

Brisbane International

Sunday, 11 January 2026
Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

Aryna Sabalenka

Press Conference



A. SABALENKA/M. Kostyuk

6-4, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Aryna, Congratulations.
Three-time Brisbane champion.

ARYNA SABALENKA: Is it three? It's two. I lost to Elena in 2024.

THE MODERATOR: No, but three in total, no?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Finals?

THE MODERATOR: Yes.

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yes.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations.

ARYNA SABALENKA: I just like to put some pressure on you.

THE MODERATOR: Yeah, I noticed that. How do you feel? How is it lifting again a trophy here?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yeah, it's super special. I'm happy to hold this trophy, happy to start this season on a very high note. Yeah, happy with the level I was able to show throughout this week. Can't complain.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Congratulations. The celebration at the end, can you just tell me, kissing of the biceps? Is there anything in particular behind that?

ARYNA SABALENKA: No, I think because during the game I made a lot of aggressive, heavy winners when I see the speed, so I was just making fun with my team.

Q. So nothing in response to any discussions of...

ARYNA SABALENKA: No.

Q. No? Nothing like that? I guess another question I have is are we allowed to say the warning shot, it's been laid down now ahead of the AO? You have to

be the strong favorite, the World No. 1, but you have come in this week and really proven your tennis, haven't dropped a set. Is that fair for anyone watching for us to say that?

ARYNA SABALENKA: To say what? I didn't get...

Q. The warning shot's been laid down?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Warning shots?

Q. Yeah, that you've laid down, that you are the favorite heading into Melbourne Park? Not just because you're the World No. 1, but you've played some excellent tennis this week.

ARYNA SABALENKA: I get it, I get it.

Well, I don't know. It's tennis, it's sport, and that's why it's so beautiful because you cannot predict anything. It's like every day you go out there and you prove your level, you prove your point.

I think this week I did it really well, but nobody knows what's gonna happen in the future, but the only one thing I'm sure is that I will be there, I'll be fighting, I'll do my best to go as far as possible and do a little bit better than I did last year.

That's where is my focus. My focus is on my game and developing myself and making sure that I'm strong and healthy heading to the AO.

Q. When you play someone that you have history with, like her comments last year and the no handshakes, is it extra motivation for you or is it just another opponent across the net?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Because of the handshake, you said?

Q. Well, she won't shake hands after matches.

ARYNA SABALENKA: Well, it's their position. It's their position. What can I do? I don't mind that. I don't care about that.

When I go into the match, it's all about tennis and sport. When I go out there, I think about my tennis and the things I have to do to get the win. Doesn't matter if it's



Marta Kostyuk or Jessica Pegula there. I still go out there and I still try my best, and I'll still fight for the trophy. I have nothing to prove. I go there and I just compete as an athlete.

Q. Congratulations on a fantastic performance. Throughout the week you have obviously shown the strength and the power, but there has been that real sort of deftness of touch, as well. Is that something you have really tried to focus on this week? Because you mentioned kissing the biceps it's not just about power, there has been some really beautiful touches, too.

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yeah, I'm happy you saw that. This is something I have been working for I don't know how long, probably my whole life, but never really worked well for me.

And then couple years ago, I finally found the touch game. I figured something, and I kind of like changed my game style. Now I'm not only the aggressive player. I can play at the net, I can be in the defense, I can use my slice, I have a good touch.

That's something that I have been working my whole career to be, to have that variety in my game, to have A, B, C plans for the match. And I'm super happy to see that things are clicking together. Hopefully I can just become better in those parts of my game.

Q. How hard is it to go from -- because there are occasions when you were both bludgeoning huge shots from the baseline, and then to just completely change touch, how much of a mindset -- do you have to be planning it ahead of time?

ARYNA SABALENKA: No, I think now I'm a really experienced player, and right now I just trust my instincts. Sometimes, yeah, it was crazy exchange of shots, and then I felt like I have to change the rhythm and I was going for that. Basically I was just trusting myself and those decisions.

And I think it's important to, you know, to be in a way unpredictable on court. I think I managed that really well today.

Q. You said you have been working on that for quite a long time. How long has it taken you? How long have you been working on that? Is that a sign of maturity in your game that you're able to change your court craft and the way you have been constructing points if, say, Plan A isn't working?

ARYNA SABALENKA: I guess that's, how you call it, maturity, that's for sure. And to be at the top of the game, to be strong, it's not enough, that's for sure. You have to be strong mentally, physically. Also, you have to

have that variety in your game just to mess up a little bit on the court.

Yeah, I have been working for so long, and I'm once again happy to see things are getting together. Can you say like that? Maybe. Whatever (smiling).

Q. After starting so strongly here for the last few years, is this as complete as you've felt your game is heading into the Australian Open?

ARYNA SABALENKA: No, for sure there are so many things I can improve at, and that's the beauty of sport. There is always that little percent for little room for improvement.

I definitely feel really great about my game, about my tennis, but I also know that there is a lot of things to improve and to work on. That's what we're gonna focus on next week.

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