

# BNP Paribas Open

Tuesday, March 3, 2026

## Elena Rybakina

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome back to Indian Wells. How has your preparation been for the tournament so far?

ELENA RYBAKINA: Well, it was good. I mean, not so many days, but I still have couple here. The weather was nice, so yeah, really happy to be back here in Indian Wells.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. After you won in Riyadh, you talked about carrying that momentum, be healthy, the level into 2026. How did it feel to do that at the Australian Open?**

ELENA RYBAKINA: Well, I would say the start of the tournament was not the greatest, but then I progressed, like, throughout the tournament, so that was a good thing.

I think we managed well with the team, because it's important to get to these big tournaments in your best form.

As I started in Australia with the first tournament, it was still not quite good, but then slowly it get better.

So yeah, I'm happy that we found the momentum, and hopefully I can keep on going.

**Q. You won here in 2023. What is it about these courts, these conditions, that you like so much?**

ELENA RYBAKINA: Well, the conditions can be a bit tricky, especially with the weather change and the difference between day matches and night matches. For me, I will say it's quite slow (smiling), but still, it's possible to play, possible to win. Just rallies a little bit longer. Not easy to get these short points, free points. So you need to work for each point, long rallies.

But I think it's good conditions, and yeah, I can still play well, even if it's slow.

**Q. Changing the subject slightly, this is not directly about this tournament, but in Australia, Craig Tiley was talking about changing the format for the women's matches to best-of-five sets for the second week. What is your thought on that as an idea? Do you think at this stage in your career it's something that you can**

**adapt your training to to suddenly, if it were to happen, now I'm going to play four times a year, best-of-five sets in the second week?**

ELENA RYBAKINA: Well, I think it's a huge change, to be honest, even if it's only second week. You start in one format, and then it gets longer, so it's mentally also, to be ready to play so many sets if it goes to that point, I think it's not easy.

And of course physically, then you need to understand how you're gonna feel. Even if you have this one day in between, it might be not enough, and then in the second week sometimes you play two days in a row.

I think it's a huge change, and I don't think it might be interesting also for the people, because they maintain the level for so many sets, I think it's going to be quite difficult.

So I think it's a tricky topic, and me, as a player, I would say I wouldn't want to play three out of five, to be honest.

**Q. Coming off of that question, the WTA has put up a tour architecture council to fix supposedly the schedule and fix the calendar. Do you have any thoughts about the potential to fix the calendar, if you feel there needs to be fixes, and what those could be?**

ELENA RYBAKINA: I think it's important to not only create a new, let's say, group of people. It's important to hear the players. I honestly have no idea what's happening with these kind of decisions.

I'm not really in touch with anyone. I just know that there is some changes, or hopefully it's going to be some changes, but personally no one came to ask my opinion or, like, we can talk about this on the press conferences, but yeah, I don't know what's gonna happen. So this is not the question to me, for sure.

**Q. We have seen the rise of, like, player vlogs or mini documentary series. What do you think about these sort of like videos and players showing the behind the scenes of their life? Is that something you have ever thought of maybe doing?**

ELENA RYBAKINA: Well, I'm not probably the person who likes to show a lot what I do in my daily basis. I'm trying to work on it to kind of interact with the fans, also try to show a little bit more, but yeah, probably I'm less open, and I don't know even how to say, not creative, but it's also like extra time.

So for me, it's not easy to find these like more like flowing, you know, throughout my days. So if I do something, I really want to be into it and spend a lot of time, which I don't have.

But I think it's nice definitely, especially for the people who want to know what's happening actually behind the courts. So I think it's nice, whoever does it, like someone more, someone less, but I think it's a good thing.

**Q. You retired in the Dubai tournament. Just wanted to ask how are you doing? Are you 100% for this tournament?**

ELENA RYBAKINA: Yes, I'm feeling good. Hopefully well prepared. I mean, for now, I have been practicing well. Yeah, it was a tough schedule after Australia. I wanted to keep on playing, but then got sick in between.

So it was not easy to keep on going. After, I took some days off and started my preparation. So now I'm feeling good. Hopefully gonna play well here.

**Q. You're playing the mixed doubles event. You're defending champ. What do you like about that format and how can that help capture the casual fans?**

ELENA RYBAKINA: I like the format. I think it's nice to play, first of all, with the guys also, and it's nice to try also the courts, you know. It's still a competition, so you want to win.

I think it's cool event. Yeah, last year it was nice, so hopefully we can defend our title (smiling).

**Q. On that note, last year you and Fritz obviously won, and you seemed to have great chemistry on the court. What is it about your personalities that you think works really well together?**

ELENA RYBAKINA: Well, I think just the game style, we both play kind of aggressive, and we have big serves. Yeah, it's just generally fun.

Also, Taylor, he knows, of course, guys, so he will give me some advices on the return, which is like really difficult to return guys' serves.

So yeah, it's just fun competition. Yeah, hopefully, as I said, we can defend our title.

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