

# Brisbane International

Friday, 9 January 2026

Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

## Aryna Sabalenka

### Press Conference



A. SABALENKA/M. Keys

6-3, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations, Aryna. Another strong performance from you today. What do you think gave you an advantage on the court?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yeah, I think I played a great match. I think my return was really good today. I put so much pressure on her, and I think that was the biggest advantage today.

Super happy to get through this difficult match.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. There was a bit of redemption, I guess, for the Australian Open. I know you said you've played previously, but this was on Australian soil. Did you feel any of it?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: Honestly, not really. I was just trying to play my best tennis, just trying to play point by point, and when I won the match, of course I was super happy, but I didn't really have the throwback into the Australian Open last year, to be honest. I don't know why.

**Q. Maybe that will come later in the month?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: I don't know (smiling).

**Q. Your semifinal next match, you're playing Karolina, and she's beat you the last three occasions, so what do you bring into this one?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: Well, I never focus on the past. Doesn't matter if I'm the one who is leading head-to-head against the player or I'm the one who's losing, I don't care. I just try to bring my best tennis, and I'm trying to do better, do better this time, and I'll be out there tomorrow competing, fighting. Hopefully I'll be able to get the win.

**Q. We said it before, but we noticed when you play, if you hit a bad shot or something goes into the net or doesn't go your way, you seem to get annoyed for**

**maybe two seconds, and then you move on straightaway. Is that something you have worked on?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yeah, definitely. I have been working so much and so hard on controlling my emotions, because before, in the past, I feel like I could miss an easy shot, and then could I lose the match because I would be so frustrated by that mistake.

Now I'm just trying to move on, like okay, whatever, I'll try better next time. That's my mentality nowadays, and I feel like that's been really working well for me.

**Q. I asked you yesterday about the challenge of having tough matches heading into the AO. They have all been different this week. Obviously you've had different opponents, gotten harder through the week, as well. You have kind of had the brushout really quickly, and then the rusty kind of early match in your second one. Obviously you played Maddie today, and it was a weird one because you broke each other back in the last set. You had to fight back. As you said, your serve got on top there, and you managed to assert your dominance through the second set in particular. I'm just curious, what is it you kind of get through the week in these tournaments? What is it you want to get out of these individual matches when you kind of get into the AO? What is it you're looking for in terms of your game when you look big picture and going into that? Sorry, it's a long question.**

ARYNA SABALENKA: It's a long question.

**Q. But what is it that you are looking for in terms of yourself and your game? These tournaments are really important in trying to --**

ARYNA SABALENKA: You're still talking.

**Q. Sorry. These tournaments are really important in trying to...**

ARYNA SABALENKA: I got it. I got the question, no worries. I understand.

Well, here, in particular, I'm just trying to bring on court things I have been working on the preseason, such as coming to the net. I was working on my serve, and it



seems that it's working a little bit better.

I'm just trying to bring on match court things that I have been working on the practice, on the preseason. That's it. I'm just trying to get some matches, get some wins, get the rhythm going again.

**Q. We know you have a very love/hate relationship at times with your box. What is it exactly you're looking for when you're talking to them? Are you actually engaging with them when you're angry at a point, you've missed a point or a hit? Do you want something back from them? What is it that you're looking for?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: Honestly, I have no idea what I want. Every tournament I look there, and I think that's the crazy thing, because they kind of are trying to guess what I'm looking for.

Sometimes I'm looking for support. Sometimes I'm looking for advice. Sometimes I'm looking just of sake of looking. That's the tricky part for them. I believe we have to ask them how they feel being there and, like, guessing what I need at this time (smiling).

But it's always different. Sometimes I'm just, I don't know, just saying what I have in my head just so I don't have it anymore in my head and I throw it on someone else. Sometimes of course I look for advice when things aren't working well, and I'm just trying to get any advice they can give.

Yeah, sometimes they have just been annoying and I'm trying to tell them that they have to stop doing something (smiling). Yeah, I'm annoying. I'm really tough one to handle, that's for sure.

**Q. You said you have done a bit of work on changing your mindset to get out of those moments really quickly when you're disappointed with yourself after a point. Have you done anything specific? Any specific work to achieve that?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: Well, I have been working with a psychologist for so many years, and you are always looking for something, trying to figure the best solution for yourself.

And for me, I think experience helps a lot, because I have been through so many different situations on court, and I know that this one little mistake not going to change the whole match. It's okay, it happens, and nobody is perfect. That's been working pretty well for me.

Sometimes I just need to throw the racquet, yell something just to let it go out, and then I'm kind of, like, empty inside and ready to build from the beginning.

**Q. A little bit less than 12 months ago when you met Maddie in the final, you were on a 20-match winning roll at the Australian Open. When you face her again today, does that take you back to the immediate moment when you didn't win last year? Does that give you some kind of a platform or a level of your game that you need to take into the first Grand Slam of the season now?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: I mean, of course you're aware of the level of your opponent, but I never stay in the past. I know that I lost in Australia against her, and that's the big motivation of course to go out and to get the win.

But I never, like, stay in the past, and never remember things from the previous meeting. I'm always looking to the match is a new match against a new player. That's my approach.

I know I have to be focused from the beginning to the end with her, because she's incredible fighter and she can come back any time. My approach is like it's a new match, doesn't matter what happened in the past, I have to go out there and play my best tennis.

**Q. You have managed working with psychologist, like you seem incredibly stable and your results prove that too. What can a psychologist still add to your performance at this point?**

ARYNA SABALENKA: At this point, that's why I stop working, I think -- I mean, and again, everyone is different. Some people need the psychologist; some people don't. I have my team, and for me it's important just to talk a lot and to hear different opinions, different, let's say, options to figure the solutions for whatever situation I'm dealing with. Then I can kind of, like, process it in my head by myself.

That's what I do. I basically just talk a lot with my team, and together we come to solution, yeah, to whatever I'm dealing with.

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