

BNP Paribas Open

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Aryna Sabalenka

Press Conference



A. SABALENKA/H. Sakatsume

6-4, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Aryna, congratulations. I have to ask you about tennis, I'm afraid. Just give us an assessment of the match.

ARYNA SABALENKA: Thank you. Super happy with the level I played. Super happy to get this win. I haven't played for a while after Australian Open, and happy with the performance today.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. I'm curious just about playing with the ring on for the first time.

ARYNA SABALENKA: It's very comfortable.

Q. Do you notice it when you play, or was there any worry about something happening to it during the match, like it gets hit or...

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yeah, we double-checked if there is a possibility to lose the diamond, and there is none, so I was pretty confident wearing this ring, and it feels comfy, feels shiny. I hope that my opponent will get distracted with this diamond and it's going to benefit me (smiling).

Q. Congratulations. Can you give us a little more details on the engagement? When did it happen and how did it happen?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Well, as everyone probably saw, I wasn't prepared at all. It was a surprise, and I think it happened -- not I think, I know it happened the 3rd.

Yeah, the whole team knew. My agent told me that I have a very important meeting for 15 minutes. Just put on something nice. She wasn't pushing enough for me to put the makeup on, and I was super tired in the evening. I was, like, Okay, I'm not going to do that. I'll just wear jeans.

Why you laughing, guys? So funny, right? Yeah, I look like, whatever (smiling).

Then, yeah, we got there and I saw Georgios and I was crying half of the time, because I thought that I looked ugly, not prepared, and this is such a beautiful moment. I stopped everything, and I asked the videographer and the photographer to make sure that my face is not there, just the ring, and, I don't know, side views and from the back, just so you guys wouldn't be shocked by the way I looked.

Yeah, it was a beautiful moment. I was surprised even though I kind of like knew, had a feeling that it's going to happen here. But he still managed to do a surprise.

Yeah, it was a special moment.

Q. You two travel the world together. Do you know why he chose Indian Wells for that moment?

ARYNA SABALENKA: It's Tennis Paradise (smiling). Sounds just beautiful.

Q. Emma Raducanu was speaking about the potential for having some time where she doesn't have a coach. Can you imagine ever having a period where you don't have a coach there or what that would look like?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yeah, I'm ready to fire all of them right now. (Laughter.)

No, I think for me personally it would be tough. I think even though I'm mentally tough and strong, for me it's important to feel the support and to see my team in the box and just have my people around.

So for me, I mean, right now I don't see myself being without the coach. And even though I'm, like, smart and I know tennis, I kind of like know everything, but at the same time, I don't like to go in the practice and do the whole practice myself. It just takes too much of an energy.

I just need the coach to schedule the practice, to make me do stuff and just so the only thing I'm worried about is my tennis, not like which exercise should I do today? What

should I work on today?

For me, it would be difficult. But I feel like she been struggling a lot with finding the right coach, the right fit for her. I think maybe for her it's good to take this little break, not rushing, like, bringing just anyone in her team. That just makes more problem, I feel like, and insecureness, you don't have your person around.

I feel like maybe for her it's a good decision, but I feel like she's going to obviously end up having coach. I think she just need to choose carefully the person that she's gonna bring on her team.

Q. Do you think it would be sort of chaos if you were in charge of your own...

ARYNA SABALENKA: No, no, no. You know, for me, it's opposite. I feel like if I would be in charge in my preparation and everything, I would overdo stuff so I would get to the tournament being super tired and all because I just overworked.

I feel like I need my team to kind of stop me from practicing and, like, schedule my trainings better. So, yeah, for me, it would be difficult. I mean, with the time probably I would learn how to do that, but I still feel more confident having my team and my people around me.

Q. Another question on the proposal. Did it happen here, or was that the place you're staying or at a resort or something?

ARYNA SABALENKA: It happened -- I mean, not like on-site, but -- where did it happen? What is the address?

He just rented the house, very beautiful house, very beautiful setup. Yeah, so...

That woman was driving me, I was looking super ugly and she was happy with that, right? She was driving me somewhere, and I was, like, Where are we going?

Then she just throw me out there and left and run away, because she knew that the first thing I'm going to call for is, Carly, where are you? What is that? Why are you guys -- no one, no one told me secretly, Aryna, you better put make-up on and dress better.

But in the end, it looked better, it looked real, it looked like it was a real surprise. Honestly, I'm super happy with the way they all did it to me (smiling).

THE MODERATOR: Carly needs to come up and answer questions. (Laughter.)

Q. Taking you back a few weeks, playing Jovic in the Australian quarterfinals, it wasn't a particularly close match by the scoreline, but were there things in her game that bothered you? What areas of her game do you think she really needs to improve?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Jovic. She's just young. She plays great. She's a hard worker. She's moving well. I think probably in that match she just got a little bit stressed and nervous that she plays against me. That's how I felt.

I feel like with the time -- I felt like she's doing everything right, and I feel like with the time, she'll get there, for sure.

Q. I don't know if you saw, but the ATP is doing their athlete arrivals here for the first time as part of a stylist and bigger fashion initiative. Would you like to see something like that with the WTA, or are you happy -- you're doing your own fashion thing already. It's your choice. Do you prefer how you're doing it right now?

ARYNA SABALENKA: I mean, I love the way I do it right now, but I feel like it would be so fun to see girls arriving full glam and full ready, because I think we have so many girls really stylish, really beautiful, and, you know, most of the time we look like this on the match, and I feel like it would be super cool to show -- I feel like people anyway know that we can look good, but I feel like it would be super cool to arrive on-site full glammed and beautiful. It's fun, fun stuff. I would like to do that.

Q. You learn a lot about people when you're on the road with them. What's one thing you've learned about your fiance traveling together, and what's one thing he's learned about you?

ARYNA SABALENKA: What I learn about him? He likes Oakberry a lot. What he learn about me? That I'm crazy (laughter).

I don't know. We're learning a lot of stuff about each other. There is nothing, like, specific I can come up with.

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