

Brisbane International

Tuesday, 6 January 2026

Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

Madison Keys

Press Conference



M. KEYS/M. Kessler

6-4, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations. First win of the year for you. How would you rate your performance today?

MADISON KEYS: Overall, I think pretty happy with how I played today. Always a little nerve-racking to play the first match of the year, but always great to get a win, and I think a few things here or there to kind of work on for next round, but a win is a win. So, happy (smiling).

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Yeah, you seemed a little rusty early on.

MADISON KEYS: Thank you (smiling).

Q. Would you say that that was the case?

MADISON KEYS: Yeah, I mean, I think it's always hard. I think it's sometimes also a little bit harder when the person you're playing has already played a match, and then you're kind of trying to still knock off a bit of the rust.

Yeah, I felt like it took a little bit just to find my rhythm, but I feel like once I did it, kind of settled in a little bit better.

Q. Today, your strengths, you had a lot of winners on your groundstrokes. Is that something you have been working on or it just comes naturally to you?

MADISON KEYS: That just kind of comes pretty naturally. I feel like the courts here are pretty fast. The balls move through the court really well, so I feel like it's one of those just kind of places where you kind of want to have your foot on the gas and try to be dictating, because, I mean, it's really hard to get yourself back in points here if you're on the defense.

Q. Brisbane obviously a smaller, shorter tournament, but one for you to lead into the AO. And obviously that was a huge moment for you last year. Do you have your mind to that at the moment or just staying here in Queensland?

MADISON KEYS: Definitely just focused on here. Obviously the Australian Open is big and it's in the future, but there's this week, I'm also playing in Adelaide, so I still have a lot of tennis to play before I get to Melbourne.

Q. What is it as players especially, you being the reigning champ, what is it that you kind of figure out or look at when you sit and work out how you kind of want to map out leading into the AO and what you want to get out of this couple of weeks heading into Melbourne and making sure you kind of hit that week prime, given you've got the United Cup, you've got Brisbane, which is such a stacked women's field, and just making sure you get that balance right? You mentioned you're going to go to Adelaide, too. That's a short turnaround into Melbourne. So just weighing up those considerations making sure you hit Melbourne at full steam?

MADISON KEYS: I think it's always a tough balance, especially at the start of the year, because obviously you want matches and you want to feel good going into Melbourne, but I have never been a huge fan of having too much time before a slam. I feel like the days kind of get long, and I get a little bit antsy so I prefer to play.

Especially here, the two times I have played in Adelaide, I have had really deep runs in Australian Opens. I don't know. Maybe I'm just trying to replicate that.

But I feel like for me personally, it's really just about feeling really confident on the court, and then just trying to obviously manage your body at that point, and hopefully you get lots of matches under your belt going into the Australian Open and you feel good for Round 1.

Q. What do you want to get out of this week? Obviously love to win the tournament, but what is it that you actually, like, tactically, you know, technically want to get out of this week heading into what is another slam in a couple of weeks where you're going to be the hunted in Melbourne?

MADISON KEYS: Yeah, I think that I have really been trying to focus on trying to get to the net a little bit more, and I think my biggest goal, not only for here but really just for the entire year, is to do the things that kind of make me uncomfortable on the court.



I think sometimes, especially if I get nervous or it's in tight moments, I kind of fall back on being a little bit more comfortable, which I think sometimes actually gets me in trouble. So I think continuing to try to do the things that I have been working on in practice in matches in the big moments is probably my biggest goal of the year.

Q. Impressive win. You mentioned on court that you had spent a good period of time in the offseason developing a couple of things that maybe weren't working quite so well at the end of the year. Were you able to put them into practice today? What were a couple of those things that you perhaps didn't think was working at the end of the year last year?

MADISON KEYS: Yeah, I think obviously just kind of working on my serve a little bit and on my return. I felt like at the end of the year, I wasn't starting the points quite as I wanted to, and that kind of resulted in being a little bit more on the defense and running a lot.

So I have really tried to kind of shift my mentality and make sure that I'm trying to be the one that's on my front foot and dictating points. And I think that massively comes from the first two balls. So really put a lot of emphasis on serve and first ball and return and first ball.

Q. You're on a collision course with Sabalenka if you do win the next one and she does. She won in 46 minutes there. How big is that in this tournament? Because there are so many world-class players, 7 of the top 10, that you could have a quarterfinal with your Australian Open opponent from last year?

MADISON KEYS: I mean, the reality of this week is that it's a very tough draw, so, I mean, hopefully that happens. It means that I have won another match (smiling).

I honestly haven't even gotten that far. I haven't looked at the draw. I don't ever look at the draw. So just worried about my next opponent.

Q. It is quite an intoxicating thought that to play Sabalenka in the lead-up to the Australian Open, to have to get past her and the high quality of players here, it's a big carrot, isn't it, to get there?

MADISON KEYS: Yeah, for sure. Like I said, didn't know that that's who my quarterfinal would have been, so I think that it's always great to have to play the best players and see where you're at. I mean, I think if you obviously win that match, it's a great win. I think that there is always a lot of things that you can learn no matter what happens.

So, yeah, hopefully I win my next round, and then we can worry about the quarterfinals.

Q. Any thoughts on Shnaider or Potapova in the next round as your possible opponent?

MADISON KEYS: Both are really great players. I think they both probably very much like the conditions here as well, it just being a little bit faster.

Potapova is obviously a little bit more of a kind of, I guess, a true ball striker. Really kind of hits through the court and likes to try and dictate. That's always one matchup.

I think Diana, being a lefty and she's a little bit craftier, so I think conditions work very well for both of them, but I think they are almost opposites in how they play. So it will be interesting to see who gets that win.

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