

BNP Paribas Open

Sunday, March 15, 2026

Elena Rybakina

Press Conference



A. SABALENKA/E. Rybakina

3-6, 6-3, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Not the result you wanted, but a great fight out there. Tell us about the match.

ELENA RYBAKINA: Yeah, very difficult match, close match, and as you said, not the result we wanted.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Really well-fought match today. What do you feel she was able to do today that she maybe hasn't been able to do to you in a final in quite a while?

ELENA RYBAKINA: Well, I think that match was very close, especially in the third set. It's roulette. You cannot say that someone did something extraordinary.

I think I started the match well. Then my level of energy dropped a lot. Of course, losing in the second set, it gives confidence also to your opponent.

Well, as I say, third set, it was fight with the conditions, with the opponent, with yourself at some point. It wasn't easy with such heat.

I'm happy that I played the other matches kind of later, but there is also a moment where I maybe didn't get used to such hot condition, morning matches, also.

So it's at some point good to not play in the morning and play last match, but the same time you are not really adapting as quick. I mean, it again was very tough battle, and honestly, nothing really to say much.

Q. You just talked about that you don't get used to that condition. The effects today, just heat or more like different bounces or the feeling of the ball?

ELENA RYBAKINA: I think the sun was pretty strong, and I would say that it hit me in the second set quite a lot. I really couldn't push much. I was trying to give myself time. I went also after first set, because I needed some cool air.

Honestly, I think the first set I played really well, and I was much more with the energy. Second set, big drop. Then in the third, I think for both of us was quite difficult. We had just to push and do as maximum as we could.

Q. When you know a player as well as you know Aryna, you have played so many times, you know her off the court, as well, how do you try and formulate a game plan? Because you know exactly what she's going to try and do, and you know that she knows what you're going to try and do. How do you go into a match like that?

ELENA RYBAKINA: Well, we have a team which prepares us for different scenarios of the match. And of course we know our strengths and sometimes even knowing where she serves. So I know if it's a fast serve, even if you put the racquet doesn't mean that you can really put it back in, because it's, like, very strong serves.

So we both trying to change some things, and in the important moments, I think the difference is of this extra energy, extra push, and for me I had the one match point and she returned pretty well, so it's tough to say.

But from my side, I could say that I should have done better in the second set, somehow find this energy maybe, or I don't know. But I can say that I did everything possible, but still, if you have this little difference, and I had a match point, so I could have done better in the end.

Q. She switched up the pace of her serves quite a bit. I don't know if she took speed off her second serves, but they seemed to kind of have some effect. Did you struggle against her serving today or notice she was doing something different when she was just taking so much speed off of those second serves especially?

ELENA RYBAKINA: I think I was battling more with myself and with the sun and the energy level (smiling). But definitely her serve is not easy to return, if it's first serve or she's going with a kick.

But in these matches, you need to have energy, you need

to move well because she plays fast also. Of course when the serve is changing, it's more difficult to return rather than it's the same serve.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports