

# Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships

Wednesday, February 21, 2018

## Elena Vesnina

### Press Conference

E. VESNINA/J. Ostapenko

6-1, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. How did you feel about that match, in singles getting back-to-back wins for the first time this season?**

ELENA VESNINA: That's right. You're right. Actually, I didn't think about that.

I'm just really happy that I won my match against Jelena. It was a weird match. At the beginning, everything was going my way. I was playing very clean. Jelena was missing a lot of shots.

In the second set, she got back. She is a top 10 player, she is a Grand Slam champion. Of course, she will rebound, she will change something in her game.

I had some kind of weird games on my serve. I will speak with my coach about that. I actually asked him before the changeover, I feel like I'm tossing the ball totally wrong, my timing is not good.

He is like, I don't know. I didn't see anything. You have to think by yourself.

I'm like, You're sitting there. Just tell me your thoughts.

He is like, I don't know. I didn't see it. Bad angle.

I am like, Oh!

Then I'm serving three double-faults. I'm looking at him, It's totally your fault. It's not my double-fault, it's your double-fault (laughter).

Definitely was a very nerve-wracking match, especially at the end. The tiebreaker, some long rallies. I was running side to side like a rabbit trying to get every single ball back to her.

She's really a good baseliner. She's hitting quite strong and hard and deep. You have to stay during the rally, play as many balls as possible on the other side,



try to move her around.

**Q. Do you think that's the ATP player in him that's refusing to help you do that?**

ELENA VESNINA: Yes, he kind of refused to help me I felt in that moment. We're like women, sometimes really sensitive. Sometimes we just need some kind of a kick or support.

Just tell, Oh, no, you're serving good. Just think about the toss.

Just saying something.

He was like, I don't know. I didn't see anything. I'm just here, like, hanging around, chilling on the side.

I felt it that way (smiling).

**Q. I presume this is Dmitry Tursunov.**

ELENA VESNINA: Yes.

**Q. Is he staying on after the tournament?**

ELENA VESNINA: Yes. I'm just joking around. Every single match, it's like a separate story between you and your coach, between you and your team. Sometimes your team can really help you to get through such tough matches. They can scream a few words in the big moment, and you will be like, Oh, that's fine, it's okay.

You have to have someone beside you, behind you, who knows you, who supports you, who never going to let you down, doesn't matter how you're playing. Even if you serve three double-faults in a row, my mom is like, It's okay, you're playing great, keep going.

You need someone like that behind you.

**Q. How many years were you with Chesnokov?**

ELENA VESNINA: I'll tell you. From 2008.

**Q. A long time?**

ELENA VESNINA: A long time, yeah. He was not my traveling coach all the time. He was only kind of few tournaments. But we were practicing in the off-season, between French Open and Wimbledon, after Wimbledon, for a couple of weeks before the US Open. It was kind of few weeks there, few weeks there, but

not full-time travel.

**Q. Who would be on the road with you?**

ELENA VESNINA: My dad. He's always with me. He's just not here this week. My mom now, she's here. She's not traveling much. My full-time traveling coach is Dmitry right now. It's Dmitry and my dad together, or one of them.

**Q. How has it been between Dmitry and your dad?**

ELENA VESNINA: Really good. It's actually really good. My dad, first of all, he wants to hear, like, another opinion from the side. He's very open with this. He was trusting Andrei a lot when we were working. Now it's like a fresh view in the team.

He gives Dmitry all the power, all the responsibility for me. He's like, You go. He's trying to help him a little bit, trying to give him some advices: This opponent, some moments she can get nervous. Cheer her up. Giving him his thoughts, that he feels it's going to help. Them Dmitry try to adjust and help me.

But it's not easy, especially with the guy who is just playing. Last season he was an ATP player. Now coaching a girl. Give him some time. I'm tough on him, but he's getting better and better.

**Q. Did you get tight out there?**

ELENA VESNINA: Tight?

**Q. Yes.**

ELENA VESNINA: That game on 4-3, I guess so. Three double-faults. Out of nowhere actually. I was serving quite okay for the whole match. I was mixing up the serve, changing direction, a couple of good aces in the big moments. Then this game on 4-3, that was not the great game. I agree with you. Hopefully it's not going to happen again.

**Q. She's got a big couple of months coming up, defending the French. She's still very young. How do you think she's going to cope with that pressure?**

ELENA VESNINA: You know, she's a very confident girl, I must say. It helps her a lot. It's a really good kind of feel that she has inside of her.

A lot of players are saying that she's not really kind of respectful to other girls. I mean, she's still junior, give her some time. She's getting better.

Yeah, she has this confidence in herself. She's, like, different character compared to all the junior girls her age.

