after these long matches. Of course sore here and there but no issues, which I'm happy with.

Of course it's nicer to finish matches in two sets, but, I mean, opponent played really well today. I had my chances, didn't take them, but overall I'm happy with the game, and hopefully I can just play better and better with time.

Q. I just spoke with Jasmine, and she had a lot of praises for you and your game and your serve especially. She said how tough it is to read it, especially from the deuce side of the court, especially going slice wide. I wonder if you have any opinion on her and if you saw any improvement from the last time you played against her?

ELENA RYBAKINA: Well, I would say that last time we



played was also tough, and here it's a bit different clay, but I think she's more aggressive and maybe some moments she believes in herself more than it was before. It was some tight moments, and she played really well today, so I think she improved of course.

For me, of course I know that I have quite heavy serve, but for example today in these important moments maybe didn't help me. I was either too passive or was out like this, so I feel like I'm missing a little bit. It's just part of the work. As I said, it just takes time to feel better and better on clay.

Q. You were down and facing breakpoints quite a lot of times today. Sometimes you were broken. But sometimes it was, like, 30-40, you hit a big serve, it was great, Jasmine couldn't do much with it or you were in charge of the point. Do you find yourself kind of going into a special zone when you're serving maybe 30-40, you just focus that 1% more maybe? That's how it seemed on the outside.

ELENA RYBAKINA: Yes, of course you're trying to focus on these important moments more. As I said, I had chances. She played well, and then sometimes I'm too hard on myself. I'm, like, I could have done better, but also, she played well.

So it's, like, not battle with each other, but it's not easy sometimes when you miss easy ball and, like, just kind of forget, and here with my game I get a lot of these floating balls which you need to really pay attention and I'm trying to come forward much more. Of course it's a lot about mental in the end of the day.

Q. The spectators also seemed to be a factor. Do you have a clue why they were for your opponent basically?

ELENA RYBAKINA: Well, I didn't hear that it was more support to Jasmine. I felt it was just nice atmosphere, good rallies. Maybe a lot of Italians here. I'm not sure. But I think the atmosphere was nice and they were cheering for both of us.

Q. We don't know who you'll play next, but if it is Iga, obviously the second time that you guys would have



played this year, I feel like the last two times you both played maybe there was, like, in Rome she kind of got injured and so she felt like that wasn't a full match. Maybe you were very tired, I know, in Doha. So I'm curious what you make of the matchup this time if it does happen here under these conditions?

ELENA RYBAKINA: Well, it's always of course tough to play against Iga, and I feel like we pushing each other till the limits. I remember when this year when we played exhibition and you're just coming out of preseason and it's very tough. She started really intense, and I'm, like, I need to keep it up (smiling).

I think it's nice to play against her. Of course I want to win, but I need to be also realistic. She's very good player on clay. She's maybe a little bit more favorite now, but again, if I play well, I serve well, I move good, I have all the chances. So I'm just happy to play against her.

Q. Due to the weather, probably we're all happy to have this as an indoor tournament this week, but there are some other things, special light effects, walking in and so on, Kiss Cam, Fan Cam. What do you think about these things? Do they fit you? Do you like it, appreciate it?

ELENA RYBAKINA: I'm coming here third year in a row and kind of knew what to expect. Of course it's unusual, the lights, and that you are playing indoor clay and it's wooden under. It's of course different compared to all the other tournaments on clay.

But as I said, it's still good preparation. You've still got to slide, still physically need to be ready for these long rallies.

Of course it is different from outside, but as I said for preparation and just how it is, this tournament is nice, it's good to play.

Q. Do you have a preference, Emma or Iga, in the next match?

ELENA RYBAKINA: I don't have any preference, to be honest (smiling).

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