

BNP Paribas Open

Wednesday, March 15, 2023

Aryna Sabalenka

Press Conference



A. SABALENKA/C. Gauff

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THE MODERATOR: Once again, you're looking very comfortable out there today. How did you feel?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yeah, it was great match. Yeah, I felt really great on court. I think I played great tennis and super happy with this win. It's always tough matches against Coco, and I'm super happy that I was able to finish this one in two sets.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. You mentioned the tough matches with Coco in the past. I'm just wondering, coming in with that 3-1 head-to-head for her, are you able to not think about those? Do you feel like kind of like a different player now that you've won the Australian Open?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yeah, I mean, I didn't really think about our previous matches. Yeah, I feel a little bit different on the court this year. I feel like I'm a little bit different player. Yeah, I wasn't really focusing on the last matches against her. I was focused on myself.

I knew if I'm gonna bring my tennis on court today, that I'll have all of chances to win this match. So super happy that I was able to show my best tennis today.

Q. What is different in your tennis from the Australian to now than before?

ARYNA SABALENKA: I think I'm more calm on court, and I'm able to control my emotions, which help me to stay in the game no matter what, and just fight for every point, without losing my mind and without giving like easy points to opponents.

Q. Could you just take a moment and talk about your very early days and how you started and how you evolved into getting on the circuit, probably your parents' involvement, your dad and so forth.

ARYNA SABALENKA: Sorry?

Q. I imagine your parents were involved and your father and so forth.

ARYNA SABALENKA: You mean in tennis, how I start like from a very young age?

Q. Yes, that's right.

ARYNA SABALENKA: I don't know how I -- like I started playing tennis very easily. My father was trying to bring me into sport and he was trying to find something good for me, and he was passing the tennis courts. That's how I started.

Yeah, my family help me a lot. I think my dad, from the very young age, he was trying to make me like a really tough person. I think that's where my character came from.

Yeah, it was a lot of up-and-downs. It was a lot of tough periods. But I'm really happy that it wasn't like really wasting of time. I'm really happy that I was able to achieve so many goals in this sport.

Yeah, I just hope that my family is very proud of me.

Q. Just going back to the Australian Open, when did you come down from that cloud, the high? You say that you've got more confidence now the way you're playing this year. Do you feel there is a different attitude with your fellow players towards you? And the last part is: Where is the trophy?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Trophy is back at home with my mom.

I didn't get the first question.

Q. How long did it take you to come down...

ARYNA SABALENKA: Ah, after Australian Open, yeah.

I don't know. I actually thought it's going to be really quick, like after every title, you know. But, yeah, of course it was



different. I think I needed like maybe four days to kind of get back to normal. Because for four days, I would say I was, like, for whole day, all day long, I was thinking about, Oh, my God, it's happen, is it real life? I was afraid I'm going to wake up right now and it was a dream, you know, (smiling). That was my biggest fear.

Yeah, just for this, and then we get back on court, start practicing again, because the tournaments keep going. I couldn't lose myself for a long time. You know, I was trying to stay still focused and tried to keep working.

Q. What was the most memorable, I guess, moment or meaningful moment of those four-day kind of celebrations, you know? Was it, I don't know, did you go big and go crazy? Was it reuniting or talking to your mom? What was the most meaningful...

ARYNA SABALENKA: Can I say that (smiling)? Like straight after the title, we went back to the hotel and all my team was drunk. (Laughter.) I don't know how many liters they drink that day. There was the most funny and, yeah, memorable moment.

Why you're like hanging your hat, hiding? That's normal. That's okay. I think everyone would do the same, no? Everyone was so stressed during that weeks, I think it was normal to have a little drink.

Yeah, I didn't drink.

Q. How long before you played tennis again after that celebration? Did you play again the next day, back to practice?

ARYNA SABALENKA: No, I think five days. I think I had five days off.

Q. With the fact that you have now won your first major, you touched on confidence, but how much more encouragement and determination does it give you to do it more and more compared to previously, now that, you know, No. 1 is within reach all over again also? So what is the mindset when you've won a major, what it does for you?

ARYNA SABALENKA: It just great to have this understanding that at least you won one Grand Slam, and then you reach your goal. Of course this wasn't the only one goal for me.

I don't know, like you never know what's gonna happen, but that's why I keep working and keep fighting, knowing that it's not going to give me any advantage on the next Grand Slam or here. I still have to bring my best tennis,

and I still have to work hard for it.

It's just good to know that you have won already, you know, (smiling). Because before, I didn't have a slam, and every time I felt so much pressure from myself, because I really wanted to get it. Every time something would happen, I would lose like really close match just because I really want it and I would miss so many easy shots.

Right now it's given me more belief and understanding what I have to do on those important matches.

Q. Makes you more relaxed?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Not like relaxed. I would say like more calm, different than relaxed.

Q. Looking ahead, you'll play either Petra or Maria. Can you just talk about, you have played Maria a lot in your career, I believe, but very different-style opponents, but on this court and the way it's playing, how do you see those matchups?

ARYNA SABALENKA: I mean, I think anyway it's not going to be easy match. It's semifinal. It's not going to be easy.

It's always tough battles against these girls. Again, I think it's going to be long rallies because of the court. I think if I'll be able to bring my best tennis and I will be able to stay focused from the beginning until the end, I think, yeah, I can get this win.

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