**Elina Svitolina**

**Press Conference**

E. SVITOLINA/K. Bertens

2-6, 6-4, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. A little bit of a slow start, but you came back strong in the end. What do you think was the key to turn it around?**

ELINA SVITOLINA: Well, yeah, it was a really tough start. I think she started playing really solid and I was bit in and out with my attitude and with my game.

But then I was just waiting for my chances, and I think in the second set I took my chances.

In the third set I think I create chance for myself because I was playing really good and felt the ball really good.

Yeah, in the end I think just playing solid was the key for me today.

**Q. KiKi told us that you two never played before, right?**

ELINA SVITOLINA: Yeah.

**Q. So we can see KiKi deliver many variations in her techniques, like dropshot, and also kept you running from side to side. Is this part of the reason that maybe you need some time to adapt to her style? Because you two never play before, how did you adjust your strategy or emotion to turn around in the second half?**

ELINA SVITOLINA: Yeah, first of all, of course we never played each other before, but she was in the same situation. I was not really thinking about it. I knew that she was going to bring like variations with her game because she's playing lots of doubles and she's really a good doubles player as well. So I was really kind of expecting this.

But, you know, it was not about how good she can dropshot or something. I don't think she did many in the first set. I was just giving her too much time to open the court.

Yeah, I think this was the big problem in the first set. Then when I had some time in restroom to think about what happened in the first set, I was like, Come on; you need to step the court and just try to do something with the ball, otherwise she's going to kill you.

Yeah, I was trying to put pressure with my shots, and I think it worked really good.

**Q. This is your opening match of the tournament, but it's such a long and tough one; you need two hours. How will this long, tough match influence you in your preparation for the future games?**

ELINA SVITOLINA: Well, I expect long matches here because everyone is playing so well. It's kind of normal because everyone have a high rank, so everyone is in the same kind of condition. It's quite normal that there will be long matches.

Well, I have my fitness coach here so I'm prepared for long tournament, for long matches. I will try to do my best to recover well. I don't know yet when I'm playing, but not playing tomorrow, so I have couple of days off to recover and go for next match.

Looking forward for next challenge.

**Q. I think you were the first player to arrive here for the tournament. How much do you think that extra preparation helped you?**

ELINA SVITOLINA: When I lost the first set I thought it was the worst thing to do. (Laughter.) Yeah, well I thought that it was bad idea to come here earlier.

Yeah, but then I started to think differently. I started to say to myself what to do on court.

Yeah, it's a bit strange because the balls and the court are completely different from last years. It's so different. I think everyone is in the same condition and everyone is trying to do their best.

Everyone is on such a high level here; everyone is adapting really well. It's quite normal because here is top players, so we're used to adapt fast and quick.

**Q. Last two questions: You mentioned that it is difficult to like find training bases in your country, in Ukraine, and also get out of the country to find good sponsors, or also sponsor your training and playing matches overseas. Did you also come across such challenges or difficulties when you were young? How did you overcome the challenges? Who give you the biggest help? This is the first question.**

ELINA SVITOLINA: Okay. I answer first. Well, I got really lucky because I have great support from my family. My brother, he used to play professional as well, and was coaching me when I was young, until 12 years old. Then I moved to the other city, which called Kharkiv in Ukraine where I got sponsored. I'm still the ambassador of the place where I used to practice for many years when I was young called Superior Golf Club.

There is also tennis court, so I was there most of the time. I got really lucky that I had this opportunity. Yeah, then I moved and I was practicing in the academy.

So my career was all the time like step by step. I don't know. Everything just was going not quick. Was not rise so fast, but then everything was like quite solid in knew my. I think it helped me a lot. It was sometimes of course tough moments in my career, but I always had this support with my family, with my team.

Yeah, I think I can call myself really, really lucky.

**Q. (Through translation.) Two questions: I know this year you've won in Rio and Beijing over No. 1 players. Does it give you any positive signal for your future competition with high-ranking players? Next question is: What's your goal for your next year's ranking?**

ELINA SVITOLINA: Well, it was great experience for me to play in Olympics first of all, and then beating Serena as the player who is such experienced player and won so many things, I'm not sure I even dreamed to win so many titles as she has done.

Yeah, beating Kerber as well. She's really on top of her game for a moment. She had amazing year.

Of course it build me a lot of confidence and I was -- yeah, I'm just trying to take match by match. It's always for me really -- I try to focus on each match. Of course there is some matches which means a lot for me, and I try to take positive things and I try of course always think what I can improve more.

Because I think in those matches which I won against them it was really -- I was playing really well and keeping my emotions on a high level. That's why I think this was the key in that game, in that moment.

**Q. You had a really good win over Vesnina a few months ago. Curious if you will do anything different before that match to maybe start maybe a little bit faster and be prepared for that next match?**

ELINA SVITOLINA: Yeah, I will try to prepare well, to recover, first of all. She's of course really confident I think at the moment after winning doubles in Singapore. It's a big thing for her and for Makarova as well.

I think she would come really confident into the match. I will try just to stick to my game. I will sit down with my coach and speak about the match. Probably he will see what I've done good in New Haven where I played her.

Yeah, it's a new match, new challenge. There will be new opportunities. I will try to create of course opportunities for myself. Yeah, I will do my best.