

BNP Paribas Open

Friday, March 14, 2025

Aryna Sabalenka

Press Conference



A. SABALENKA/M. Keys

6-0, 6-1

THE MODERATOR: Aryna, congratulations, and welcome to the final. How does a win like that feel?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Well, honestly, I didn't expect this match to be that fast, and of course I'm super happy to be in another final here, and hopefully I can do better than -- when was that, actually? Two years ago.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. How do you explain that? You've played such tight matches with her, and then something like that.

ARYNA SABALENKA: Well, I needed this revenge badly, so I was really focused, and I think tactically I played really great tennis. I would say that today was a bit opposite. Like I played great at the beginning, and she kind of lost her rhythm and she couldn't play her best tennis. I think that's why the match went so fast.

So at the Australia, I played really bad and she played great. It's just, like, tennis (smiling). Let's just call it tennis.

Q. As the match progressed, what were you thinking as the games fell and fell and fell your way, 11 games in a row?

ARYNA SABALENKA: I was thinking, yeah, I wish I would play like that in Australia. But honestly I was just focusing on myself. I was trying to keep the same rhythm, trying to put as much pressure on her as I could, just, like, I finished this match as fast as possible.

I was just really focused on the game.

Q. It almost seemed like at times you didn't really even need the motivation of revenge because it was so one-sided. When that was happening, do you pivot a little bit and go for bigger targets and stretch out your margins a little bit?

ARYNA SABALENKA: I wasn't going that far in the tactic. I was just following the same strategy and that's it.

Q. What was the strategy?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Just keep her out of the rhythm. Don't give her fast balls just so she's not in a good rhythm of her shots, stay low (smiling).

Q. Can you remember ever wanting to win a match as much as that? Can you give us more of an idea about just how desperate you were to win tonight?

ARYNA SABALENKA: It's not like I was really desperate. I was more -- I don't know how to call it. I was hungry, and as I said before, that Australian Open match was really heartbroken for me, and I really needed some time to recover after that.

And if I would lose today again, it would get in my head and I didn't want that to happen. I was really focused, so I was just really hungry to get this win against Madison.

Q. There was a question to Andrea Andreeva how far ahead she thinks when she's playing a rally. Does she think ahead of forehand, then backhand, then the crosscourt, then down the line. Asking you the same question. When you're playing, how far ahead do you think?

ARYNA SABALENKA: I don't think really far. I think it's more like you follow the instinct. You practice that, like, you practice tactic on the training block, but then when you go out there on the match, you're not really overthinking. You just follow the instinct.

I'd say that I just take it step by step, meaning shot by shot, and try to find the best solution in the current situation.

Q. In English there is a phrase, "never pull the tail of a tiger." Have you heard of that phrase?

ARYNA SABALENKA: We have similar in Russian.

Q. So maybe it's a good phrase, and maybe Madison



got your attention in Australia. Just comment on that.

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yeah, you know, with me when you get to the point of revenges, really principal matches, it's tough. It's tough facing me. I wish I would have that mentality in each match I'm playing, and I'm trying to move that direction.

But, yeah, the moment you, as you said, pull that -- how you call it? Tail of the tiger? Yeah, it's tough with me.

Q. You talked about being the old mama to young Mirra on court out there. But seriously, is it a little bit weird facing someone so young for you?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yeah.

Q. Do you feel a little bit more pressure against a kid who is so young that you just don't want to lose to a young kid?

ARYNA SABALENKA: No, it doesn't matter. I passed this stage of thinking about the age of my opponent.

It just, you know -- I don't know. I still feel like I'm 18. You know, it's just so awkward for me to think that I'm 26 and 27 this year, and she's 17 and is, like, just two years older than my sister.

I look at my sister as, like, a kid. You know, I remember her being this little baby. So I look at Mirra and think, oh, my God, I'm so old. Yeah, that's just crazy.

I'm depressed right now. Why do you ask that question? I'm almost 30 (smiling).

Q. One of the great things about you is that you giggle so much and you are still so young in spirit and haven't been jaded by all this. What keeps you so young? Why do you have that beautiful spirit, do you think?

ARYNA SABALENKA: I don't know. I don't know. I feel like these kind of questions you better ask my team.

I don't know. It's just the way I am, the way we are in the team, and this is the environment I have been raised in. Everyone is making fun of each other. Everyone is happy, young, and probably sometimes behave like a kid, which is good and bad, but whatever it is.

So I don't know. Maybe I'm just not smart and I'm a kid in the head. Who knows? Ask my team.

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