

Brisbane International

Sunday, 11 January 2026

Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

Marta Kostyuk

Press Conference



A. SABALENKA/M. Kostyuk

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THE MODERATOR: Marta, obviously not the result you would want today, but just looking overall at the whole week, amazing performances. How do you feel, and how does this help you to start the season?

MARTA KOSTYUK: Well, for sure a great week for me. Three top-10 wins. Not more I could ask for. And given the fact I had just one top-10 win in the whole last year, so it's a great beginning of the year for me.

You know, it's gonna come one day. I know I just have to keep working and, you know, I'm very happy about the week.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Congratulations on a great week. Impressive performance tonight, as well. There were some phenomenal rallies in that match, brutal groundstrokes, a lot of great dropshots, your court coverage. Do you take a lot out of today that you pushed the No. 1 in the world really, really far?

MARTA KOSTYUK: I think we had very close matches in Madrid and in Rome, specifically in Madrid. I feel like today's conditions were very different from there, like, the court is really fast. You know, Aryna did a good job today retrieving all my deep balls and just keeping the pace.

There was not a lot of things I could have done today. I tried different ways, but obviously I also didn't play my best tennis today. I wasn't 100% fit. So I felt like I could cover the court better (smiling), because, I mean, it's also the final. You know, I had really difficult matches against, you know, great players. So I mean, I'm not injured or whatever. It's just the body's also getting tired.

And against, when you play World No. 1, you have to be -- it's better if you're 100% fit, you know, because, you know, this gives you the best chance.

I'm very happy with the week in general. I did a lot of progress on and off the court, and I think tennis is not a

sprint, it's a marathon. We have four slams a year. You know, it's a lot of opportunities. You know, it's opportunity every single week. So I'm happy how I converted my opportunities this week, and I think that's what I will take, for sure, with me.

Q. When you're playing someone like Aryna, just doesn't seem to ever let up. Like you said, it's a bit of a marathon, but it felt like you guys were sprinting out there for a full hour and a half.

MARTA KOSTYUK: Yeah. Well, I mean, I wish I could give more variety today, but it was really, like, really, really fast, as I said. So, you know, I had to do it the other way. Didn't work.

But, you know, I think at the end it was a great match. I'm very happy that I was staying in the match as much as I could. I was coming back. It wasn't easy, because it felt like, you know, I'm hitting the wall every time, like I do different things but nothing is working. I kept trying. I never gave up.

I gave myself the best chance today. It didn't work out, but I think that's what counts in the end, because I felt like last year I almost gave up throughout the match against these players, and, you know, I haven't done that this week, which for me is a very big win. I think it gives me a lot of opportunities in the future, too.

Q. You had three top-10 wins this week. If you keep playing like this, do you feel you belong in the top 10 and can reach that this year? Looking immediately ahead to Melbourne, how deep do you think you can go if you play like you did this week?

MARTA KOSTYUK: Well, I think if I keep beating top-10 players, for sure there is no way. I mean, I will be top-10 player, because it just will be really far in the tournament then.

I mean, I think so. This is the goal, for sure, and this week showed that, you know, I'm not that far. You know, I just have to keep working. So, yeah, it's this way.

Sorry, what was the second question? Sorry.

Yeah, it's in a week. I have time to recover. I don't play Adelaide. I heal a little bit, I rest a little bit, and back to work. I feel generally pretty fresh mentally, fresh

physically in three days.

So, you know, I have a great team with me who help me recover, who will, you know, help me stay happy. I think that's also very important. And I'm going to Melbourne tomorrow, and I'm very excited to see my Ukrainian family again, have some Ukrainian food, see my friend Evalise, she has birthday tomorrow. I'm very, very happy to see her for her birthday.

You know, it's good couple of days ahead, and I feel good. It's another new tournament in a week, so, you know, we start again, all of us. We will see how far I can go.

