

The Elite Eight tell all on the eve of the 2014 WTA Finals in Singapore



Posted: Sun Oct. 19, 2014

SINGAPORE -- The WTA's Elite Eight met with the press on Sunday to talk about everything from future memoirs to lessons learned from another tough WTA season. Here are some of the best quotes from the women on the eve of the last big event of the season before WTA Finals play begins on Monday with the Red Group. Serena Williams opens play against Ana Ivanovic and Simona Halep takes on Eugenie Bouchard. Matches begin at 7:30 a.m. ET.

• 2011 champion **Petra Kvitova** says the Singapore courts are playing a little fast. "I think it's very similar if I'm comparing to the years in Istanbul. I think the surface is very similar. Maybe a little bit faster from the beginning, but not really big difference. I think the surface, when you are playing longer on the court it's getting faster and faster."

• **Serena Williams** says her knee is feeling better, though she has only been hitting since last Monday. "They thought it was very bad for me to hit sooner than that. So we just worked together, and, yeah, Patrick kept me off the court. He's like, 'You cannot hit; you cannot do this; you cannot do that. You have to just relax.' Which was very difficult for me to do. After that, I just started training. I was surprised at how well I was able to kind of jump back into it."

PHOTO



http://cdn-jpg.si.com/sites/default/files/styles/si_title_image/public/images/Serena%20Williams%20WTA%20Finals%20Preview.jpg

[Five burning questions heading into the WTA Finals](#)

by Courtney Nguyen

• **Serena** on the prospect of locking up the No. 1 ranking this week. "I definitely would be here if I already had it locked up. It's obviously super important for me. I love being No. 1; I love being the best. But at this at the same time, I'm really glad that I was able to get a slam this year, which was really annoying for me that I wasn't able to capture one. That was something that was super, super, super important, especially for the goals that I was trying to reach."

• **Eugenie Bouchard** is more proud than wowed at making her WTA Finals debut at 20 years old. "I totally feel like I belong. I think my year this year has proved that. I feel like I've been able to play well, raise my level in big matches, at late stage of Grand Slams. So therefore, I've earned the right to be here. I feel like so excited to be here. To be part of the best players in the world is a great thing and an accomplishment on its own. But I don't want to be happy with just participating this week. I want to try to do my best and try to end the year on some good matches."

• **Ana Ivanovic**, into her first WTA Finals in six years, says she no longer takes the event for granted. "I remember we were just talking about the first time I played in Madrid and then the very next year in Doha. It felt like it's just another tournament. Now it actually does feel special because I know how hard you have to work to make it."

PHOTO



http://cdn-jpg.si.com/sites/default/files/styles/si_title_image/public/images/serena%20tarpsichev%20lead.jpg

[Serena Sharapova blast Russian federation head's racist comments](#)

by Courtney Nguyen

• **Agnieszka Radwanska** recalls her first WTA Finals experience: "I remember my first Championships I was alternate, second alternate, so I was more at the pool than on the court. But then suddenly I get the phone call that I'm on court the next day."

• **Maria Sharapova** tweeted her love for this behind the scenes photo from the draw ceremony on Saturday. When I asked her to explain why she loved it so much, she couldn't help but laugh. "Just because it's like a thousand words in one picture. It's incredible. Can't wait to write a book. Those are the moments where I'm like, 'Oh, my goodness. I just wrote a whole chapter in one evening.' Yeah, looked like a lot of fun, huh? Love those things." Do we sense some sarcasm there, Maria?



Maria Sharapova
@MariaSharapova

Follow
And the pic of the night...)

4:40 AM - 18 Oct 2014
2,072 RETWEETS 3,768 FAVORITES

[Reply](#)
[Retweet](#)
[Favorite](#)

• Speaking of books, here's **Serena** on the idea of writing another memoir in the same vein as Andre Agassi's candid "Open." "As a tennis player, every day we have a press conference or we have to talk a little bit about our lives. I'm an open person, an open individual. So there are definitely some things I had pinned down and I think would be fun. Other than that, I don't really have as much to say maybe as Andre did. I'm not sure. Who knows?"

