

Brisbane International

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Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

Aryna Sabalenka

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Aryna, start off, how have your preparations been, and how do you feel coming into Brisbane?

ARYNA SABALENKA: First of all, yeah, I'm super happy to be back in Brisbane. The preparation was amazing. It was really tough. We worked a lot. I really felt like I'm really ready to go.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Have you ever felt heat quite like this? It's been pretty warm the last couple of days.

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yeah, it's been amazing weather. Brisbane welcomed me with super, super heat.

But, I mean, in September I was able to practice in Dubai, which is like in sauna. I feel ready for this weather.

Q. How does it feel to be back in Australia generally given your success here last year?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yeah, I have really amazing, amazing memories from last year. I'm super happy to be here. I really did a great job in the pre-season, make sure I have chances to replicate the same results like I did last season.

Q. Was there anything specific you're working on pre-season?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Well, we worked a lot on, first of all, my fitness. Secondly, my serve. I mean, we worked a lot to make sure I bring the same consistency in the game in the next season, also make sure that physically I'm ready for long matches, for staying to the last stages of the tournament.

Yeah, we worked a lot. Hopefully we'll see my improvement on court in the next season - this season. We're still in '23, so that's why I'm talking like next season (smiling).

Q. Victoria was the last woman to go back to back at the Australian Open. She's playing here this week. What makes tournaments so hard to go

back-to-back?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Well, first it's a pressure. Last year I did an amazing job. It wasn't something, like, easy to do, you know? It's not going to be easy this season.

Just having this kind of thought on the background of your mind, well, I actually have title to defend, makes it actually not easy. I'm trying not to put myself in this, like, pressure. I'm just trying to prepare myself as good as I can, just to try to do it.

It's not an easy thing to do, especially with the Grand Slams. It can get super emotional. One thing can change everything. But I think I did a great job in the pre-season, and I think I'm ready to do it. Sound so confident, but...

Q. All that pressure, do you feel it puts in better stead for the title defense?

ARYNA SABALENKA: You're talking so fast, I didn't get your question.

Q. Do the matches that were really tight help you prepare?

ARYNA SABALENKA: The matches were really tight? Last year?

Q. Last year with all the Grand Slam results, do you think that puts you in a better frame of mind for the title defense this summer?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Well, I think all those Grand Slams that I was able to get kind of like to the last stages of the tournament will definitely help me emotionally. Not I will, but I have more belief in myself in the Grand Slams. I really hope all those tough matches, tough losses on the Grand Slams, will help me this year in Australia to grab this trophy.

Q. Do you think having such a strong field assembled here this week gives you such a great preparation heading into the slam?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yeah, I mean, the draw is really tough here in Brisbane. I think it's a good preparation going to the Grand Slam, have these really tough matches. It's really good preparation before the Grand



Slam.

Q. You talked about trying not to put too much pressure on yourself. How do you do that? Is it a mental game you play?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Well, actually I think I did a big change, like, in my mindset last year. I kind of, like, accept the fact that I can lose, that everyone can go there and beat me if I'm not bringing my best tennis. Kind of like accepting this fact give you more belief. You're more calm on the court in those crucial moments. I think that's why I'm kind of like not putting myself under pressure.

Worst case, what happen? I'm going to lose a Grand Slam, lose some points, drop a little bit in the ranking. There's so many tournaments ahead. I'm going to try to do my best to be in another Grand Slam or in other tournaments. That's why I like my mindset, you can beat me. But I'm going to prepare every match and have huge chances to win the match after match, probably to hold the trophy.

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