

China Open

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Beijing, China

Aryna Sabalenka

Press Conference



A. SABALENKA/A. Krueger

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THE MODERATOR: Aryna, another good performance out there. Talk us through your thoughts on the match, what you thought you did well today.

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yeah, I'm super happy to get this win. Yeah, was great match. I think I played a little bit better than the first round. Really happy that I'm able to raise my level.

Yeah, she played some great tennis. Great serve. Yeah, great shots. I'm really happy, yeah, I was able to close this match in two sets.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. 14 wins in a row, one shy of your career-best streak. What is it about your tennis at the moment that's going so well for you? Is this the best tennis you've played in your life?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Well, maybe right now, like, I'm not playing my best, best tennis. But I think the way I'm controlling my emotions and the way I'm holding myself sometimes really helping me to stay in most of the matches, in those difficult situations to keep fighting and keep playing my best tennis.

So I think, yeah, control over my emotions, that's the key.

Q. When you played your first tournament in China, 2017 Tianjin...

ARYNA SABALENKA: Wow, that's been a while, right? I've been around. I'm old (smiling).

Who said yes (laughter)?

Q. Did you have a sense back then that this section of the season, the tournaments that are hosted in China, would be particularly successful events for you? If so,

do you know why?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Well, back then I didn't really think a lot (laughter). I was just playing my tennis. I don't know.

Like, it sounds crazy, right? I played so many tournaments in China and I played really well in most of them. Yeah, the stats are impressive in China. I mean, I can assume it's the fried rice probably does that magic, I don't know (smiling).

I don't know, I love playing in China. I love the conditions. I love the crowd. It's really great atmosphere. It feels like tennis community became bigger here, more people watching us playing. It's really amazing to see.

Yeah, I'm just enjoying atmosphere.

Q. You're the first seed in this tournament. You've been the first seed in 18 tournaments during your career, but you've only won two of those. What pressure comes with being the first seed? What can you do to flip that narrative this tournament?

ARYNA SABALENKA: You're the one who's putting pressure on me. Before, like, this question come up, I didn't even think about that (laughter).

I don't know. Maybe like in the past it was some sort of pressure. Nowadays, I'm not focusing on that. It's just the ranking. You can be world No. 1, and if you're not bringing your best tennis, like, you're not going to win the match.

Every time you're on the court, you have to bring your best tennis. If it's not the best tennis, you have to fight for every point.

Nowadays I'm just trying to focus on myself, on improving myself every day, and staying calm on court, just trying to bring my best fight spirit on court. Yeah, it's all about that I think. Yeah, I'm not focusing on that.

But, I mean, right now because you asked this question, I'm going to think about that. Oh, my God, I need to get better in that stat. Thank you (smiling).



No, I'm kidding.

Q. When you talk about controlling your emotions better these days, is it something like matches feel like living or dying? Sometimes it would seem that matches felt like that to you in moments. How much of it is you telling yourself it's okay, it's no big deal, or is it the opposite, that you're far more disciplined in managing that?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Well, it's actually big question. I improved so many things which give me more confidence that I can win the match no matter what. Probably this is what give me that belief and that calmness on court that, okay, no matter what, I'll be able to fight and I'll be able to find my way in this match.

But also, I mean, in the past I had a lot of difficult things to face. After you face certain things, you realize it's just sport. Okay, if you're not going to win this match, what happens? Nobody going to die. You're not going to die. It's okay. You're going to go in another tournament and you're going to try your best in the next one.

Before it felt like if I'm not going to win this match, something bad going to happen. I'm going to die, whatever. But these kind of thoughts create all of that pressure, all of that frustration, all of that crazy stuff.

Nowadays I'm just, you know, working hard, I'm trying to improve myself every day. Every time I'm on the court, I'm trying to give my best. If you give your best, you didn't win the match, okay. You learn and you try better next time.

THE MODERATOR: Questions in Chinese.

Q. In the past on the WTA Tour, there's so many women players reaching great achievements in Grand Slams. After there will be some swings in their performance. It did not happen to you. How did you control yourself with great achievement and with great adjustment after Grand Slams? I think you've had good rest after the US Open, so we see greater performance in the China Open. Did that help?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Well, I would definitely say that balancing, like, hard work and a good rest, good recharge, that's the key of being ready on every swing.

After each Grand Slam, I would have, I don't know, some days off. I would go somewhere where I would just forget about tennis and I would just live normal life, just have fun, chill, relax without thinking about tennis at all. I think that's actually the key of bring this consistency every time on

each tournament.

Yeah, I think that's very important after great run in a tournament. Like even if you made the semis, it's really important to just rest after because every tournament takes so much energy physically, mentally. You just have to chill and relax and just separate yourself from tennis life.

Q. Some fans saw you shopping in SKP. Did you shop somewhere else in China, in Beijing? Compared to previous trips, do you feel any differences in Beijing, in China?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Ouch. Spotted (laughter).

Yeah, I do feel different this time in Beijing. I'm not afraid of going out to the city. I'm not afraid of get lost. I know that I'll find my way back to the hotel (smiling).

Yeah, I went to shopping in SKP mall. It's really cool one, a lot of great restaurants over there, great shops. Yeah, I went there.

But I don't know, I've been in China for so many years, but I never went to Great China Wall. Yeah, that's on my list. I mean, it takes like one hour and a half to get there. You have to go really early. Lately I've been sleeping really good until very late. I'm struggling with finding the time for that.

But yeah, I feel different these days in Beijing. It feels, I don't know, like home I would say.

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