• **Bouchard** on the prospect of playing Serena for the first time this season: "I think it's about playing my game: trying to take it early, trying to move forward. And then also the mental side: not being intimidated; going out there fully believing. I think with that good mental approach I'll have a good chance."

• What's the difference between being talented and being a champion? "I think being a talented player, usually the most talented players aren't usually the best players," **Serena** said. "I think being a champion is the one that works the hardest and maybe has to work harder than everyone else because they're not as good and things don't come as easy for them as someone else would."

NEWS



[img src="http://cdn-jpg.si.com/sites/default/files/styles/si_tile_image/public/images/wozniacki%20rankings%20lead.jpg" alt="Caroline Wozniacki says rankings drop was 'depressing'"/>](http://cdn-jpg.si.com/sites/default/files/styles/si_tile_image/public/images/wozniacki%20rankings%20lead.jpg)

Caroline Wozniacki says rankings drop was 'depressing'

by Courtney Nguyen

• **Caroline Wozniacki** has no plans to part ways with her father as coach: "I feel like I've tried enough and I'm tired of trying different things. So I'm happy where I am. My dad is a great coach and it's been working really well. It's nice for me to have my family with me. I think that that's the most important thing. I realized that when my family doesn't travel with me to tournaments I feel kind of lonely and I don't enjoy the game as much."

• Like her good friend Li Na, **Kvitova** is gunning for the Australian Open. "I mean, of course U.S. Open it's not really my favorite one. I'm sorry to say it. In Paris is clay, so it always takes me a while to get used to clay a little bit and play some good tennis on it. It's always about the confident over there...I love Australia. I love the people over there. I love the Grand Slam over there as well. So I hope that it's can be the best one then."

• **Ivanovic** says she's learned over the years to embrace the spotlight, which she struggled with after winning the French Open in 2008. "That's why I started Twitter and Instagram actually. Because I really felt like I changed in this sense because I started to feel more comfortable with myself. I matured. It helped me to be okay with myself and who I am as a person and to embrace everything that comes with the job that I do. For me, I really struggled to be in the spotlight. It was really strange when I won French Open, when I was No. 1 in the world. It took me some time to accept this and to be okay. Now I actually enjoy it. That's why I think it shows on and off the court I'm much more relaxed because I'm much more content with myself."

NEWS



[img src="http://cdn-jpg.si.com/sites/default/files/styles/si_tile_image/public/images/WTA%20Finals.jpg" alt="Sharapova, Wozniacki and Serena tweet up a storm at WTA Finals"/>](http://cdn-jpg.si.com/sites/default/files/styles/si_tile_image/public/images/WTA%20Finals.jpg)

Sharapova, Wozniacki and Serena tweet up a storm at WTA Finals

by Courtney Nguyen

• No injury concerns for **Ivanovic** heading into the tournament. She gets underway on Monday against Serena. "I feel physically very good. Just need a little bit more sleep, you know, with the jet lag."

• **Simona Halep** on the lessons she's learned during this breakout season. "To take care more of my body because I didn't make maybe the right way always. In Wimbledon I should put the tape on the left ankle because on grass is difficult always."

• **Halep** on getting used to the spotlight. "Yeah, now I'm more natural with these events. It's not easy. Before coming here I took like three dresses with me, so I thought that I go to the weddings or something like this. Yeah, it's normal. It's part of my life. It's part of the top players. So I have to enjoy it and just to be happy because something like this is happening in my life. So is the best moment and I have just to be happy."

• **Bouchard** on her happiest moment on court this season: "I think that moment of happiness would've had to have been after winning my quarterfinal match at the French Open. It was such a tough match, tougher than I could ever imagine a tennis match being. I was down 4-1 in the third and was able to come back. It was such a grind on the clay, and I couldn't believe almost that I won the match."

Highlights from that quarterfinal win against Carla Suarez Navarro:

• **Radwanska** picks her favorite hot shot of the year: "I think I really liked that shot from Montreal from the semifinal. The overhead backhand. Maybe someone remember that. I think that was my favorite one, especially because it was a really big moment."

Here's the shot:

[MORE](#)