

# BNP Paribas Open

Sunday, March 19, 2023

## Elena Rybakina

Press Conference



E. RYBAKINA/A. Sabalenka

7-6, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations. How does it feel to be the champion here at Indian Wells?

ELENA RYBAKINA: Yes, feels amazing. It's been tough but really good two weeks for me here, yeah.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. What were you able to do today to beat her for the first time?**

ELENA RYBAKINA: Well, I think important was the first set. We both had chances, but in the end, it went my way. So I think it was important this first set, and then it was a bit easier to start the second with an early break.

Then the conditions also changed a bit. In the end of the second set it became very windy, so from one side it was difficult to play. But since I had this advantage of the score I, think this was the difference today.

**Q. Congratulations. She said that she started to get frustrated and fall into old habits, was the word she used. I was wondering if you could feel that, having played her in the past and then at the Australian Open, that she kind of reverted to more her old self at all.**

ELENA RYBAKINA: Yes, of course compared match in Australia, it was different, especially this first set, because she did couple of double faults, which gave me an advantage. But then I didn't take this opportunity from the first times.

Yeah, so of course I felt the difference, because in Australia she served really well. The second serve was, I think, same speed as the first one. So kind of really aggressive.

Here I had some chances in the first set, and then I think in the second I started a bit more aggressive. I think it's also not easy after to find the rhythm if we are both big servers

and you a little bit down already in the score.

**Q. How important was your second serve today? Because your first-serve percentage wasn't probably as high as you wanted, and she seemed to be doing pretty well when you were landing the first serve, but the second serve she seemed to have a difficult time returning. How big was that shot for you today?**

ELENA RYBAKINA: Yeah, the first serve was not working that well how I wanted, of course, coming to this match.

But on the second serve, I just tried to push more, because I remember since Australia she was putting a lot of pressure on the second serve. So this is something for me to improve also. I think here, since the conditions a bit slower, it was kind of easier to play the next shot.

I tried to also change the second serve. So yeah, I think it was also important in this match in the end.

**Q. Do stats mean much to you? There is one that says you're the first woman at this tournament to beat No. 1, No. 2 in the same year.**

ELENA RYBAKINA: Well, I didn't think about this, but good stat. I don't know what to say (smiling).

I mean, when I come to play against anyone, I try not to think about the ranking. I just want to do my best. Yeah, in the end, trying to win.

**Q. Congratulations on your incredible performance. Well done. Before we leave, is there anything you would like to tell the public about yourself as a person, your family, your background, anything?**

ELENA RYBAKINA: I don't know. I think that I had some questions, and if you want to really check something about me, I think you can find everything on the Internet. So I don't know what I can say.

But for sure missing my parents here, because it will be nice for them to watch me live, especially winning the tournament, because they were in Australia.



Unfortunately, I lost, so would be nice to see them. I mean, I'm gonna speak with them anyway now, so...

**Q. How will you celebrate tonight?**

ELENA RYBAKINA: Probably nothing special. Just because tomorrow we have to leave already to Miami, so we will stay with the team in the house to have just nice dinner. Then we have to quickly pack and go already to Miami.

**Q. Any fun food items or things you get to celebrate when you've won the title?**

ELENA RYBAKINA: I don't know. Maybe just some food which I usually don't eat during the tournament; some sweets, some pizza. Something like this, yeah.

**Q. Speaking of Miami, obviously whoever wins Indian Wells we're going to ask about sweeping both tournaments, so the idea of winning Indian Wells and Miami back to back, what do you think of that? Is that an incredibly difficult feat to you? Is that something that you're going to gun for when you get there?**

ELENA RYBAKINA: Well, I will try to focus just on every match, because I think that it's really tough. I know Iga did this. Big respect, because I think it's still kind of long trip to Miami. It's completely different conditions.

So I think that that's the goal in the end of the day. But when I go on the court, when I'm already there, I'm just trying to practice and prepare for each match.

**Q. In the past, have you found the conditions in Miami preferable to Indian Wells? I mean, obviously now you love the conditions here, but yeah, do you like the conditions in Miami or no?**

ELENA RYBAKINA: Well, depends, because for now I didn't have good results there, I would say, but, I mean, I didn't have also here. So who knows when I get there?

But it depends. I know it can be very windy there, very humid. For sure it's something to adapt. Yeah, I will see how it's gonna go, and hopefully I can adapt quickly.

**Q. She led 4-2 in the first set. What did you do that you thought helped you get back into the set and eventually win it?**

ELENA RYBAKINA: Yeah, I knew that for sure it's gonna happen that someone is gonna lose the serve. Unfortunately, I was the first one. But yeah, was just trying to focus on every point, because I knew that it can go

either way.

I can also break, especially here, just because it's a bit slower, so you can try, like, two, three turn. And then you just see how the rally is gonna go. I just tried to focus on every point.

Then, yeah, also this tiebreak was really epic, I would say, with all these double faults and nerves. So in the end, it was just focusing on every point and try to fight till the end.

**Q. Now that you have beaten her once, do you think that's going to change your attitude next time you play her, or is every time just the same amount of, not respect, but reverence for the match?**

ELENA RYBAKINA: Well, I don't know. Just because it depends also on the conditions, on the surface we play.

But for sure every time I'm gonna play match against Aryna, it's gonna be tough battle. I'm gonna try to prepare, depending also on the conditions. Yeah, I don't know how it's gonna go the next matches we play against each other, but, I mean, for sure it's gonna be tough matches again.

**Q. You're now going to rise to No. 7. My question is years from now, what do you really hope to accomplish in this sport?**

ELENA RYBAKINA: I think the biggest goal is of course to be No. 1. There is still long way to go. So this is the kind of end goal, I would say.

For now, I'm 7, but you know how quickly the ranking change. So I need to always focus on the next tournament I play.

Yeah, I'm just trying not to think so much about the ranking, especially now since it's a long way to go (smiling).

**Q. Are you looking at the race ranking maybe more than the 52-week ranking?**

ELENA RYBAKINA: Not really. I know that now I'm No. 2, I think so. But, I mean, it's just the beginning of the year, so still many tournaments ahead. It doesn't mean anything in the beginning, I think.

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