

# US OPEN

Friday, August 25, 2023

New York, New York, USA

## Aryna Sabalenka

### Press Conference



**THE MODERATOR:** Aryna, welcome. Could you give us your thoughts as you get ready for this year's Open.

**ARYNA SABALENKA:** Yeah, I'm happy to be back. I mean, I really like to play here, the US Open. Just can't wait to start playing here.

**THE MODERATOR:** Questions.

**Q. The bartending in Cincinnati, how did you feel that went? You practiced with Coco Gauff yesterday. You've seen the growth she's shown playing so well.**

**ARYNA SABALENKA:** What was the first question?

**Q. Bartending in Cincinnati with Taylor.**

**ARYNA SABALENKA:** Okay, oh, my God. It was a lot of fun. It was really a lot of fun. I got the skills how to make margarita. If anyone wants one margarita, I can make it for you. It's a lot of fun.

About Coco, yeah, she's doing much better in last three weeks. Yeah, I practiced with her yesterday. She definitely playing much better, improved a lot, yeah.

**Q. You've played some really tough three-set matches over the last couple weeks. What do you take away from them and how you apply lessons learned?**

**ARYNA SABALENKA:** Yeah, I mean, I played some great tennis, a lot of good matches the last week. That's what I needed before going to the US Open.

And, yeah, I was there, like, thinking more about building my tennis for the US Open so I can come here with couple of matches - how to say - going into the US Open.

I feel great. Yeah, the lessons is just to keep fighting no matter what, just keep working.

**Q. Now that you've won a Grand Slam, do you view the non-slam tournaments differently, more as preparation for the slams?**

**ARYNA SABALENKA:** Yeah, you know what, I change my approach to these tournaments. Of course, I want to win all of them, like we all do.

But, yeah, now I'm looking to those tournaments more like preparation for the Grand Slam. Yeah, I think it's changed a little bit after Australia Open. I don't know if it's good or bad. I hope it's good. But it is what it is.

**Q. Over the last couple of months, you and Iga have been battling for the No. 1 ranking. You haven't had a chance to take it yet. Is that something you think about coming into a tournament, into the match, are you aware of that? How do you push that to the side when you step on the court?**

**ARYNA SABALENKA:** Well, I don't need to push it on the side because this is not something I'm really thinking during the tournament, during the matches.

I mean, I know that I had and probably I have opportunity to become world No. 1, but there is still a lot of job to be done. I'm, like, focusing on myself more than on the ranking.

I know that if I'll bring my best tennis, if I'll do my best, I know that I'm able to do that. I'm trying to shift my focus more on myself, on my game, on improving myself more.

**Q. You played an enormous number of matches this year as a result of the success you've had. How are you able to balance the needs to have a rest? Do you still feel mentally and physically as strong and sharp as you need to be?**

**ARYNA SABALENKA:** Yeah, I feel really strong physically and mentally probably because of amount of matches I play this year, even stronger than before.

Yeah, it should be a good balance between playing matches, between preparation, and the recovery. I have my physio and I have my team. They doing well in managing this amount of practicing and the recovery.

So physically, mentally I feel ready. I feel motivated. I feel strong.



**Q. In terms of recovering from sometimes tough losses, Ons was saying she was not ready to play for a few weeks after Wimbledon. You've had some tough losses in the semis the last two majors. Did you have to take time off? Did it help you to get back on court? How do you make sure you don't have a hangover from those losses?**

**ARYNA SABALENKA:** Well, definitely I needed some time off, kind of like forget about tennis for a while, like few days at least, just to don't get super depressed.

I mean, I got a lot of experience. Winning tough matches, losing tough matches. What I learned in the past, all these matches, you're not losing them, you're learning to become stronger. I know that in the future these tough losses will help me to win some great matches.

That's why I'm kind of like have this short memory. Okay, I lost, the lesson is learned, it's time to move on. I know this match will help me in the future.

**Q. There's a chance the WTA Finals will go to Saudi Arabia this fall. What are your thoughts on that? Will you go, assuming you're qualified?**

**ARYNA SABALENKA:** Well, first of all, from what I know, nothing have been confirmed. I always love playing in the WTA Finals. This year I want to do a little bit better than the last year. But right now my focus is here, the US Open. So I'm trying to stay focused at the US Open.

Whatever decision they're going to make, I'm happy to go - how to say - wherever (smiling).

**THE MODERATOR:** Thank you.

**ARYNA SABALENKA:** Thank you.

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