**Q. In what way?**

ELENA VESNINA: I would say she's brave, brave enough to say something in her face. She can say that, Oh, this player is nothing special. This player is like No. 3 in the world. You know, this kind of way.

She's kind of brave, confident in herself. She's not afraid of everyone. That's why she won French Open. She's not afraid. She's fearless.

Now she's getting in a bit different moment in her life. She's defending a lot of points.

**Q. People are sussing her out a little bit?**

ELENA VESNINA: Of course, she hears that, she knows that.

She has this Grand Slam title. Nobody will take it away from her. She has the game. That's the most important. Maybe she has some problems with her game, with some psychology, mental part. She needs to, you know, get more mature, get her emotions right.

But definitely she's a great player. We will see many, many matches of her in the future. She will win many tournaments in the future.

**Q. She seems to be inconsistent. Even when she was winning the French Open, she was dropping middle sets.**

ELENA VESNINA: She's this kind of player. She's finding her game, finding her shots. If her shots are going close to the line, deep, nothing you can do. She's putting one corner, another corner, ace here, ace there. Very powerful, very strong.

Maybe she needs to work a bit more on this consistency. It's difficult. This kind of age you need to grow up, then it will change.

**Q. Do girls in the locker room talk about it, that Ostapenko has no respect?**

ELENA VESNINA: Yeah, there is some talks in the locker room sometimes. In the beginning, she had some problems. She was not shaking hands right, proper, blah, blah, blah, all these kind of things.

I was straight with her. I was telling her right away in her face. She's actually answering me. I have a good contact with her. I'm going to tell it to her face.

You shouldn't say that, you shouldn't do that.

She actually see that. She kind of changing. I kind of her mentor, coach. I know she's young and she has all this pressure around her right now. I think, my opinion, she's getting better, definitely getting better.

**Q. You sound like someone who you psychoanalyze your opponents. Does that help you a lot on tour?**

ELENA VESNINA: Yes, because I have probably the same problems as they have. Different part of the careers. Everybody is struggling with this, with that. Girls, you know, like personal problems. All this kind of going around you.

Sometimes it's difficult to feel good on the court. Sometimes you really practice good, feel good on the practice, but then on the match totally different story. A lot of girls having these same problems.

Because I had the education, psychology education, it helps me in some moment. Still I'm an athlete. I'm very, like, challenging athlete. Sometimes the emotions are going around. I'm trying to calm down. On and off I know I'm using this kind of education in my life. Definitely helping me.

**Q. I spoke with your coach yesterday, long conversation. He was telling me basically what it's like for him now on the women's tour. One of the things he was saying is it's difficult to be sensitive, say the right thing. Is that something you feel is one of the main things?**

ELENA VESNINA: I'm telling him, Don't be scared, first of all. I can answer to him. Something like he's telling me, Move your legs.

I'm like, I'm moving my legs.

He's like, Oh, my God, I said something wrong.

Don't think too much. Just emotions here and there. It's not like I'm trying to scream on you, try to be aggressive against you. It's just my emotions. I just want to answer something because I'm working hard, I'm tired. I need kind of emotions to, like, give it back.

At the beginning he was a bit scared, going on the other side of the court.

I'm like, Come here, don't worry, I'm not going to bite you. You have a girlfriend. You know what it is (smiling).

**Q. How many hours a day do you train?**

ELENA VESNINA: It depends. During the tournament, amount of practicing on the court is going down. Let's say if I have a match on the next day, I'm going to hit one and a half hour, then I'm going to do a light session in the gym. If I have a day off, I play the day after, I'm going to do two sessions, one and a half hour, one hour with a coach, alone, or I'm going to hit with the girls, playing some points, just to feel a little bit of game

emotions, game points. Then I'm going to do the gym, as well.

**Q. And then play doubles?**

ELENA VESNINA: And I have doubles, too. Oh my God, I forgot about that (smiling).

**Q. What additional fitness do you do apart from playing tennis on the court?**

ELENA VESNINA: What I'm doing outside of the court?

**Q. Yes.**

ELENA VESNINA: You know what? Now, the tennis is going really physical. A lot of girls are working on their fitness. We're working on the stability, on the strength, on the acceleration, on the footwork. It's all together. It's not on the same day. Our fitness coach is giving us some day of fitness working on the court and stability, then the next day you're working on your legs, strength and power and acceleration, then the next day...

It's really hard work, lots of work every single day. It's not like I finish my match and I'm done. I'm going to the gym, I'm going to do something with my fitness coach, with my physio, that some part of my body needs some work on it.

**Q. At what age did you start playing tennis?**

ELENA VESNINA: I was six.