

# BNP Paribas Open

Tuesday, March 14, 2023

## Aryna Sabalenka

Press Conference



A. SABALENKA/B. Krejčíková

6-3, 2-6, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Barbora is one of the toughest opponents out there at the moment. How does it feel to get that clutch win?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yeah, I'm super happy with the win. It was really tough match. It's always tough matches against Barbora. Yeah, she played unbelievable tennis. I'm just super happy with this win.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. This was only actually your second match on the courts here. Were you happy it went a little bit longer, you got to feel the space a little bit better?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: I mean, I would prefer to win this match in two sets, to be honest (smiling).

Yeah, I mean, it's good that I was on the court a little bit longer probably. I felt the court a little bit better, I hope so. But anyway, I would prefer to win this one in two sets.

**Q. When you were in a situation like that, you're obviously playing with a lot of confidence. Do you have any doubt in your mind? It doesn't look like it at the moment.**

ARYNA SABALENKA: Ah, well, first of all, again, I don't like this word "confidence." I prefer to say I have a little bit more belief in myself. That's why I don't think about anything else. I just have this belief, and I'm just doing my best on court. Yeah, focusing on my game, focusing on bringing the best tennis on court every time I'm on the court.

**Q. You're such a fun-loving person. Out on the court there was that fun exchange about on a perfect day, I think you said you go to the beach.**

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yes.

**Q. In the morning and shopping and dinner. So let's take it further. If you have a choice of going to one beach and shopping in one store and going out to dinner, been to so many great restaurants, give us...**

ARYNA SABALENKA: I don't know. It's tough to pick. Beach, I don't know, probably I would go to Miami Beach. Then I would go for Bal Harbour, take Miami location, let's say Miami, then Bal Harbour. Then some sushi place probably. I don't know (smiling).

**Q. This was the second time that you have said that you prefer the word "belief" in yourself over "confidence." Is there a word in other another language, in Belarusian, that most accurately describes your feeling, and if yes, could you please spell it?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: Okay. I don't know. There is no, nothing. I don't know. I would just keep that I have that strong belief in myself. I don't know actually. I forgot my language (smiling).

**Q. The coach Patrick Mouratoglou recently said it's so much easier for players from big countries, Grand Slam countries, than players from small countries. Obviously unless I'm missing something, no major tournament, big tournament in Belarus. What is it like to sort of be on the road all the time and not really have a natural fan base that you go to each year? Just talk about playing as a citizen of Belarus.**

ARYNA SABALENKA: I don't know. I'm very happy person that I have so much support in different countries. That's why it makes really easier for me.

Yeah, because so much I feel so much support, like here, US Open, Australian Open. Everywhere I feel like people support me, and I hope they like me.

So that's why, for me, I really enjoy -- I really enjoy my life. Yeah, we're traveling a lot, but isn't it perfect? We're not staying in one place, we're always learning something. I think that's such a great life.

I actually thinking what I'm going to do after my career. I think I'll be depressed all the time, staying in one place (smiling).

**Q. What was it like on that gondola in Melbourne and the photo shoot, you're coming down like a grand queen and...**

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yeah, it was super beautiful. I felt really, I don't know, I felt really weird. It was just like so much attention to me.

Yeah, I felt like, I don't know, I'm not a queen. Everyone is just taking pictures of me. It was nice experience. I was thinking like, okay, I won my first Grand Slam, let's just take it all, you know (smiling).

So it was really a wonderful time.

**Q. Daniil Medvedev has been entertaining us with his complaints about the speed of the courts at the change of ends. It's a disgrace, it's not a hard court, and I should know because I'm a specialist. You like a quick court. What do you think of them?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: Who said I don't like quick courts?

**Q. You're good on all surfaces, I suppose, aren't you?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: Well, I would say that, yeah, courts are really slow here, but I don't know. Danny is the person who really should like the slow courts and should feel really comfortable playing on these courts.

I don't know. I feel probably on the first match it was a little bit awkward, because my opponent played really slow and the slow courts, and it was like super slow, you know. Right now when I'm playing players who's playing a little bit like aggressive, so that's why I don't feel that courts are really that slow.

I don't know. I feel comfortable. I feel like I have some extra time. Yeah, points are longer, but then I have a little bit more time to kind of get to the ball.

**Q. What do you think has been the key good result in Dubai just generally and then obviously here after Australian Open, a lot of players struggled in the weeks after, tournaments after they get their first Grand Slam. What was it like for you to kind of have to step back on court afterwards, and how do you feel like you've handled it?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: Well, I'm really glad that I won my first Grand Slam in this age, because I felt like if I would be

18 years old to win the Grand Slam, then I would be struggling for years.

I kind of understand that, yeah, that's happen and that's was my dream. It was amazing moment, but time to move on. It's another tournament, it wasn't the only one goal.

So that's why for me it was not easy, but I have this understanding that no matter what, I have to keep going, keep fighting, and keep showing my best tennis if I want to keep winning. So for me it wasn't that tough.

**Q. Does your heart go out to some of the young players who have had these huge breakthroughs, huge slam wins and have really struggled, struggled with expectations and the limelight?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: That's really tough, but I think they have to go through it to -- they just have to go through it. Nothing is going to be easy. Yeah, they won their first Grand Slam, which is amazing. They showed their best there.

Yeah, I think they have to go through, not a lot of, but they have to go through some tough period to understand no matter what they have to keep fighting. Nobody going to give it easily to them, so they have to work for it.

Yeah, I think that's just a process. Anyway, they will figure out later.

**Q. You mentioned that you'd like to close the gap between yourself and Iga for the No. 1 ranking. You said, it's kind of an impossible dream, but it's something that I want to make possible. Given what you just said about new goals, moving on from the slam, is part of the reason you have this new quest in mind is just to give you something to shoot for, something to fight for and keep you motivated?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yeah, of course, of course I want to be No. 1. Of course I want to win more Grand Slams, which is normal. I think every one of us, everyone want to do that.

Yeah, probably that's why it's help me to stay focused and help me to keep working and just keep doing my best every day.

**Q. Your next match is against Coco Gauff. You've always had very close matches. Can you say a little bit about how you're going to prepare and what you expect from the matchup?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: I mean, yeah, as you said, we

always had tough matches, great battles, she's a great player. Yeah, I'm going to do my best to do good recovery.

Yeah, make sure that I prepare myself as good as I can for that match, because, yeah, it's going to be a great battle.

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