

# Brisbane International

Saturday, 3 January 2026

Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

## Daria Kasatkina

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Dasha, welcome back to Brisbane. How does it feel to be back here playing under the Aussie flag for the first time?

DARIA KASATKINA: Feels interesting, honestly (smiling). Well, I obviously feel different this year. Obviously nervous. But, you know, coming here feels, always felt special, but this time extra special.

I'm really looking forward to my first match, and, you know, going to now push triple compared to the last years, because now I have definitely more responsibility.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. The other day you talked about this, like, six weeks last year after you stop the calendar. I would like to know after that six weeks, how was the process for you to come back to start train again? Do you make something different, thinking maybe that last time of the year in 2024? How was that process? Was here in Australia? Training in other place?**

DARIA KASATKINA: Well, I had a different offseason this year. As I said before, I had the necessary break after China Open, so I took six weeks off, and then I had pretty long preseason, which I think was pretty good.

Yeah, this year has been, already it's last year, it's been different for me. I went through, you know, tough times, difficult challenges. So I really felt that I needed time to recharge and get back to my normal state of mind, which I think I'm on the good path right now.

So, yeah, I'm really looking forward for the 2026 season. It's, as I said, feels a bit anxious about it but pretty exciting, as well, because gonna play in front of the home crowd right now (smiling). You know, when something happens for the first time, it's always, you know, special. You never know what to expect, but I'm really excited for this.

**Q. We saw you the other day and had a chat. What are some of your favorite things so far about Australia or being Australian? Have you tried Vegemite?**



DARIA KASATKINA: Well, I think my favorite thing here is people, honestly, people of Australia. I been coming here, like, 11 years straight, and I was always amazed by how, of the mentality of the people here.

For me, at the beginning it was a little bit, I couldn't understand. I felt something, like, that's not possible, because we had a different mentality, honestly.

Then getting to know, traveling the world and getting to know people, I understand this is probably something I would like to be, like, with Australian mentality, as well.

It's tough for me, because I'm coming from the different background, completely opposite of what you guys have here. But I honestly, I mean, I'm enjoying being surrounded by the Australian people, because, I mean, it's amazing. The way you guys approach, like, challenges and, like, life in general, I mean, this is my ultimate goal, honestly. I'm still in the way of being a professional athlete, you know, leaves a lot of scars on you, but I'm really trying to learn.

**Q. Your first round here you play Anastasia who has also changed nationalities. She will be representing Austria from now on. What's it like -- I think I saw you guys the other day -- meet up here on the courts, having somebody else who probably knows exactly some of those challenges that you have been through in the past year? Have you guys talked about that at all, or are you just looking at her as another competitor, or...**

DARIA KASATKINA: Well, we actually didn't talk. Actually, we didn't cross each other this week, so we didn't talk about it at all. Honestly, I think in the end, our situations are a little bit different. So I've got many reasons for switch. I'm not sure about her reasons, because as I said, we didn't talk about it. So, I mean, I cannot say anything here.

But she probably got them if she made this decision. But, I mean, yeah, this is the reality. I mean, we see the part on here that there is many other girls already who switched. I mean, we all know the reasons. We are not going to name them again, but we all know the reasons.

**Q. That matchup, though, I guess every player that you are going to come up against at this tournament, 7 of the top 10 women in the world, you've got to face**



**a difficult draw however far you go, aren't you?**

DARIA KASATKINA: Well, you know, the tour is like this right now. Doesn't matter even if you are playing a seeded player or unseeded player. You're going to face high-profile athlete, world-class.

At the end, I realize, of course sometimes you can have a little bit better draw or a worse draw, but at the end of the day, you're going to face a very good player.

You have to be focused on yourself. You have to work hard and go out there and compete as much as can you. I think this is the most important. It's difficult, because, you know, you want to win all the time, but now I think the competition, like, level of the competition is so high that you have to accept that you're gonna -- I mean, tennis is one winning; is one losing. There is no draw in tennis, which makes it tough and beautiful at the same time (smiling).

Yeah, now it's like this. You just, you go and try to do your best and try to leave the court without regrets.

**Q. This last question is not related to the tournament, but I need to ask. You talk about the way that the people in Australia live, their mentality. Obviously you're a new citizen. Is related to your personal life. I like to know how you feel when the ATP announce a new Masters in Saudi Arabia. They have the Finals in the WTA in Saudi Arabia. How do you feel, like, this plan of the tennis, like, have more presence in that country, in a country that we know that doesn't have the respect for all the people? Like how do you feel like player going there, the fans? Do you feel like the people of tennis think in that matters, or it's just the money at the end of the day?**

DARIA KASATKINA: Well, you know, unfortunately, we, as players, we don't have much voice in the questions like that. So, yeah, I mean, at the end of the day, our organizations, they want to do business, and we unfortunately we don't have a say in it.

You know, we are players. We want to play tennis. We need to, you know, need to earn money, provide for our families, for us. So it's, I would say, we're, like, somewhere in the middle where we are the ones who have to go there and have to play, and, you know, it's our job, and we are pretty limited in the terms of where we can go or where we cannot go.

As I said, we cannot have much say when we talk about that. But I am always trying to find, you know, good things. For me, the good thing here is that if we can come to country like that and to show young girls who are there, you know, trying to play tennis, trying to do other sports, that it's actually possible. It's not that far away. I mean, I think this is a good thing.

If we will just cut off this opportunity, I mean, they're not going to win, for sure. They are already not in the best situation. So we're going to say, No, no tennis for you, I'm sorry, it is what it is.

If we can support those girls and to show them, Look, I mean, your opportunities are actually not that far away, for me, I think this is a good thing. If we can improve that, I mean, this is also a good thing. I'm trying to also think that way.

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