

# BNP Paribas Open

Tuesday, March 4, 2025

## Aryna Sabalenka

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Aryna, welcome back to Indian Wells. How are you feeling ahead of the tournament starting?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yeah, I'm super happy to be back. I love this tournament. It's called "Tennis Paradise" for a reason. It really feels like you're in paradise. I'm just super happy to be here.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. The courts have a new surface this year, how are they playing?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: I love them. They're a little bit faster, which is good for me, right? No, but it feels good, feels good so far. I'll tell you later after my first match. I hope I'll still like it (smiling).

**Q. You talked in the Middle East about how the season is a marathon. What's your mindset coming in after sort of a disappointing couple of tournaments?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: I mean, yeah, it's been like three years I couldn't do well in Middle East. It's a good problem to have, because I was really far at the Australian Open, so I was kind of like exhausted every time I'm in Middle East. So I'd say exhausted and had sick, so it was tough months. February is not my month, I believe.

And here I love this tournament. They call it another slam, so I'm pretty excited. Really want to go as far as possible.

**Q. Do you feel like you have put the Australian Open disappointment behind you now? Do you feel reenergized? Is it also a case of you using that as motivation for the tournaments that are coming up, and in particular the Grand Slams in the summer?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: Oh, yeah, absolutely, yes. This kind of disappointed losses always motivate me to keep working hard. And yeah, that was a tough one, but I think it's behind me.

Now I'm ready to get that revenge back if I'll have a chance (smiling).

**Q. Just continuing off of that, how long did it take you to get over Melbourne? Obviously you were emotional on that night.**

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yeah.

**Q. But was it the toughest loss that you feel you've experienced?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: I had some tough losses in the past, but that one was tough to accept, to be honest. It took me, like, a week and maybe a little bit longer than that to stop thinking and to finally move on.

I'd say that lesson learned and it's in the past. It's always -- not always actually, but it's good to have these tough losses because next time you're going to do much better.

**Q. Maddie came in and talked about, as she said, after Australia, her entire mind changed, and how she has done everything differently in her older age, as she put it, including seeking out psychological consult. Have you ever done that or have you ever considered really completely resetting and maybe getting help?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: I work with psychologists for four or five years so I have learned a lot about that part, and I think I had a lot of tough situations in my life, and I handled them pretty well on my own.

I'm the one who is better handling difficult situation by myself than, like, asking someone to help. But I'm not saying that there is something right or wrong. It's all about the way you are and what you feel like you need.

I have my great team, who is my family, and they're my biggest support, and I don't need someone from the outside to help me to handle my struggles.

But it's great that she realized that she need it and she asked for help, and it's good. That's it. You know, it's like for her, this is the best option. For me, not really asking for help is the best option. We are all different, and there is nothing like right or wrong.



**Q. You said February is not your month. Now that you have gone through February, sort of what is it that you tell yourself to sort of put that behind you and move and remember who you are and what you can do?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: Well, listen, I just tell myself, okay, whatever, whatever happens there, we just leave it there and we move on. And I go on practice court and I work really hard to improve things that didn't work there.

Basically that's it. And as an athlete you learn how to have like a short memory, I'd say, and it's actually pretty easy to do.

**Q. What was it like attending the post-Oscar party, getting dressed and doing all that stuff? Are you enjoying that part outside of the tennis court, the fashion?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: I love it. I love it. I think you should have something else outside of your job in life to kind of like balance these things, not to get too much into your job and not get too crazy and kind of like explode too early. I love that outside-of-tennis life.

That was very cool experience, completely different to what we do. Everyone is dressed up. Everyone is looking chic and beautiful. It was just nice to be in a different environment and to kind of like have a little fun time outside of like working really hard on court.

**Q. You have been to Indian Wells a few times. I got to see you play in the finals before. What would it mean if this year you were able to put this trophy on your mantle?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: It would mean a lot, because final I lost against Elena was also a tough match. I felt like I kind of like lost that match on my own. I just made a lot of unforced errors, and I kind of let that game go her way.

And win this trophy would mean a lot, because I had a lot of crazy experience here at Indian Wells, and I always wanted to win this tournament.

It would be incredible to have this beautiful trophy in the house (smiling).

**Q. Tennis is great, but it's also a real grind. What's the role of laughter and humor? And secondly, who is the funniest person on the tour and why?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: Who is the funniest person on the tour? Well, I think Ons is really funny. I have to say

Dimitrov is also pretty fun.

I don't know. All of us, like, we've got that kind of like funny personalities, so it's really tough to pick one person.

What was the first question? It's like...

**Q. The role, how important is just laughing and...**

ARYNA SABALENKA: Have a little fun in life outside of tennis? I think that's really important. As I said, I think it's all about balance in life, and you have to balance this, like, really tough tennis life with, like, little fun, just so you're not losing your mind on court, you know.

So I think I've been always talking about, like, balancing things out. So I think it's very important to have some fun outside of court.

**Q. Gambling has really come to the forefront in tennis now, and both tours depend on it to help pay you, but it does have its downsides because of social media. Do you find that gambling is good or bad for the sport?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: I would like to skip this question. I don't have, like, answer right now.

**Q. You were at the WTA party in Los Angeles. What do you want to see from the new brand?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: What I want to see? I want to see more fun and a little bit like more structure, like, the way they represent us and show us, and I would like them to show our personalities a little bit more, just so people can actually see and know who we are outside of tennis court.

Of course I would like them to, if they post something and they do something on social media, they post better pictures of us, not where we're looking like really ugly and wrong (smiling).

But I think it's a fresh start, and it was much needed for tennis. I hope it's just a good beginning for our sport to be explode a little bit better.

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