

# Rothesay International

Tuesday, 25 June 2024

Eastbourne, England, UK

Devonshire Park

## Emma Raducanu

### Press Conference

E. RADUCANU/S. Stephens

6-4, 6-0

THE MODERATOR: Emma, congratulations. Your first match here in Eastbourne and a great performance. Just talk us through your thoughts on the match, please.

EMMA RADUCANU: Yeah, I think it was tricky for me, because I have never played her before. I had to adapt to the court, to the visuals, to the bounces, to the surface.

It was difficult in the first set, especially playing Sloane who, I don't know, she just seems more experienced, maybe has played this tournament -- I think she did play this tournament before.

Yeah, it was tough to hit through the ball, I would say, also, because the conditions or the balls get very slow. I think they don't really bounce either.

I think it was just about adapting and figuring things out in the first set, but I'm pleased with how I did that. Yeah, did some really good stuff in the second, too.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. It seemed like you talked to Nick a little bit in that sort of tight period, maybe half an hour in, before you really put your foot down and moved away. Was he helpful or did you kind of figure it out yourself?**

EMMA RADUCANU: I think it was more just, like, okay, I need to figure out how to hit through these conditions or how best to play in these conditions, because, like, for example, like, I'd say rushing when the balls get heavier is not the best play, because you're just giving them time.

That's what was happening, I'd say, in the first set. She had so much time on the ball, I'd say. Then when I was moving the ball around in the second and the back end of the first, I think that, yeah, I was just able to take control more.

But obviously Sloane is a really good athlete and good counterpuncher. So in the first set, I think I was, yeah, just getting outplayed a little bit because my ball speed



was probably too low.

**Q. It looked like you wrote "My own pace" on the camera afterwards. What do you mean by that? What does that phrase kind of mean to you?**

EMMA RADUCANU: Yeah, I would say it's just I'm going to do things on my own time, at my own pace, and I'm in no rush to do anything (smiling). And everything I'm doing and playing for now is for myself.

I think it's just, whether that's tournament scheduling, whether that's, yeah, how much time I take off to train compared to compete, I think I'm just way more focused on my own lane and less susceptible to outside opinions or views.

Yeah, I'm just enjoying it, to be honest. Just doing everything for myself and really just being independent out here.

**Q. Emma, there are heavier balls, which are obviously not unique to this tournament. Is that a concern for you from an injury perspective and the impact it can have on wrists, elbows, shoulders, arms, or is it more of a frustration because it doesn't really suit your game?**

EMMA RADUCANU: Yeah, I would say it's a big difference between when the balls have been played with for even two games, three games here, compared to when they're brand new. The ball change is always a tricky moment of the match.

I think, like, it's not just me on the grass. A lot of the players pick up wrist, elbow, shoulder injuries or niggles, because yeah, it's just slower and slower I think for the viewers to watch longer points.

But I think especially here in Eastbourne, maybe because the courts are fresh and very new, it is slower than Nottingham, for example, so I think me coming here, I really needed to adjust, because it dies on the courts and it gets very heavy, like, even after one or two games compared to the other tournaments' three or four.

So I think it is something that I just need to take care of and make sure I'm doing all my rehab. Yeah, I wouldn't trade it for the grass court season. Maybe they could just help us out with the ball a little bit (smiling).



**Q. On doing things at your own pace, was there ever a period when you felt that you weren't doing things only for yourself and that you were susceptible to outside influences?**

EMMA RADUCANU: Yeah, I would say it's pretty natural, you know, becoming a different person overnight almost with the circumstances. Not necessarily myself. At such a young age, it's easy to get caught up in it.

I think at one point I was chasing, playing too many tournaments when I wasn't ready, and then I was just picking up niggles after niggles in every tournament, because I never really gave myself any time to do the training and the work. I think that's something I did a lot better this year.

Even though I might get challenged or questioned for not playing certain tournaments like the French Open or the Olympics, I think that for me, that is just part of it, doing things at my own speed and doing things how I want to rather than how everyone else thinks is best for me, because ultimately me and the close few people around me just only know what is actually best for me and my game.

**Q. How much are you enjoying being in Eastbourne so far? What are your viewpoints on it being downgraded next year?**

EMMA RADUCANU: Yeah, I think it's sad to be downgraded. I think that having the big 500 on home turf is such a great thing.

I think that it's an amazing opportunity for the British players, myself, even like the younger players, to pick up some points, because the qualifying points, even at a 500 compared to, like, playing 25s, playing 50s, is massive.

So it is a shame that it is getting downgraded, but from the tournament side of things, I don't think anything will change with, you know, the spectators. I think always it's going to have a great turnout.

Me, I love being here. The weather especially is stunning, and when it's like this, the seaside is even nicer. Live music at night on the beach, yeah, it's just a nice, happy, relaxed place to be in. Yeah, it's different away from the bustle of London, which is also nice.

**Q. Obviously the reason it's being downgraded is because Queen's is getting a WTA event next year, which is in the bustle of London. Is it exciting, the opportunity to play at Queen's, or would you rather actually London doesn't need another tournament?**

EMMA RADUCANU: No, I would say I love London.

Like, it's where I grew up. Of course it's one of my, probably my favorite place in the world.

But it's nice to also escape it from time to time. I think everyone who lives in London would agree. It's nice to get out of the city sometimes. That's more what I mean by that.

But for Queen's, I'm very excited, because it's just, yeah, you feel like it's your home crowd. It's like how Katie probably feels in Nottingham. It's her home crowd.

I'm very excited, just because the venue is so nice. I have been to the men's tournament when I was younger. So, yeah, to have a women's tournament there, I'm really happy about it. I'm just a little bit worried about the courts being slippery, but it's okay, because yeah, I wouldn't trade it again.

**Q. Do you get a sense, as you play more matches, that the periods when you really do trust the ball coming off the strings and landing where you want it to go are getting longer?**

EMMA RADUCANU: I would say the matches kind of help with, like, not necessarily confirmation, but it's just nice to see the reward, I would say, because I take a lot of confidence from practice, which is why I think this year especially I have rushed less, played less, chased less, and it's been working out for me, especially in this middle section of the year.

I think the most important thing for me is just playing when I'm ready, when I'm fresh, and when I want to, because there have been certain tournaments where I didn't necessarily want to play, and it's kind of showed in my game. Because, yeah, I would say I'm pretty expressive. You can see when I'm, you know, very happy and excited, and you can see the opposite too. So I think that is just mainly picking my moments and smart scheduling for me.

**Q. Emma, in terms of your performances on this surface, how does that rank in terms of your best performances?**

EMMA RADUCANU: Yeah, I would say the second set was really high-level. I think I played really, really well. Just, yeah, did everything pretty well, I'd say. It went pretty quick.

It was very important to get that first set, because the dynamics of how the match can play and how the opponent kind of reacts to you can shift, because I think in the second set there were a few balls where, in the first set, Sloane might have got to them and played a really good shot, and in the second set, not so much.

But I'd say it was, like, just in terms of the whole picture,

adapting, you know, playing on a brand new court for me, it was up there. I think my best performance on this surface was probably when I played the third round at Wimbledon and then probably the second round at Wimbledon, and this was probably, like, third maybe. Yeah.

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