

# BNP Paribas Open

Sunday, March 19, 2023

## Aryna Sabalenka

Press Conference



E. RYBAKINA/A. Sabalenka

7-6, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: A tough one today but another great battle between you guys. What are your thoughts about the match?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yeah, it's a tough loss, but she played unbelievable tennis. I would say I didn't serve great today.

But, yeah, it was another tough battle and this one goes to her. She deserves it, she's a great player. Hopefully next one I will do a little bit better.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. Can you talk through the match a little bit more. It seemed to get a little bit windy there at the end.**

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yeah, it was a little bit windy. It doesn't matter. Like, we both play in the same conditions, so I was just like -- I was struggling a little bit more. And especially, I mean, when you lose the first set and then everything seems like going not your way, then it's even tougher to play in these conditions. But when you're winning the set and then like there is no pressure on you, so you play better in these conditions.

So like I was a struggling a little bit more. But that's okay. I mean, it happens. I will keep working and hopefully can do better next time.

**Q. You did have that break advantage in the first set at 4-2. What changed from there? With respect to the serve issues today, was that fully you or was that the pressure that she was putting on you on the returns?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: I think it was combination of both. I think I didn't serve that well, and it started to get a little bit more windy and I didn't adjust my serve.

Of course I felt like she stepped in a little bit and started playing a little bit more aggressive. Yeah, just a little bit

there, there.

Yeah, I had a lot of opportunities in the first set and I didn't use it, which is totally fine. It just kind of -- I feel like it's a small reminder that, no, you still have to work on so many things. There will be days when everything -- not everything, but where -- not everything will go your way, so you still have to work hard and you still have to fight a lot.

**Q. How did your emotions after losing that first set start to affect how you felt in the early part of the second set?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yeah, I think I was super disappointed with myself after the first set, especially when you kind of, coming back, and then she had a set point, then you kind of hold it. I was serving for like three times I think for the set, and I didn't use it and my serve didn't work well.

Yeah, I was super disappointed with that, and I went to the toilet to switch off, to kind of reset and start everything from the beginning. Seems like in the first two games I wasn't there. I was just like all over the place and I was just trying to bring myself back on court and keep fighting.

So, yeah, it didn't work well today.

**Q. You just talked about that it was maybe a small reminder to just stay focused.**

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yeah.

**Q. Can you talk more about that? What is the message you're taking away?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yeah, what I mean is that there will be some days when, like, old habits will come back and you just have to work through it and not every match will be like going your way, and you will be serving perfectly. So it just kind of reminds that that's okay to still struggle with something. That's okay to not play your best and like keep fighting and keep using the rest of the weapons, you know.

Today I would say that I was super disappointed with my serve, so I was back to old habits. I was like a little bit overreacting on things, and I wasn't there in the first two games in the second set, so, I mean, this is what I mean.

**Q. On the serve and the 10 double faults in the first set, and you're saying old habits, how concerned were you getting during the match with nerves creeping in, the double faults at the set points, things like that?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: I mean, of course in the first set when I was like serving for, I don't know, third time for the set, I was a little bit nervous, but I was just trying to bring myself back and trying to -- how to say -- trying to do, I mean, better on my serve. Trying to technically go better.

But, yeah, it didn't work well today (smiling).

**Q. Just thinking you haven't lost many matches this year. In fact, only your second one. Almost as though you're not used to losing anymore, which is a good position to be in. How do you handle that tonight and tomorrow and the next day? How long will it take you to get over it? Will you think about it a lot?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: About after this loss?

**Q. About having not won.**

ARYNA SABALENKA: I don't know. For me it's quite easy. I think it's gonna stay in my head until tomorrow, and tomorrow we are flying to Miami and I will forget this one (smiling).

Yeah, but, I mean, it's good to have these statistics in the season, but I'm not focusing at that. I'm just like the thing is helping me to stay focused and to keep winning is just to focus on myself and focus on the game and focus on things what I have to do on court to keep winning.

Yeah, but this one was tough, especially in the finals, it's always tough to lose, you know. You're, like, one step to the trophy and you losing it. This one is really tough.

But she's a great player. I mean...

**Q. Do you go over it in your mind though, the one or two points that maybe might have made the difference? When you lie down at night...**

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yeah, I think this will be my dream tonight. It's going to be like in my head till tomorrow, because, yeah, there was so many points where I could play better and where I could handle myself better.

I mean, and especially serving for the set, like, there is no pressure on me, why would I go for like bigger serves. Just like serve to the body and just play the point, you know. I was, like, overhitting.

Yeah, this is just another lesson, and that's okay. I have nothing against that. I will learn. I will come back better.

**Q. Obviously your first final here at Indian Wells. We are going on to Miami. Are you more comfortable in the conditions at Miami or Indian Wells?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: I don't remember conditions in Miami, to be honest (smiling). I will have a few days to figure out if I am comfortable there or not.

But, I mean, these tournaments are amazing. Like here is just like tennis paradise. Miami, it's another paradise. A little bit different than here.

We'll see. We'll see how courts, what the courts are there. Yeah, hopefully I can do well there.

**Q. She's now won Wimbledon and here and had other good results. Talk a little bit both about her game, and also, do you know her a little bit? Can you tell us a little bit about her personality.**

ARYNA SABALENKA: I don't know her that good, but she seems very nice and cool girl, you know. She's really good person, I would say on and off the court.

But I don't know her that well. But seems like she's very nice girl.

**Q. How much more determined does this make you? You said it will take you till tomorrow to get over this, but looking ahead, looking forward, the extra confidence it might give you having reached so far again and kept this amazing run of titles and wins, finals, the determination it brings to you?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: I didn't really get the question.

**Q. Well, how much more of a firmer step forward, you know, when you've got Miami, a potential final just two weeks away, to regroup after this and feel positive about that?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: I think it's a good -- it's not good to lose, but I think this tough loss will motivate me more, because I don't like to lose in the finals. This is the worst, you know. So I wouldn't say that this loss is really good.

But going to Miami, I think I will be more motivated instead

of going as an Indian Wells winner. So, I mean, I hope that this tough loss will help me in the next matches to stay focused and keep working and keep fighting for another title in this season.

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