Q. You spoke about Ukraine in the oncourt presentation there. I suppose there is a lot of conflict in the world at the moment, there has been a lot of other things that are front-of-mind. Do you feel like it's really important to just reinforce what's going on at home to keep that front of people's minds?

MARTA KOSTYUK: I think it's important for me to use my platform in the right way, and my platform is Ukraine, because I represent Ukraine, so I think it's really important to talk about that.

Yeah, I think, you know, I have such exposure, so many people follow me, so many people look up to me, kids and people. You know, I have just learned with the war and everything that's going on that it's really important to stand up for things and to talk about them, whether it's war, whether it's other beliefs, or the position that you have.

No matter what it is, if it's what you believe in, you have to talk about it. I think it's really important for me also personally, because as I said on the court, my house, like the house where my parents live, it has heating, like they have generators, so even if there are blackouts, they can still push their electricity, so they can still heat up their house, but it's still very cold inside. Like my husband's parents are walking around in the jackets at home because of how cold it is.

So, you know, I'm here, I do my job, of course, this is the most important thing, but at the same time, like, the reality back home is very, very different. So I just, I feel like I cannot ignore it and I have to share it. I have platform for this, and I have voice.

Yeah, you know, it's not, in my position, it's not okay to not talk about it. It's just, I mean, it's just gonna be inhumane for me.

Q. Just looked like there were times in the first set in particular you were keen to try and attack the first serve a bit more even with the extra speed she gets on that. Some winners but then some going long.

But is that a risk you think you just have to take against someone like Aryna, or next time do you think you might look to be more defensive and search for winners down the track?

MARTA KOSTYUK: I would say Aryna was very powerful today. I mean, some serves she was serving, I was, like, wow, it was 175 kilometers per hour wide serve. If you're a tennis player, if you know tennis, it's incredibly fast serve for wide serve, and it's not like it wasn't going into my body. It was an actual wide serve.

So, you know, she was serving really good today, and my, how do you say this shot, my forehand slice on the return wasn't working that well today, and I felt like she would get the advantage in the rally very quick, so I didn't want to give her that opportunity.

I mean, I was trying different things, and unfortunately this slice also wasn't working well today, like I missed most of them.

Yeah, I don't know. I wasn't as sharp today. I wasn't as, like, fast, I would say. So it's like a combination of things. So I tried different things, and, you know, at that moment, like, on the court, it felt like it's the right thing to do. It's almost the only thing I could do. I was missing a lot of balls today, was going for a little bit more than usual, because the pressure that she creates on the court, you know, if you play a little bit shorter, it's almost a winner right away.

So, yeah, I mean, I wasn't in the winning position today. So it was difficult. But yeah, I mean, I tried different things. So, you know, something was working; something wasn't.

But, yeah, generally I like to return aggressive. She's been really, really good today retrieving these balls. Like even when they were going in, it was incredible speed. I actually want to know, there were some points I want to know what was the speed of the ball, because it felt like we were hitting 150 kilometers per hour, which was crazy.

I think when I played her on clay, it's a little bit different type of game, so her ball is not accelerating so fast as here. Like here was really difficult to even structure something in the point, because the ball was just, like, sliding on the court like crazy.

Yeah, you know, every week we have different conditions, we have different balls, different weather, different court. So, you know, I will try different things next time, I guess (smiling).

Q. Marta, great week this week. Well done. There was a situation where there was a smash you mishit badly, and Aryna was also surprised. The look on

your face was like, what happened? She was maybe more surprised it hit it out, and you both laughed about it. How was that whole sort of point for you?

MARTA KOSTYUK: Yeah, I mean, it was crazy shot. I don't know how it went in, and it was really crazy. I don't think I have ever played this type of shot in my life.

I mishit once the serve, like with the tip of the racquet, and it was an ace, because it, like, landed very short. That happened to me in Madrid last year. But I never had this type of shot.

So it was funny, and, you know, it was just, you know, very accidental winning point. It was funny how, you know, she stopped and then she reacted, but it was, anyways, the ball, like, sliced very quickly on the court. Yeah, it was funny.

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