

# Western & Southern Open

Friday, August 18, 2023

Cincinnati, Ohio, USA

## Aryna Sabalenka

Press Conference



A. SABALENKA/O. Jabeur

7-5, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Aryna, very solid performance tonight, despite in the second set with Ons. Talk us through your thoughts on the match, how happy you are to be in the semifinals.

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yeah, I'm super happy to be in the semifinals. Super happy to get this win back. At the same time I'm a little bit sad for Ons. I really hope she'll recover fast and she'll be ready for the US Open.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. Sometimes when you're facing an injured opponent, it could be distracting. You were playing better towards the end. How do you reconcile that?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yeah, I think I started serving a little bit better. What was the score? 1-3 something, I started serving better, feeling better. I see that she was struggling a little bit with her, I don't know whatever happened to her, I don't even know.

Yeah, I mean, it's can be distracting. But sometimes players do that for a reason, to get you distracted. But I saw that she struggled a lot. She didn't play that good. She didn't move. I mean, I was just like just finishing the match, yeah.

**Q. The first set serving, do you attribute that to Ons or you weren't in the rhythm?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: I was a little bit out the rhythm. The courts here are not giving a lot of advantage on your serve. It's kind of like normal that you can lose your serve.

Yeah, I was just the whole match trying to find the rhythm on my serve. I was really happy that at the end I start feel it better. I really hope that tomorrow I'll be able to serve like I served in last games.

**Q. A lot of players have said they've been struggling**

**with the conditions and controlling the ball. How have you felt with the balls?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: Well, it's just different, completely different surfaces here and Montreal. Like, Montreal is super fast. It's just different. Here, the ball bounce a lot higher. Just super different conditions.

Yeah, I mean, it takes a little time to adjust to these conditions, especially if you been playing in Montreal till the last stages of the tournament.

I don't know. I mean, so far I like these balls. I think for my game it's helping me because my shots are getting even more heavier and even more tough to play against. I don't know. I don't want to complain against these balls (smiling).

But, yeah, I know some of the players doesn't really like it because, I mean, it's heavy, it's tough. If your body is not ready to play a long matches, not strong enough, then, yeah, it can become injury.

If you asking my opinion, I like it (smiling).

**Q. Have you thought about tomorrow's match?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: The only thing I was worried is the schedule. Everyone was complaining about schedule in Montreal. Just the same thing happen here. I was really disappointed, like, why they would make this decision Alcaraz play at 3. I mean, I understand this is Alcaraz, everyone wants to see him play. They put him at 6. I just played the match not before 7. Finish, what, 9? I have to play 1 again tomorrow. I was thinking at least 3 p.m. Just the only thing what makes me worried.

About Muchova, we had really battle at the French Open. It was really, really tough match. Really great fight. I'm really looking forward for this match. I really hope that I'll be able to bring better tennis than I brought today on court.

Yeah, hopefully I'll be able to get this win back.

**Q. Back to the semifinal in Paris, the racquet change,**

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**the whole thing... Now we can talk about it. Can you talk about what happened there?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: I've been super unprofessional, super stupid, all these whatever you want to call it. It was all about me there.

I was pretty sure that I have an extra racquet in my bag. Then I think they changed the ball, so I was looking for a new racquet. I was just, like, shocked. I think that's probably affect me a lot to keep playing because I didn't have a fresh racquet.

I asked my team, because I know they had in the bag an extra racquet for me. But they gave me the wrong one. I was just struggle a lot. I think that's why I was off the pace because I was blame myself for not be professional in the semifinals match of the French Open. But, like, lesson learned. Now we have plenty of racquets (laughter). I really hope it's not going to happen again.

**Q. It was your racquet but the wrong tension?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yeah, it was wrong tension. They had - how to say - less tension and more tension. I was asking for more tension. I mean, everyone was shocked that I was just, like, going crazy on court. They just passed me the wrong racquet.

I asked them for another racquet when she was up 6-5 serving at 30-Love. Probably if I would take it earlier, probably I would have a chance.

So I've been super unprofessional. Not like I really hope, but it's not going to happen again (smiling).

**Q. You mentioned about the scheduling in Montreal. How do you feel about the prospect you might end up playing at 3 a.m. or 2 a.m. at some point because it seems to be happening more often this year?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: I mean, I understand that in Montreal conditions weren't like really great. Like, nobody could control it. It was raining. I mean, every year they facing the same problem: raining. I was thinking, Why they can't just put the roof? Probably it's not that easy like it sounds for us. I was just thinking like, Why?

For the second time I'm there, and the second time I potentially could play two matches in one day. This is tough, especially with these balls. For girls, we're trying to adjust for them. We have to play five or six sets in one day?

I was just thinking, Okay, put the roof and make, like, better

schedule.

Then here, okay, there is not like crazy raining. There is no raining. I was like, Okay, they could make it better, you know?

**Q. Iga watched her episode of the Netflix series and was thinking there were some things missing that she would have liked to have seen. What do you make of your portrayal?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: I know before episode comes out, you watch it with Netflix on Zoom and you can make this adjustment like, I don't like this, this. You can change this, that or that. I don't know, like, why she couldn't do that when she was checking her episode. I don't know.

I like my episode. I mean, probably was a little bit sad because I was crying watching it. Like, everyone was crying watching it. I was hoping they going to show more positive side of my team, myself.

But at the same time I was, I don't know, I really liked it because I wanted the people to know what we are facing, like the story behind the scenes.

So I would say I really loved it. I hope in the next episode it will be even better, it will be more positive.

**Q. In terms of playing Karolina game-wise, you guys played on a slower surface in Paris, now here. How much does that change things? Best surface for each of you. Does that make a difference?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: I hope it will make a difference. But I actually think this surface is really good for her style of game. But probably I felt more confidence on the hard court against her. I kind of know her little bit better.

I mean, I think, I hope, I don't know whatever I can say, but I'm going to take this win back. I mean, at least I'll do everything I can, everything what is in my hands to get this win back.

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