

BNP Paribas Open

Wednesday, March 15, 2017

Svetlana Kuznetsova

Press Conference



S. KUZNETSOVA/A. Pavyluchenkova

6-3, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. How does it feel to get back into the semifinals after a very, very long time?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: Well, I didn't count the years, but, yeah, if I look back, for sure, it was very long time ago. So it's great.

Q. She's beaten you a couple times this season. What did you adjust or do better today?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: I mean, she's been playing great this year. I knew going into the match -- I knew in, like, Sydney, it was not my best day and Australia I played a little worse. I basically didn't play.

Not taking away from her, she did very well. But comparing to my normal level.

I know this court suits me a little better, and I know I'd be more fresh and it worked, the tactics and everything.

Q. What is it about here that suits you? You have been in the finals here twice. You have done generally pretty well here.

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: Well, overall, I think I did good in many tournaments. You know, I can say other tournaments don't suit me.

But here, the bounce of the ball is really high, and I really like it because I play with topspin.

Q. Does it take time to realize how your game suits a certain surface?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: Intuitively, I always know. But when it goes up to bottom of your heart and you really believe it, it's a little bit different and it takes time.

Q. You can go into any tournament almost and kind of win it, or you cannot do very much. Do you know going in whether you're going to have a good week or not?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: I knew in Australia I was not there. I don't know. Maybe because last season I gave it too much, like, everything I could. And in

Australia, I didn't feel great.

Well, I had injury, and it also in some other part helped me to recover, because I was a little bit out of the gas. I spent some time home, and I was coming here. Carlos was not, like -- he was not really happy with my preparation.

But I said, Look, I feel great, and I want to play. I think it's more important than to prepare better. Of course, you always can prepare better.

So going in here -- it always depends on the draws, on the players. It's a lot of things in between of your situation, how you feel.

And here, I was just feeling that I'm ready to play. I want to play. That's the most important thing.

Q. Anastasia was in here the other day and she was talking about the pressure of 2009 when she made the semifinals here. It was a lot with all the Russians playing well at the time that she just didn't do well with it, that she struggled with work ethic and preparation and things. I'm wondering, as a group of kind of Russians, and she's the youngest of all of you, did she ever talk to you about that, or look for advice or things like that?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: No, she didn't. But, you know, the thing is we are all rivals. It's really hard from her, for example, for me to go to another player and ask the opinion or whatever. It's really hard. Like, what should I say? We are all rivals. We are friends, but we're rivals. It's really hard.

You really need to have confidence. Also, I think another part, on other hand, when you ask somebody for opinion, it means you respect that person, and you put that person above yourself. And you cannot do that, you see?

So she didn't ask, but I'm happy she's getting better and better every time. Because I think with her talent and possibility, she can do much better than she was doing couple years ago.

Q. You have had your ups and downs through your career for various reasons, and now you're on that rise up again. Looks like you're really enjoying

everything with what you're doing. If you had to compare the enjoyment that you've got now for the sport to maybe a couple of years ago, where would you say you are?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: Yeah, I think I enjoying the most now, because the thing is when you're so young and you get to the top of the game, you don't value it so much.

When you play couple years -- I was couple years, what, 20, 25 in the rankings? And then, like, couple it was like three, four years, and then you make it to top 10, you value so much more the effort and what you've done, what you achieved. You know, you have been there before and you got here.

So I'm enjoying it much more now, because now I know the value of this.

Q. You had that great run to qualify for the WTA Finals. Is that one of the most fun accomplishments you have had? It was such a ride?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: Yeah, most surprising one, for sure. Because I have not even been thinking about Championships. I have just been playing. And I'm not trying to think each week about the rankings or something. I think I should improve and enjoy and want to play. That's the most important.

And then this thing happened. Like, I was going to Moscow, and somebody said, If you win -- I thought it so far from me. So I was just playing, playing, match by match. And when I actually won, I'm, like, I'm for sure going to Championships.

And then I played unbelievable matches, so I won couple -- I think I was match points down, and so I think it's amazing. So you never have to give up. There is always opportunity.

Q. Were you re-energized by that a bit?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: Mentally or physically?

Q. Mentally.

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: By Championships?

I was so dead after all this run. I was -- I couldn't even sleep. Like, in Championships, I barely slept. I was three, four hours sleeping a day. I had no idea where I was at. It took me days to recover after.

But emotionally, of course, making it, that run, it was huge for me.

Q. What do you remember and what do you take from the times you have been in the finals here and

do you take anything from that?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: I played here against Hantuchova and Jelena Jankovic probably? Or Ana Ivanovic? Ana.

Nothing (smiling). I mean, it was so long ago. What do you take out of being in high school? I don't take anything. Just fun times.

I mean, I don't even remember how it went.

Q. You talked about balancing. You know, you're an older player. You have the experience. You still know you have to get out there and do the work. But balancing the preparation -- you know, you're here in doubles and singles -- to make sure you still have enough in the tank for the next match. Do you pull off a little bit on training because you have so much match court time?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: You see, before I was just thinking about it in shower. Because before, when I used to play these tournaments, I used to practice hard in the days between. Now I just go in the court and I see how I feel. If I don't feel like it, I just hit couple balls.

Not training two hours is not going to make me play worse next day. It maybe will give me more energy. So I'm adjusting on my body and about my emotional statement, as well.

So I'm listening to myself more. I understand it's couple years left. It's not something, like, I've got to work for the future. My future is now, tennis future (smiling).

That's how I do it now.

Q. Can you just look ahead? Obviously you don't know your opponent yet, Muguruza or Pliskova. Talk about your matchups.

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: Muguruza I played in Brisbane this year. It was a really close match. It's good matchup for me.

Then Pliskova I played in Championships. Also great match. Both of them, they play similar game. I mean, they play flat and pretty short rallies. Both extremely tough opponents. Both going to be tough ones. So I'm just looking forward for that.