

Roland Garros

Sunday, 4 June 2023

Paris, France

Aryna Sabalenka

Quotes from Audio

A. SABALENKA/S. Stephens

7-6, 6-4

Q. Congratulations on the win. First of all, what are your thoughts on the match?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yeah, it was crazy match. I'm super happy with this win. It was really tough battle and that she came back from Love-5, and it says a lot that she's a great fighter and, yeah, that she's not going to give me that win easily.

So it was really a tight first set in the second one, and, yeah, it was a great battle.

Q. What do you think changed from 5-0 that made that first set tricky?

ARYNA SABALENKA: I don't know. I think it was just like few key moments which I didn't finish right, and then she start to believe in herself a little bit more. People start to support her more. She kind of play with that crush and was like going for the shots. I think she played unbelievable tennis.

I felt like I kind of like dropped my level for a little bit -- not for a little bit, actually, for five games.

But, yeah, I'm super happy that I was able to win the first set.

Q. What were you telling yourself as that first set was getting closer, and what was the key then? Because you played a very good tiebreaker.

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yeah.

Q. A very clean tiebreaker. Seemed like a very disciplined tiebreaker.

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yeah. Yeah, I was just keep telling myself that I have been through a lot of tough situation, and I went through all of those craziness, so I'm strong enough to handle this tiebreak and that gave me so much power, so much belief.

Yeah, I think that was like the key that's helped me to win



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that tiebreak.

Q. In terms of just playing night versus day, how different did you find specifically -- we'll talk about the crowd in a little bit -- but specifically the conditions? Did it play very differently than what you had in your first three matches?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yeah, I think it was a little bit different, I think ball didn't fly that much. It was much slower. I would say that when we start until, I don't know, maybe first three games, it was kind of similar to the day session, the speed of the ball I felt like that.

But then everything start to get slower, slower, and slower, and I think that's why she had more chances and it was kind of tough for me to adjust to the ball because it was super slow for me. Yeah, that was really tricky.

But I don't know. I enjoy playing day session. I enjoy playing night session. I think it's a little bit different tennis and different atmosphere. And, yeah, that was just amazing, amazing match today.

Q. In terms of just how that performance, just, you know, being as physical as you had to be against Sloane because you couldn't just bang, bang through the ball to get it past her, how good is it to have that sort of match going forward?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yeah, actually, you know, that's what I was thinking about during the match, like it's a good match to play on the clay court. It's a good preparation. If you can get through this match, you can get through whatever happens to you, you know. Like, it was really tough, tough match.

A lot of balls coming back. It wasn't easy to finish the point. So I always had to find this perfect shot to finish it, and that was tricky. Yeah, that was tough.

Q. Talk about playing the night session and just the crowd, the ambience, it's a very unique and new thing here at Roland Garros, you know, in the last couple years this night session. What was your experience?

ARYNA SABALENKA: That was amazing. At first, I didn't expect that much people. It was a lot of people watching us play. It was great atmosphere, great support. I don't know, there was something -- I don't



know, I felt like this was like final match. It was like full crowd. Everyone was just like, I felt like they enjoy it, I hope they enjoy it.

Yeah, that was incredible.

Q. In terms of obviously next match playing Elina, you guys have played twice before. First and foremost, what do you make of that match as a quarterfinal for a spot in the semifinals here at Roland Garros, which neither of you have ever made it that far?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Yeah. She's playing really great tennis here in Paris, moving well. Like another player's gonna run a lot and put a lot of balls back, and I just have to be patient and wait for that perfect shot to finish the point. Don't rush myself. Just go there and fight and show my best tennis.

Q. Four matches in, what have you been most pleased with with how you have handled things so far to make your first quarterfinal here?

ARYNA SABALENKA: Well, I don't know. I really happy -- what I'm happy with? I'm super happy that I was able to handle this kind of pressure playing on the clay court. It's not that fast clay court as in Madrid, for example.

It's tough conditions for me, and I'm super happy that I'm able to handle it. I'm able to show my tennis here. I'm able to fight and actually enjoy playing on clay, you know. That's really important.

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