

# Brisbane International

Tuesday, 6 January 2026

Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

## Aryna Sabalenka

### Press Conference



A. SABALENKA/C. Bucsa

6-0, 6-1

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations. First win of the year for you. How did you feel on court?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yeah, I felt great. Happy with my performance today. Happy to be back in Brisbane. Hopefully I can keep the level or even get better.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. Was that perhaps a bit of a warning shot fired to everyone of just this ruthless Aryna we're going to see in the next month, perhaps in 2026 even?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: I mean, I don't know. It's tennis, as you know, and especially it's women's tennis, so you cannot predict anything.

I wasn't focusing on warning anyone (smiling) for the season. I was just too focused on things that I have been working on during the preseason. I was just trying to, you know, show my level. I did it well, and if someone got scared because of that, I'll be happy to see players giving up, but that's not going to happen, unfortunately.

But just super happy with the level I was able to show today.

**Q. When you start a new year, there's always that natural rust and things like that that can happen when you're coming out in the first games and things like that. You obviously had that hitout the other day in the doubles match, but were you even surprised at just how well you started today? Were you surprised with yourself and your own ability, or are you not surprised? You're the one that's practicing and things like that. That's the first time we've seen you kind of have that competitive singles match to start the year.**

ARYNA SABALENKA: Well, I think because throughout the year, I learned how to be ready for whatever happens on court, so whenever I go out there, I'm ready to compete. I'm ready for things are not going well, and I'm ready to bring the fight. So I think that's kind of mentality

helps me to bring this kind of level.

I mean, I was surprised with my serve-and-volley points. You know, I mean, I was practicing, I was working on that, but I wasn't sure if it's gonna, you know, go my way on the match. But I'm happy that I was able to practice that on the match.

I mean, I worked really hard, so I wasn't really surprised with the level.

**Q. I know you have talked about this in depth and probably don't want to get over it again and again, but did you think this was also a statement to everybody who maybe questioned your commitment to play that exhibition match in Dubai?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: I mean, guys, what I'm sad about is that some people got it wrong, the whole idea of that event. I don't care. You know, I feel like there is always going to be people who don't like you, don't respect you, don't support you. But there is so many people who support me who really cheer me on and who find inspiration in me, and I'm focusing on that part.

I'm not even thinking about that exhibition. It was fun. It was a great challenge. I think we brought so many eyes on tennis. It wasn't about proving something to anyone. It was about to show that tennis can be really huge and we can bring, like, a lot of attention on the exhibition match, which usually never happen, and we just proved that, that that's all what it was about and fun.

And there is a lot of people who supported us, and I'm just focusing on that. Going into this match, I was just playing my tennis. I was focusing on my game, on things that I was working on. That's it.

**Q. It obviously proved well, though, because you came out and wiped the court today in your first match?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: I mean, when you play against the guy, the intensity is completely different. Especially when there is Nick who is dropshotting every other shot so you move a lot, so there was a great fitness for me. And today I was, like, Whew, let's move around, you know (smiling).

**Q. What about your partner you played against,**



**Nick? He's up next on court. He's making a return to singles and making a crack again to try and get through to the AO. What do you think your fans can expect or what you do expect to see from Nick?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: Realistically, I will be super happy to see him winning, because what I heard from his team, not him, but from his team, that he was working really hard. That exhibition match was a great push for him to actually start working and doing things.

If he's going to go out there and be Nick that he was before injury, I'll be happy for him.

**Q. The green and gold, great colors we like in Australia.**

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yeah, I just realized actually that I'm full Australian right now.

**Q. Was that a you decision or a Nike decision? How did we get to that? It's going to be very popular Down Under during the summer.**

ARYNA SABALENKA: I want to say it was my decision but it was Nike decision, and it was great move, I think.

**Q. Maddie was just in here, Maddie Keys, quarterfinal potential if you both get there? Can you speak to that? Obviously everyone is going to be watching after the AO final last year.**

ARYNA SABALENKA: I mean, let's just first get to the quarterfinals, and then we can talk about the match. But if it happens, it's going to be a battle, and we always bring a big battle on court and always great level.

Yeah, I would love that to happen, but first let us go through our next stage.

**Q. Impressive performance. Congratulations. When you're dominating to that extent in a match, obviously you don't want to think about the person in front of you, but how hard is it to maintain that intensity? I saw every sort of shot that perhaps you didn't get, you were really frustrated. I'd like to think that was really impressive to see, but even though the scoreline is so dominant in your favor, you're still so focused. Is that just keeping that mental intensity up? Is that what you're really trying to do there?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: Well, I think because I have been on tour for quite a bit and I'm quite experienced player, and I have seen a lot of things happen, even if you're like lead easily and just lose the momentum, give some easy shots and things can turn around, so that's why I think throughout the years, I learned how to stay focused and ignore the scoreline and just focus on the things that I have to do on court.

Yes, of course I was getting a little frustrated, but I wasn't happy with the way I played the point and that's it. I think that's a great mentality to have, but it's also can be against you if you go too much and ignoring that it's like the score is kind of like good for you so you can relax sometimes. But if you can balance these two things, I think it's a great mentality to have.

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