

BNP Paribas Open

Saturday, March 18, 2017

Svetlana Kuznetsova

Press Conference

S. KUZNETSOVA/K. Pliskova

7-6, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. How relieved are you to get through in two sets? That could have been a tough...

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: You know, I haven't been, like, worrying two sets/three sets. I just feel great, you know, because I have been fighting for every ball.

If she managed to win one of the sets and then we go for third, I would still be fighting and still playing every ball. If she manages to win me, I would say great job. But it doesn't change my attempt in the match.

Q. That looked like you in full flow, like, you were serving great and could put the ball wherever you wanted to. Is that what it felt like for you out there?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: Except that serve on 6-5 or whatever it was -- wait. 6-4 in the tiebreaker, that double fault and couple forehands I shouldn't be missing.

But I felt great. I felt like I was just giving all I had in me there, and that's what I work for, you know, that moments which really matters, you know.

Q. Thinking ahead now, you have Elena Vesnina, an all-Russian final. What are your thoughts? Have you caught how she's been playing this week?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: I haven't been watching any of women's tennis (smiling). Not for not respecting. I love to watch women's tennis.

But I have been on some, like, low routine, just chilling at the house, watching some great doubles, actually men's doubles matches. That's what was on the TV and some great men's matches.

I haven't talked to Carlos about the game plan. I haven't been thinking about it.

Q. Which men's doubles did you watch?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: I watch Novak's matches, the one they won the tiebreaker. Then it was Kyrgios doubles. Then I watched Rafa's doubles. Yeah, I thought it was amazing field for doubles here. Maybe



even better than singles.

Q. Did you happen to see Kyrgios and Zimonjic beat the Bryans?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: Yeah, that one. Yeah, did I watch that.

Q. How have you felt going match to match? Did you feel like each match has been better here?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: Yes.

Q. Each one has been...

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: Yeah, for sure. I didn't have the best preparation back in Moscow to come here. But my goal was, like I was saying to Carlos, most important thing is I feel fresh. I feel fresh in my mind. That's what I didn't feel in Australia. I was a little bit burnt up. So I came here, I said, Maybe I'm not my best, but I feel great.

I was playing match by match. First match, I had so many ups and downs. Second one, third one better. Every match, getting better. Here we are in the finals. I think it's great.

Q. The other day you mentioned that I know two more hours on the practice court isn't going to dramatically change my outcome in the next match. So looking to the final, how will you prepare and maybe give yourself some rest time?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: Yeah, but that's the point. Tomorrow I will wake up and see how I feel. It's not something I plan today what I gonna do tomorrow.

Like, I wake up, I see how I feel. If I feel like playing a lot, I will play a lot. If not, probably I'll just go out there and hit maybe one hour or so. Whatever my body feels, you know. I've got to listen to it. I'm not 20s. Now they say 30s is in the style, right (smiling)?

Q. Does it surprise you, you have only played Elena twice. It's been a while. I think Estoril was the last one. You're both Russian, you're both older players...

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: It's crazy. Sometimes it happens. Like, I played Makarova way too many times, but sometimes we didn't play with Elena. I actually didn't face her so much in doubles. It's strange, but, yeah, here we go.

Q. Do you practice with her ever?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: Not a lot, but sometimes we did, yeah.

Q. Kristina was saying she's really enjoyed playing doubles with you and how it's helped her singles game.

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: How did it help her singles game? Should I get percentage or something?

Q. Well, yeah. Her serves and volleys against Wozniacki.

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: She didn't do it in doubles, though (smiling). Not coming from doubles.

Q. She felt very bad about letting you down so you two weren't together in the final. Do you feel over the years that's helped you in your singles, or does it make no difference to you?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: I didn't train to play along my career many times doubles. I actually started playing doubles with Martina and focused on my singles. Then it went well.

Then I played doubles and singles when I won the US Open and played finals in doubles, and I had many finals in Grand Slams. I managed to win only two.

And lately, couple years, was not motivated to play doubles. Even my coach was pushing me, you know, You gotta play. Many players asked me, Let's play, let's play.

And when I go on the court, I kind of didn't feel it, so I rather not do it. If I don't feel motivated to do it, play my best on the court, I don't do it.

And Kristina asked me. I felt I should play doubles here as I skipped Doha, Dubai, due to my injury. I thought I should give it a shot.

Since first match we kind of connected and I felt great. For second match, I was so pumped. Come on, come on, let's try to win. I felt amazing.

So this I don't mind playing doubles. This I love to do it. And we connect on the court really nicely. Hopefully it will go the same way. I think we have good potential.

Q. Can you talk through the matchup with Elena? How familiar are you with her game since you haven't played against each other that much?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: I really trust my coach, so I will ask him about it. But she plays pretty flat, aggressive tennis. That's it. I play more defense, but my spin is my key, probably.

Q. Do you prefer for that match -- it's going to be during the day, but does your game on these courts and these conditions, is it...

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: Better during the day.

Q. So I was in Washington when you won. Was that 2015? Yes.

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: So many years. I lose track.

Q. Most recently, because it was your first title in a while and your first big, bigger title in a while. I'm curious, what does it do for you when you win a title when it's been a while? How does that affect your confidence?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: I mean, overall, I felt over the years why I have not been top 15 or top 10 is because I have not been winning these key matches. As long as you start to win the tournaments, that's different confidences. You're ready to be in top 15, top 10. This is what brings. Because I know how to play the game. I don't have to prove nothing to nobody.

I just have to catch that momentum of confidence, and then it goes with the flow, winning matches, to be confident during the match. It changes a lot.

Q. You talked about being mentally fresh going into this tournament. Was that a tough decision after -- you know, you had the injury and everything, and you said you didn't come in with the most preparation but your mind was rested. Is that a tough decision to make to kind of be, like, we're going to go and see what happens? What were your expectations here?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: You know, it's hard decision. Like, I still always -- when I'm injured, I still was trying to go and play. And I did so many weeks, like, I was not at my best playing, not body-wise, not mentally-wise. It's really hard. Season is really long. I figure myself I'm not there. I wanted to try something new. I'm 31. I have to take some decisions, important ones. So I was really clear on that one.

Then was coming here. I was looking forward to go. When you travel week by week and then you go back home and you have to go on the road, like, no way. I have to pack again. It's really heavy. This is when it doesn't work.

I know with our schedule it's really tough to make these decisions and to skip tournaments, but sometimes you've got to do that.

Q. Did you think that ball hit the umpire?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: I just watched it. Yeah, it

hit her shoulder. It was horrible, though (smiling).

Q. What are you going to do tomorrow? Gonna watch any of the men's? Are you going to relax or, like, practice?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: Gonna wake up, I gotta eat, which is very important (smiling).

Then I gonna train. For sure, I love to train in the morning. You're done with the day. Then I will go to supermarket to buy some food for the house, because we stay in a house here.

And then I will watch the men's games, for sure. I love to watch it. Or some movies.

Q. It's Eloise's last press conference.

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: I know.

Q. Do you have any stories you could share that we could put on a transcript?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: I'm not sure (laughter.)

It's really sad. Winning player, like, I had the press conference, and to be the last and to say good-bye, I hate these things. I just wish you the best. See you in Wimbledon. I think they're lucky to have you. You're so great person. I was going to say player but...