

BNP Paribas Open

Sunday, March 8, 2026

Alexandra Eala

Press Conference



A. EALA/C. Gauff

6-2, 2-0 [Ret.]

THE MODERATOR: Alex, obviously not the way you want to finish a match here, but just talk us through how you thought you were playing and the chat you had with Coco at the net afterwards.

ALEXANDRA EALA: Yeah, it's always very difficult, a difficult decision to retire from a match, I know. No one likes winning like that, and no one likes losing like that.

Nevertheless, I'm really happy with how I played. I'm really happy with my performance, and I hope I can make the best out of the momentum.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. You posted about International Women's Day. Wondering how close to equality you think we are in tennis and what things you'd most like to see to fully achieve that?

ALEXANDRA EALA: I'm not really sure how far the gap is between the WTA and the ATP, just because I'm not in the ATP circuit. I think the WTA is a great platform for us professional women tennis players, though I think it gives us a lot of opportunity. I'm very grateful for everything they have built for us, given us a chance to become these stars and do what we love in such grand stages.

That's all I'm going to say about that, yeah.

Q. Happy Women International Day today, and congratulations on your victory.

ALEXANDRA EALA: Thank you.

Q. Among all mental techniques, what are yours that you use when you play a high-pressure match to stay focused?

ALEXANDRA EALA: There is no technique that I use specifically. I think I have gained certain experience over

the years of how to handle these high-pressure situations.

Of course it's taken up a notch when you're playing big players and when you're playing in big courts. So it's a learning experience for me.

What I try to do is just focus on the next thing. I try not to think of the bigger picture. I focus on what I can control, yeah.

Q. It was such a big difference from your last match with Coco, the tempo from the beginning. What kind of a strategy did you implement to turn the game around and to stay on top of her? What did you think you did super well today?

ALEXANDRA EALA: I think my focus was a big point of my match today and my strategy, as well as the intensity in my legs and the intensity I was able to produce to be aggressive.

Yeah, I took those learnings from the last match. I tried to do things differently, better on certain things I can control. I know that Coco is a great player, and you know she's really going to give you a hard time. There's nothing much you can do about the other person playing well, so I tried to focus on what I could control, yeah.

Q. You have introduced a lot of people to the sport of tennis and coming to tournaments. What do you think tournaments can do to help sort of encourage new fans who are coming into a sport that they might not know about but are sort of interested in a specific player and want to sort of learn more about the sport?

ALEXANDRA EALA: Well, I love that they're -- you know, it's not just myself that have been bringing in different and new demographics into the audience and to the sport.

Personally, I think one of the ways, I'm not saying that I know everything, but I think one of the ways is for the tennis community in general to develop in certain countries where tennis is not as big as other sports, I would say.

So speaking from my experience, tennis has grown so



much in my country, right, and I think that that really adds to the fact that they come and they support me, because tennis is so popular now. So people are developing genuine interest in the sport.

Another example of what I'm saying is in Australian Open, there were four women from Southeast Asia in the main draw, so that attracted -- so it was Lanlana, Mai, Janice, and myself, so that attracted another demographic that maybe was not so present in other years. Or another example is my friend Zeynep, she's from Turkey, she's been pulling in a lot of Turkish people and from the Middle East.

So I think if tennis is able to develop in those countries, it will naturally grow the sport and naturally produce high-level competitors. That's my opinion.

Q. I know every match is different, every tournament is different, but we are a year removed from that magical run you had in Miami. What did you gain from that that you could apply here technically, tactically?

ALEXANDRA EALA: Yeah, I think that Miami run was really big. It was my biggest result, and I think that that was kind of the spark that lit the fire. I learned so much from that week, and I'll always remember it as that.

But there are so many things that have happened in between then and now that have added to how I have grown as a player and as a person, and I think one of the biggest things is maturity, experience, being able to surround myself consistently with this high of a level of tennis players, and this high of a level of competition pushes me to be better.

So I'm trying to find my limits and go past that, yeah.

Q. I'm not sure if you saw the draw, but your next match is Noskova. What are your thoughts about that?

ALEXANDRA EALA: I have not thought about that yet, if I am being completely transparent. I just got off the court.

Linda is an amazing player, very powerful, and even at such a young age, very experienced. I'm excited. My first fourth round in Indian Wells, so I'm going to go in with a good preparation and a lot of motivation, yeah.

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