

Miami Open presented by Itaú

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Miami, FL USA

Aryna Sabalenka

Press Conference



A.SABALENKA | E.Rybakina

6-4, 6-3

Moderator: First question from me, Aryna, congratulations, back-to-back Miami Open finals. Just give us your thoughts and your performance today.

Aryna Sabalenka: Yeah, I'm obviously super happy with the level I played. Happy to get this win in straight sets. Yeah, I think I played really incredible tennis. Nothing I could do better today, and happy to be in another final, another opportunity.

Question: And now for Coco, 6-6 on the head-to-head. It can't get any closer than that. What are your thoughts going into playing her this time?

Aryna Sabalenka: Yeah, she's a fighter. She's a great player. Of course, we played a lot of matches, a lot of tight matches, a lot of big finals. And yeah, she is an incredible player. And I'm really excited to face her in the final, and I think it's going to be a great battle. And yeah, I cannot wait to play that match.

Question: Just on Coco, people often say that she, like, she makes opponents play bad sometimes, like, with the way she plays. What makes her difficult to play?

Aryna Sabalenka: I think the rhythm is always different, and it's not like she's just forcing unforced errors, because she's always... with Coco, you know that you have to play an extra ball, and the ball

always comes back, sometimes not perfect, but it's always back on your side, and you have to, you have to be aggressive, you have to go for shots. And yeah, she pushes you into the long rallies, and I think that's what makes her difficult.

Question: You mentioned how well you played tonight. Can you remember a match where you played much better than that?

Aryna Sabalenka: I don't know actually, but I really think that today was exceptional level for me. And as I said, nothing I could do better. And I really hope that I can produce this level each time I play on court.

Question: Coco grew up right near here. It's kind of her hometown tournament. This is kind of your hometown too, and especially now with all the Brazilians in your corner. Do you feel like this is your, this is kind of a hometown 1000 for you?

Aryna Sabalenka: Yeah, definitely. I feel that way, and especially with the Brazilian support right now, I'm super curious how the stadium is going to be on Saturday. And it couldn't be a better final. I feel happy for her that she's finding her tennis back, and I'm excited to play her on her, maybe not the best level right now, but like her trying and get back on the best level. It's always a fight. And I'm excited to play her.

Aryna Sabalenka: Over the years you know you've mentioned and reflected on working with your emotions versus challenging them, and so just

thinking, reflecting on this tournament so far, looking ahead to Saturday, how are you preparing for that? What does that look like? Whether you've had a couple of tough ones that you were able to come back from immediately, or just looking ahead to the tournament final with Coco?

Aryna Sabalenka: I will just take it one step at a time. Tomorrow is an easy day with one hit, preparation for the final, and I'll just go on Saturday with the mentality I'm ready to do whatever it takes to get the win, and I'll be there fighting, doing my very best in each point. That's the approach that helped me in so many finals and I'm excited to bring that mentality on Saturday.

Question: The last two occasions last year when you played, there was that classic French final, and then you beat her at the year-end finals. Do you think any of those matches will come to mind when you play here in this final?

Aryna Sabalenka: I don't think so. I never look back when I play anyone. Doesn't matter what head-to-head looks like. I always approach the match against any player as new matches as I play against a new player, always watch their games, I see the improvements, I see what they're doing on court. So I don't think so. But everything can happen, but I know that I'm experienced enough to let that, let those thoughts, just go away, and then bring my focus on the right, in the right place.

Question: I'm working on a story about the stadium, how unique it is, just being in this enormous building that has all these different rooms, all these different spaces. What do you think

about this very unique setup and all the different rooms and all the different indoor space there is at this facility?

Aryna Sabalenka: I actually love it. It's a lot of space. Yes, you feel more free, more open. You're not tight with the players. You know, the restroom is pretty big, you, you get your suite, and you kind of like feel isolated, and you have your own space. So I, really love the setup. And then you have a little grass area for warm up, for the dogs to play. I love the setup.

Question: When you were younger, I imagine you had kind of massive goals of being number one and winning slams. Have you always believed that you could be as consistent as you are right now and winning every single week, making deep runs the way you are?

Aryna Sabalenka: There was just a dream and something that I felt like unreachable. And I'm really proud with the work we've done with my team to get to this level, the consistency and everything, to find that balance in life and on and off the court. But yeah, Aryna, when she was 15 years old, "oh, by the way, you know in 2026 you're going to be doing this, this, and that". And I'll be like [laugh], okay, whatever. So that's, that's a dream life. And I'm super happy that the hard work really pays off. So, yeah, super happy right now.

Thank you.