

# Brisbane International

Sunday, 5 January 2025

Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

## Aryna Sabalenka

### Press Conference



A. SABALENKA/P. Kudermetova

4-6, 6-3, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Aryna, congratulations on the title. How does it feel to come through what was a pretty tricky match?

ARYNA SABALENKA: I'm super happy to win this beautiful trophy. Yeah, that was definitely tricky match. Really, really tricky, aggressive game it was. I'm really glad that I was able to put it all together and turn the game in the second set.

Yeah, really happy with the win.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. In terms of the Australian Open, your preparations for that, you must be happy with how this week has gone.**

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yeah, I definitely can take a lot of things from this week heading into the Australia Open. I definitely feel my game pretty well. Mentally, physically I'll be ready to go at the Australia Open.

Really happy with the way the week went. Yeah, having this trophy going to the major, it's really important.

**Q. Polina was playing well, almost got up a break in the second. What did you do to stop the momentum?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: Honestly, I think, yeah, I had a break in the first set. I was trying to play too conservative, I would say. I wasn't following the plan. That was the moment where everything clicked for her and she was, like, smashing the ball. Seems like everything is going in. I was like, I cannot do much in this situation.

In that second set, I just put her under a little pressure. I saw the way she was reacting, the way she was playing. She was rushing things a lot. I was like, I'm just going to stay aggressive, keep pushing, keep swinging the ball, and hopefully I'll be able to turn around this game.

**Q. What's been the secret to your success at the start of seasons over the years? This is your fourth or fifth title in a season-opening event.**

ARYNA SABALENKA: I don't know what's my secret. I guess I'm working really hard. Everything is surrounded by tennis. Tennis is my main priority. I have the great people around me. I'm able to have fun off court and be focused on the court.

I think it's a balance about on and off the court life, be able to work really hard, be focused on your goals, but at the same time having some fun just so you're not going to drive yourself crazy.

I think that's pretty much it.

**Q. Can you talk to us about your mindset now going into the Australian Open. Obviously it's a tournament you had so much success at. Do you feel like you're getting close to that invincible stage at the moment?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: I mean, that's sport. That's why sport is so beautiful, because you cannot be sure about everything. Every time you're out there, you have to compete, you have to fight, you have to show why you are, like, world No. 1 or why you're in top 10. Doesn't matter. You have to show your level and you have to fight for it.

I definitely feel confident in my game. I'm just excited. I love playing there. I love to fight for my dream. That's the conditions where I feel really comfortable in. I'm just super exciting heading to the Australia Open.

**Q. There was a moment in the second set you were a bit unhappy with your racquets. Standing on them... What was the matter? What changed? I saw your team came out.**

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yeah, I'd say half of the match I played with the tension I used to play the whole week. Today just didn't feel well. Felt like the balls were flying not where they supposed to. I just asked my team for a heavier strings. Yeah, basically that's it.

I was just stepping on the racquet to make sure it's not so stiff. Yeah, that's what I changed, I just changed the strings for a little heavier tension.

**Q. She was nailing the groundstrokes. One skidded just off the line.**

ARYNA SABALENKA: Didn't bounce. I was like, Whatever. We just moved to the next one.

**Q. You did have a smile on your face.**

ARYNA SABALENKA: What can you do? Probably before I would get crazy. Now you can just only laugh on this situation.

**Q. That was her eighth match of the week. Could you sense she was becoming fatigued towards the end of the match?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: I don't know. Didn't feel like. I was watching all of her games. Nothing really changed.

I think today she was playing some great tennis. I think she just couldn't handle her emotions in the middle of the second set. There where I step in and kind of, like, showed the level. I'm really glad that I was able to do that and I didn't, like, just let the game go the way it was going and I was able to turn around things.

**Q. You go to Melbourne tomorrow and how do you plan for the week ahead?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yeah, I'm going to Melbourne tonight. I have how many hours?

THE MODERATOR: Three and a half.

ARYNA SABALENKA: Oh, my God. I have three and a half hours. Oh, okay. I have three and a half hours before my flight, so that's my plan. Tomorrow probably day off. Going to spend day in Melbourne just a little chill, some physio probably, recovery stuff, and back to work.

Okay, guys, you know? I need to go (laughter). No, I'm kidding.

**Q. You've talked a lot this week about the world No. 1 ranking. It doesn't seem to be your top priority. Obviously Grand Slams are. Iga has five, you have three. How desperate are you to level with her and prove you're the dominant player of this generation?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: Well, I love the way we push each other. It's not like I'm thinking about her, about her amount of Grand Slams. I'm more focusing on myself, just trying to push myself to the limit and see how far I can get in this sport.

At the end of my career I want to look back and be proud of myself. We'll talk about that at the end of my career.

Oh, my God, I have to pack...

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