

Brisbane International

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Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

Aryna Sabalenka

Press Conference

A. SABALENKA/M. Andreeva

6-3, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: How does it feel to get a win against such a great opponent as Mirra?

ARYNA SABALENKA: I'm super happy to be in the finals again. Hopefully I can do better than I did last year. Get this win against someone like Mirra, young player, playing really great tennis, moving well, serving well. I mean, definitely a future top-10 player, future of tennis.

I'm really glad I was able to get this win, especially in straight sets. Didn't really want to go into the physical match, potentially play in the final. Really, really happy to get this win.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. What are these lead-in events going into a Grand Slam about for you? You want matches, but is it more than that?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Definitely getting the matches and definitely practicing something new. Been working on the pre-season. I have to be honest, it's not working really well so far (smiling). But I'm not going to give up on the things I practiced, I worked on. Yeah, hopefully in Melbourne it's going to work better for me.

Yeah, first of all matches. Secondly, it's a good practice of everything you've been working on in the pre-season before the Grand Slam.

Q. Is there ever a change in mentality when you're facing a break point? Are you trying to keep things the same or is there a little switch?

ARYNA SABALENKA: I mean, of course you know you're facing the break point and you're trying to go for a bigger targets, not overhit things. I think the next step is figure how to go for those big shots when it's not the break point, not facing that much of the break points in the next game.

But yeah, I'm really happy the way I handle all of those break points. I had a lot. Seems like today my serve



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wasn't my greatest weapon, but still I was able to handle it. So yeah, really, really happy with the level today.

Q. Facing an opponent who you may not know much about in the final. When you're facing an opponent from outside the top 100, is there a change in your mentality or it's just a final?

ARYNA SABALENKA: I mean, it's just another match. I saw her game. She's aggressive player. Definitely in the mindset like nothing to lose. I'll have to stay aggressive, put as much pressure as I can on her.

Definitely going to be great battle. She's in the finals. Definitely she deserve it. I'm really looking forward facing her for the first time.

Q. Looks like you're trying to introduce more of change of pace and slice.

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yeah, it's not working really well, but that's what I'm trying to develop in my game.

Q. Is that you trying to evolve? What's the purpose of that?

ARYNA SABALENKA: That's 100% great to have the variety in your game. Whenever you have to switch to Plan B, you have something to play with. I really believe and I really think having those tricky shots, that slice, changing the rhythm, it's going to really bring a lot of benefits to my game. Facing someone who is really aggressive, but who can have a great touch, it can be frustrating.

There is always something to improve. I'm always hoping for new things. So far they're not really working really well, but I really believe they're going to work well in the future.

Q. How hard is it for you to do this?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Honestly, I have to say I've been working on that for the last year. On the pre-season we paid a lot of attention on those shots. So far it's been working really well. In this particular tournament, probably the surface is too fast. I have so many options. Kind of like go crazy with that.

I think I have to trust my first instinct, then just go with the



flow. I know I'll see those opportunities, better opportunities, for those slices, dropshots, whatever, maybe more spin.

Q. Have you noticed anything different from your opponents? You're clearly the target.

ARYNA SABALENKA: No, I wouldn't say so. Definitely all of them trying to play little bit more aggressive against me, which is kind of like something I'm expecting from them. But not so many changes.

Q. Can I get you to comment on your coaching setup, how important it is to have that stability, what you look for in a coach.

ARYNA SABALENKA: Didn't quite get the question. Coaching from my coach?

Q. You've had your team, a lot of stability there.

ARYNA SABALENKA: I think it's really important to have, like, the same team from the beginning till the end. I think this stability is really important because shifting from one coach to another, keep changing things, it's so frustrating.

It's really important to find someone you really trust, someone smart, someone is looking to new things. Yeah, someone you can really trust.

What I'm looking in the coach is first of all have this understanding that when I'm getting crazy on court, it's nothing personal, it's I just need to throw these emotions. I definitely don't need someone same emotional as me. It would be only fights probably. I need someone really calm and who can handle those emotions.

Of course, I'm looking -- I'm not looking, I already found one. I think it is important to have someone who is always open for new things, always try new things, try to develop your game every time on the next step.

Q. You know the situation that's happening with Rybakina at the moment. You're fairly close with that team. What are you making from a distance? Rybakina doesn't have an issue. Others seem to have an issue with her coach's style. What are you making of it?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Honestly, like I'm close to Elena, but not that much to comment anyhow. I know they were working pretty well. I honestly don't know what's going on there. I know they are good with each other. I think there is nothing more I can say.

Q. Going into tomorrow's final, compared to last year, how much of a better player do you think you are mentally, physically, skills wise?

ARYNA SABALENKA: I definitely think that I improved a lot mentally, physically and skills, as well. I think every year I'm getting little bit better, little bit better. It's about those little bit percentage, getting better.

Mentally and physically I'm definitely stronger than I was last year.

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