

# Australian Open

Friday, 26 January 2024

Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

## Pere Riba

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We're welcoming Pere Riba, Qinwen's coach. Congratulations on your team and Qinwen getting to the final.

Can you talk a little bit about reflections of this tournament and what you thought she's done really well and what's seen her reach her first Grand Slam final.

PERE RIBA: Well, of course she was working really hard. She put a lot of effort in the preseason and a lot of improvements. Of course we arrived here in Melbourne with, you know, like, with the faith to do good things day by day. At least she's playing good tennis. She's really excited for play that match.

And, yeah, she's really happy.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. When you guys were working together towards the end of it the first time, I know that there was kind a lot of ambition from her and a lot of pressure she was putting on herself to get success so early. As you've now started working again together after the break, how different is the working relationship with her compared to the first time?**

PERE RIBA: Well, at least when we started I saw that she has really hungry, you know, always she wants to improve. Her ethic work is unbelievable. These things that I saw in the beginning, I had a lot of confidence on her that she can, you know, improve.

Things that changed is now Qinwen is more mature. Finally is the process. Like, when I started with her she had 17, close to do 18 years old. Now she's 21, and yeah, she's evolving. Still she has a big margin to improve her tennis.

I'm very proud of her, because she's doing the right things.

**Q. Can you explain sort of how it all came about, you know, sort of after the US Open when she lost her coach and then you left. How was the connection made and what was it like, the getting back together?**

PERE RIBA: Well, the situation was when I finish the US

Open, finish the season, in my family, my mom had some issues with healthy. Also, she has very good relationship, we have very good relationships with my family, with her.

Yes, finally was finishing the season. I was talking with her. They put in contact with me. I want to spend some time with my mom, because my last years I was in the States. Yeah, was a casualty, and she contacts to me. In that moment I not was doing nothing. I was at home with my family.

And then yes, of course I finally feel that Qinwen, I start with her when she was really, really young, when she was, like, 200 of the world. For me is like, you know, I was happy that she calls to me and to continue working the work that we were doing in the past.

**Q. Is your mother okay?**

PERE RIBA: Yeah, yeah. Thank you for asking. Everything is under control. Yeah, my sister is taking care of her at this moment (smiling).

**Q. Qinwen is a young player and you also a young coach. She learn a lot from you, but did you learn anything from her, or did you learn anything Chinese culture, the Chinese traditional culture?**

PERE RIBA: Yes, of course. I'm learning every day from Qinwen. Yeah, you learn a lot from the players. I wish that she's learning something from me also.

Yeah, and about the Chinese culture, I like so much. I have many Chinese friends. I love the people. Yeah, every day that passes I'm more involved with the Chinese culture. You know, I'm trying to start to talk a bit. Sometimes Qinwen is teaching to me some Chinese. It's complicated to talk, but I'm trying (smiling).

But yes, I'm feeling really good.

**Q. I'm not sure if it's completely unique, but you helping guide Coco to her Grand Slam final at the US Open, and then at the next Grand Slam you're guiding Qinwen to a Grand Slam final. How much of the experience in New York helps you with Qinwen here in Melbourne at the same point of the tournament?**



PERE RIBA: Always I think that all experiences is helping to you. Me, I'm a guy humble that I'm trying to learn from everyone.

And, yes, in the US Open was really amazing moment. Of course this experience are helping here, and I'm trying that when I learn something to try to explain or to teach to the player.

And, yeah, I think so that the experience in life, not only in tennis, is helping to you, and if you are taking this experience in the good direction is for sure that is helping.

**Q. My question is about the serve. There is a lot of talk about her serve, especially the little stop before toss the ball. Are you trying to fix it, or as long as she can ace her opponent, serving time is okay?**

PERE RIBA: Yeah, to be honest, when I was working with her that we finish on June 2023, she not was doing that. Then when I arrive in this preseason in December, I was watching this new motion. We were working on that for, you know, and then at least Qinwen is serving really well.

Is unbelievable the talent that she has, because she can toss the ball different, she can do different motion, and then at least she can serve really good. This is telling you how Qinwen is amazing player, you know.

But yeah, we were working and in the practice is working much better. But, you know, sometimes is not the same practices than competition, and in competition, if you have a habit or something is, like, you have to continue working for try to arrive at the point that you really want.

**Q. In terms of you'll be facing Sabalenka for the second straight slam final, Coco and Aryna are very different players. How do you see that matchup for Qinwen? How do you work with her to kind of manage the stress and anxiety of playing a Grand Slam final? Because I know at the US Open when she played in the quarterfinals she was really nervous for that match. Yeah, can you just talk about the matchup and the occasion.**

PERE RIBA: Yeah, at least, you know, is a really interesting match. Like you said, Qinwen played against her in US Open, and then will be a tough match for Qinwen, because finally I believe that Sabalenka is, like, the favorite.

But the evolution of Qinwen is, you know, every month she's better and better and better. Still she is so young. She's improving every single month and still is like, I told you, has a lot of margin to improve. She arrive with very good feelings. She arrive really motivated. And then if

she plays her game, she will have her chances.

But of course all of us, we know Aryna, and we know it's going to be a really complicated match.

**Q. Certain coaches are identified with certain approaches to the game. How would you summarize your sort of philosophy of tennis? If I was coming to you to be -- I'm never coming to you to be my coach -- but if I was a professional player and coming to you to be my coach, why would I go to you rather than somebody else?**

PERE RIBA: Me, at least I understand the tennis that every player is unique, is special, has the strong points, the weaknesses. My philosophy, I don't say it is the right one, but you cannot coach every player the same way that you are coaching the other ones.

Of course when you coach someone, I'm trying to do that check where what we have to improve, what we have, the weaker points that we have, and then when you clear that, create the schedule, create the plan, and then work hard and work a lot (smiling).

**Q. Obviously you weren't playing that long ago. Was it always in your plans to move into coaching or did you just kind of go into it accidentally? Your post-playing career, what were your plans with coaching?**

PERE RIBA: Well, I start to coach because in my head not was the idea to stop to play tennis, to be honest. If my body was in perfect conditions, my dream was continue playing.

But the situation arrive like that. One day I have the car accident, and then at that point, you know, to be coach is the closest feeling that you can have like a player. I start to do it, and I really enjoy it. I really love it. My passion is tennis.

And, yeah, you know, improving is a new feeling, is different, is a bit different to be coach or player. Yeah, I'm enjoying a lot.

**Q. You have been coaching Qinwen since she was 17. Every player is different and unique, as you said, and top players particularly have something special, like a superpower that they do better than everyone else. What have you seen within her that you think makes her stand apart or make her different?**

PERE RIBA: Like I told you, I think that Qinwen I never see in my life a player that with ethic work, you know, that she has, that always is ready for practice, really hard worker.

When you see a player like that, was so funny, the first

week that we start to work, like, long time ago, I say, Okay, 7:00 in the morning, and then we go to practice. Then we practice a lot of hours. I say next day the same, next day the same. I was thinking that after four or five days, she's gonna say, I'm tired.

To be honest, I have to say sometimes we are getting angry, because she wants to do it more, and me, I have to stop to her. I never pass in my life this. Then you can imagine the dreams that have Qinwen, that she really wants to be there in the top, and I'm really, really happy for her, because she deserve it.

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