

BNP Paribas Open

Sunday, March 8, 2026

Aryna Sabalenka

Press Conference



A. SABALENKA/J. Cristian

6-4, 6-1

THE MODERATOR: Aryna, great job today. Straight sets. Just talk us through your thoughts on the match and what you thought you did particularly well today.

ARYNA SABALENKA: Thank you. Yeah, it was a great match. So many things I felt like I did great today. Serving well, happy with the way I stayed focused no matter what.

Yeah, of course happy with the win.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Congratulations on your the victory, on the engagement, on the beautiful ring that is shining a lot. Were you thinking about a first wedding dance? Will it be some valsa Brazilian or kaharat or samba?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Oh, we didn't think about that yet. I feel like Georgios is not really into this kind of stuff, but I will definitely make him dance something fun (smiling).

Definitely going to be some fun stuff in our wedding, but I feel like we still need time to organize everything and to come up with a cool party. It will take some time.

Q. I wanted to ask about this idea of pressure on some players, and for you, when you found you were under the most pressure. If you feel like when people play you sometimes, kind of relaxed because they've got nothing to lose, that you're always going to be the heavy favorite?

ARYNA SABALENKA: I don't feel that they full-time relax, because anyway they want to get the win, and at some point they are going to start to feel tight. That's what I feel against most of the players. Yeah, they can play few really incredible games, probably crucial games, but then they still going to drop in the level and I'll have my chance.

Of course they feel more free playing against me but I feel like to a certain point.

Q. Is that you can kind of be free until it gets really tight and then it changes?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yeah, I feel when it gets really tight. I was in their shoes, as well. When you get to a point when you can win a set or win a match, you start overthinking probably, and it creates an extra tension. That's what I feel in my opponents.

Not all the time of course, but most of the time I feel like, yeah, they can play free for some of the points, but then when it's time to take it, they can get a bit tight.

Doesn't necessarily mean that they're going to lose, but still you can feel this pressure on them, as well.

Q. Tennis is an individual sport, but you travel with a big team. Now you have Helen with you too. Max is spending a lot of time with the team. How do you see your role as also a manager, a supervisor of these people? How does that work when you add new people? Does everyone get a vote? You spend so much time together.

ARYNA SABALENKA: I feel like I'm the last one who vote for anything. They make their decision, and I'm just following (smiling), basically following their orders most of the times.

But I don't know. What is that? What? Now you're red like a tomato, because you know you're wrong (laughter).

No, but I mean, we're a team. We make our decision together. That's what you want me to say? No, most of the time I follow their orders.

No, I mean, I feel like it's really important to have a good crew around you, people that there for you, having fun, make some crucial decisions together. I'm really happy with the people around me.

Q. There is a chance you could play Naomi Osaka in the next round. What would that be like?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Well, it would be for sure a fashion show at the beginning. Then a crazy match. She's a great player. Came back after pregnancy. Incredible shape. I have been watching her matches, really admire her.

We played how many -- I think we played only once, isn't it?

Q. 2018 US Open.

ARYNA SABALENKA: Oh, probably I'll have a chance to get a revenge, hopefully. I would like to play her.

Q. Yesterday on match point someone called out from the crowd and they stopped the point. I wondered, have you had that before?

ARYNA SABALENKA: What was that?

Q. Someone called out from the crowd. He thought it was his opponent who made the noise, so he asked for the point to be stopped.

ARYNA SABALENKA: The referee or --

Q. The player. Then they showed the review, and it was like, no, no, it was just a fan. Have you had that before where someone calls out from the crowd when you're about to hit a shot? How hard is that to deal with?

ARYNA SABALENKA: I don't know. I'm not really focusing on that when I'm playing. I mean, sometimes you --

Q. Can you block the crowd noise out?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Most of the times, yes, but I mean, of course sometimes they can be really annoying, and I can hear them. But I can really recognize well if it's my opponent or if it was from the crowd.

Never happen to me, actually. I don't know. I feel like in this case they should have just replayed the point because it was, I don't know, the player got distracted by someone. I don't know. That's tricky.

Q. Is the distraction, is it that you can't hear as you're about to hit it, or...

ARYNA SABALENKA: It depends. If it's like you're about to make your shot and someone yelled super loud something, then yeah, you can get distracted, just like shocked by the noise, and then of course you can miss your shot.

I feel like it's on referee to make sure that crowd doesn't do that, or if they continue doing that, make sure that the person is not in the crowd anymore, because, yeah, it's tricky in tennis.

Q. Of course you're always going to be on Court 1 now as the first seed, but in the early rounds sometimes there are empty seats, just not that many people yet. Do you prefer to be in a larger stadium with a few empty seats or same number of people in a smaller stadium but it's full?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Wow, that's a good question. No, I think I prefer to play on the main stadium. Yeah.

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