

# Miami Open presented by Itaú

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Miami, Florida, USA

## Simona Halep

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. This season so far, in the first 13 tournaments of the WTA Tour, there's only been one repeat winner. I wanted to find out from you if this surprises you that there seems to be so much depth in the women's game this season based on the fact there's been so many different winners on tour?**

SIMONA HALEP: Well, I think women in general struggle with a bit of pressure. Now I feel like this period is not easy for everybody. It's tough to stay closed in the hotel, in the bubble, like every tournament. I don't believe that all the players can perform at highest level that they can offer.

But, you know, I always said that women's tennis, the tour, it's open and everyone can win a tournament in top 10 for sure and also outside of top 10.

I'm not very surprised. I know that tournaments are not easy for the players for every week in this situation. That's why I feel like all the players have a chance to win the tournament that they play.

**Q. You were ranked No. 1 for 64 weeks. You finished no lower than No. 4 since 2014. You have the longest active streak of being ranked in the top 10. What do you attribute your level of excellence and consistency over time? How significant is the No. 1 ranking to you?**

SIMONA HALEP: Yeah, I can say it's been amazing that I could stay so long in the top 10 without dropping, and also to finish so many years in a row no lower than 4. It means a lot to me.

I think I've done a good job because I stayed very focused on what I have to do. I've been very professional with my body, as well. I took care every time I had a little problem, so thanks God I didn't have big injuries. Of course, I had some injuries because it's normal playing every week a tournament. But I took care very well of everything. That's why I feel like I had the consistency.

Also my game is based on that. It's based of feeling the

ball all the time, not missing that much. So probably for me it's easier to have every week a good level of tennis. I cannot say that some tournaments I played very bad. All the time I played good tennis, and that's why I had the confidence, like every year I can have the same results or even better.

I think, yeah, the consistency stays in my style of game, and that's why I could stay so focused on what I have to do. Also professional. I think the professional thing, it's the most important thing these days because all the players are very strong prepared and very good, very solid. You have to perform 100% every week you play. I did that. That's why.

The second one?

**Q. The second question was, how significant is it to you to be ranked No. 1?**

SIMONA HALEP: The ranking maybe is not good to say it, but doesn't matter that much in this position because I've touched No. 1, I know how it is. I've been there, yeah, many weeks.

For me the goal is a Grand Slam, if it's possible again to win one. Also the Olympics this year, because I really want for my career to have a medal. So now I'm looking for the tournaments more than the ranking.

**Q. You faced Naomi Osaka several times, but it's been a little while. What do you think about her recent hot streak? From a tennis perspective, what have you noticed about her game that maybe changed or developed the most recently?**

SIMONA HALEP: It's very solid. I see like she improved in that direction a lot. She's hitting a little bit stronger also the serve. I always believed that she's a great player. I'm sure that she's going to win more Grand Slams.

Yeah, I can say that always when I played against her, it was not easy. Even if I won few matches that we played, she's a very tough opponent.

**Q. Obviously it's been a crazy year nobody ever**



**imagined with the pandemic. I know you had a bout as well with COVID. Talk a little bit about what you think you learnt about yourself, not necessarily tennis, in this whole year.**

SIMONA HALEP: Yeah, it was a very tough year for everybody. I felt it also. I was lucky that during COVID I didn't have bad symptoms. Yeah, I took it a little bit like with positive thinking.

I have learned that we have to live every day because you never know what comes tomorrow. That's why I tried. I can say that I succeed of enjoying every day of my life.

Back home I had a great time with my family, with my friends. We didn't travel that much because I was scared actually to leave home. So I've been home all the time between tournaments.

I think we have to keep thinking positive because everything comes like a little bit more difficult. But it's nice that we still can play tournaments. This gives us a little bit of hope that soon we'll be back to normal.

**Q. I know the clay court season hasn't even started yet, but I wonder if I can ask you a question about grass. When you and everyone starts the grass court season, it will be two years since you played a tournament on grass. Do you think it will be difficult for players to learn how to play on grass again?**

SIMONA HALEP: Well, it's first time when I'm thinking about this (smiling).

I think, yeah, is going to be a little bit we going to have the feeling long time ago we played on grass. But I think we'll be able to switch quickly because we are used to it. Is in our system for so many years. So I think is not going to be that difficult.

**Q. I wanted to ask you, it's been a year of a lot of change for a lot of people. What have you done to change your training? What kind of adjustments have you made that's different that you're applying this year?**

SIMONA HALEP: Well, when I didn't have the possibility to train, I didn't train. For everybody was a lockdown back home. But when I had possibility to go to train, I did the same things.

I didn't travel that much. Between the tournaments I stayed just home because I was a little bit scared of everything. So the big change is that I didn't travel. But the rest was pretty the same. I'm not used to go out that

much. So for me it was pretty the same.

**Q. You will start the tournament in the second round. Do you know your possible opponent?**

SIMONA HALEP: They have to play. It's Garcia against someone else.

**Q. Do you usually see the draws and project?**

SIMONA HALEP: No, just the next opponent that I have to face.

**Q. I believe you posted that you got the vaccine.**

SIMONA HALEP: Yes.

**Q. You mentioned being stressed out and worried the last year with the traveling and things like that. I am curious what impact getting the vaccine might have on your decision making going forward with your play schedule?**

SIMONA HALEP: Well, I had the COVID. I had the vaccine. So I can say I'm a little bit safer now (smiling).

But still I protect myself. We are still in the bubble, which is exhausting to stay in the bubble every week. But we have to respect the rules.

Yeah, I feel more relaxed. I feel more comfortable to travel now. That's why I decided to come here. Few weeks ago somebody told me that you didn't play US Open, why you playing Miami? I said it's long time since August, so now I'm in a better position also mentally, and that's why I'm coming. So I'm happy to be there.

**Q. What is the challenge of winning Miami? A lot of players play well in Indian Wells, don't necessarily play well in Miami and vice versa. What is the challenge of winning this tournament?**

SIMONA HALEP: Well, the challenge is big. I always wanted this tournament because it's a nice tournament, also good conditions all the time. The atmosphere, the weather, it's nice. So I feel good.

I had semis. When I won Indian Wells, I had semis after. I think I can play the court very well. Now I'm struggling a little bit with the shoulder. But I'm happy to be here. Of course, I have to dream big. Maybe in one day, I can win this tournament.

**Q. Over the past couple of years, a lot of the young players coming up play with heavy topspin forehands.**

**Seems different from older players. Have you noticed that? What is it like to play against? Do you feel women's tennis might go in that direction more in the future?**

SIMONA HALEP: Probably. But still I think it takes time to get to the spin because many players are playing really flat and powerful. So I think, yeah, it might change, but not very soon in my opinion.

**Q. This tournament, like you said, is usually always paired for you in this trip with Indian Wells. How different is it having this tournament by itself? Usually it's a twin tournament. Does it feel like a totally different tournament, making the trip just for this tournament?**

SIMONA HALEP: Yeah, and I don't feel tired because all the time, yeah, you feel tired here if you have few matches in Indian Wells. Now I feel fresh. I'm looking forward, yeah, to start the tournament and to see how good I can play.

But it's nice. It's a nice feeling even if it's just Miami. It's a nice feeling to be here.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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