

# Brisbane International

Tuesday, 2 January 2024

Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

## Arina Rodionova

### Press Conference



A. RODIONOVA/S. Kenin

7-5, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations on a great win. Talk us through your initial thoughts on the match.

ARINA RODIONOVA: Yeah, it was surprising, I would say. I just really enjoyed out there, and I think everyone can see that I'm just having fun on the court, and it's always when I'm having fun on the court, I always play better tennis.

Yeah, it works. So far so good.

**Q. After your first round when you said you were coming into this one with no expectations, when do you start putting some expectations on yourself after two top-50 wins in a row?**

ARINA RODIONOVA: I need to win the whole thing now, and Australian Open afterwards (laughing). No, listen, I still don't have any expectations. I'm just enjoying it out there. The same as last time.

Actually I wouldn't mind if the match would go into the third set because the more time I spend on this court, I'm truly having fun there at the moment. I don't care if it's three hours. I'll stay there for three hours. If it's four, I'll stay for four. It's better for me.

It's just like it's always a bonus to have one more match there. Yeah, I think I'll really enjoy it.

**Q. You mentioned the Australian Open. I think there's one wild card spot left. Obviously you have your eyes on that, I dare say?**

ARINA RODIONOVA: It's not up to me. If it was up to me, I would give it to myself, yes, but I think there's other people involved. I don't know. Hopefully they like the way I'm playing this week, and hopefully they like the I've already won I don't know how much matches last year. I've done all the hard work.

So I put myself in the best position. There's nothing else I could have done to get myself closer. I've pushed really hard the whole year. I think when I was starting, I was

400 and finished the year at around 100.

Yeah, I'm super proud of myself, and I'm happy with myself. If they they're not happy, then there's nothing else I can do. I've done my best, and now it's out of my hands this, so...

**Q. You've had Sam Stosur in your corner this week. Can you talk about your friendship with her and the support that she's been giving you?**

ARINA RODIONOVA: I've known her for years from the tour. Yeah, we always had good relationship, and she sent me a few messages throughout the year when I was winning some tournaments, which was really nice of her.

I was at her retirement party last year in Melbourne. So, yeah, we're good friends, and it's nice to see a familiar face in the box. I think a couple of weeks ago she got the job of captain of the Billie Jean Cup, and I was really happy. I messaged her that I was really happy she got it because I think she really deserves it, and she's going to be great for the job.

If I ever get to play Billie Jean Cup, then I would be really proud to have her as my captain. That's exactly what I told her.

She's great for Australia. She's great. I mean, she's an amazing tennis player. She mentors great. Yeah, she's an inspiration to a lot of people, including myself. It's really nice having someone like her watching the matches, yeah.

**Q. Great match. You played 106 matches in 2023, which is phenomenal. Probably in a lot smaller crowds than what you had out there. What was it like having that Aussie support?**

ARINA RODIONOVA: Oh, it's so great. I think that's the reason why I'm having so much fun out there because, as I say, I've done the hard work. I've played in the small cities, small tournaments where no one is watching. Yeah, I think it's a little bit like a reward for me just even being here.

Obviously winning is a great bonus, but, yeah, playing this level of tournament and being at home and being healthy enough. Like last year I couldn't even play the week before Australian Open because my injury was still



not great.

Yeah, I'm really grateful for the opportunity to be here and just enjoy the moment because you never know how many more years I'll be able to do that. Again, having fun out there.

**Q. The camera was flashing to your dad, your Coach Ivan, a fair bit. He doesn't give too much away, but he was looking like he was --**

ARINA RODIONOVA: He is not here.

**Q. So sorry. I thought that was --**

ARINA RODIONOVA: I don't have any coaches or anyone in my box. Just my friends.

**Q. Moving on from that one. Last night Daria Saville after her win said that she wants to be the No. 1 female in Australia, but that's you at the moment.**

ARINA RODIONOVA: It's on, Daria. You have to speak to her about that comment, but no, I love Daria. We're good friends. I love some healthy competition. Daria, bring it on. I'm ready for this (laughing).

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