



MATCH NOTES: ABU DHABI WTA WOMEN'S TENNIS OPEN
 ABU DHABI, UAE | JANUARY 6-13, 2021 | USD \$565,530 WTA 500

WTA Website: www.wtatennis.com | @WTA | facebook.com/wta
WTA Communications: Alex Prior (aprior@wtatennis.com)

ABU DHABI WTA WOMEN'S TENNIS OPEN – FINAL

[4] ARYNA SABALENKA (BLR #10) vs. VERONIKA KUDERMETOVA (RUS #46)

Sabalenka leads 1-0

***Sabalenka** won previous meeting on the ITF Challenger Circuit in 2015 ... **Kudermetova** appearing in first-ever WTA singles final of her career ... **Sabalenka** bidding for 15th consecutive win and third straight title... **Kudermetova** just two points from defeat during upset over Svitolina on Monday*

FINAL RECORDS

PLAYER	LAST FINAL REACHED (final result)	CAREER F W/L
[4] Aryna Sabalenka	2020 Linz (WON)	8-4
Veronika Kudermetova	-	-

RANKING PROJECTIONS

- After Abu Dhabi*, there will be no changes among the WTA's Top 5
- **Aryna Sabalenka** could rise to No.7 (from No.10) if she wins the title
- **Veronika Kudermetova** is guaranteed to improve her career-best ranking to No.36 by appearing in today's final and could jump to No.33 if she wins the title

**The points from Abu Dhabi will be added to the rankings on Monday, January 18*

[4] ARYNA SABALENKA (BLR #10) VS. VERONIKA KUDERMETOVA (RUS #46)

Head-to-head: SABALENKA leads 1-0

2015 ANTALYA 12 HARD O R32 ARYNA SABALENKA 6-3 6-3

SABALENKA		KUDERMETOVA	
Career Prize Money	\$6,804,310	Career Prize Money	\$1,676,537
Plays	Right-handed	Plays	Right-handed
Date of Birth (Age)	May 5, 1998 (22)	Date of Birth (Age)	March 24, 1997 (23)
Singles Titles	8	Singles Titles	0
Tournament W-L (MD)	5-0	Tournament W-L (MD)	5-0
YTD / Career W-L (MD)	5-0 / 131-62	YTD / Career W-L (MD)	5-0 / 50-40
3-Set W-L (YTD / Career)	1-0 / 45-23	3-Set W-L (YTD / Career)	2-0 / 20-13
Tie-Break W-L (YTD / Career)	1-0 / 28-26	Tie-Break W-L (YTD / Career)	2-0 / 19-11
Hard Court W-L (YTD / Career)	5-0 / 106-40	Hard Court W-L (YTD / Career)	5-0 / 31-25
Top 10 W-L (YTD / Career)	0-0 / 12-13	Top 10 W-L (YTD / Career)	1-0 / 5-3
Top 20 W-L (YTD / Career)	1-0 / 26-18	Top 20 W-L (YTD / Career)	1-0 / 6-8
Coach	Anton Dubrov	Coach	Sergey Demekhine

SABALENKA:

- Has posted wins over Hercog, Tomljanovic, Jabeur, Rybakina and Sakkari here in Abu Dhabi
- Win over Jabeur was revenge for a three-set loss at last year's Roland Garros, which was also her last defeat in singles – since then has posted a perfect record, riding a career-best 14-match winning streak into today's final
- Won 13 of 15 service games to see off No.19 Rybakina on Sunday; went 4-3 against fellow Top 20 players last year, falling only to the Top 10 trio of No.8 Bertens (Billie Jean King Cup), No.2 Halep (Dubai) and No.5 Svitolina (Strasbourg)
- Cruised past No.22 Sakkari in SF with a dominating performance, blasting 22 winners (including 8 aces) to just 8 unforced errors during their fifth meeting in past 17 months; also beat the Greek in back-to-back weeks last February, at Dubai and then during Doha title run, as well as en route to the trophy at Zhuhai in the final event of 2019
- Faces No.46 Kudermetova in today's championship match for a chance to lift her third straight title (ninth overall), having won last two events of 2020: Ostrava and Linz
- Owns 8-4 record in tour-level singles finals, 8-1 after losing the first three (2017 Tianjin, 2018 Lugano and Eastbourne); now has won five consecutive finals, with last loss at this stage coming at 2019 San Jose (l. S.Zheng)
- All eight titles have been won on hardcourts (2018 New Haven and Wuhan, 2019 Shenzhen, Wuhan and Zhuhai, 2020 Doha, Ostrava and Linz)
- Will rise to a new career high ranking of No.7 with the title, surpassing Andreescu, Kvitova and Bertens; current career high ranking stands at No.9 (first achieved on Feb.4, 2019)
- Has enjoyed success in the first week of the season before, having captured the title in Shenzhen in 2019. However, failed to defend this title in 2020, falling 2r (as No.2 seed)
- In her last event in the Middle East, won the third Premier 5 title of her career at Doha last year (d. Kvitova in F)

- Beginning a season inside the Top 10 for the first time, having finished 2020 at No.10 courtesy of a nine-match win streak and back-to-back titles – at Ostrava (d. Azarenka in F) and Linz (d. Mertens in F)
- After also taking home the silverware at Doha (d. Kvitova in F), was one of two players (also Halep) to lift three singles titles during disrupted 2020 season
- At Ostrava completed the sweep of titles by teaming up with Mertens to win the doubles
- Ended as World No.11 for the second straight year in 2019 after capturing three WTA singles titles at Shenzhen (d. Riske in F), Wuhan (d. Riske in F) and Zhuhai (d. Bertens in F)
- Having also won Wuhan in 2018 (d. Kontaveit in F), became first player to successfully defend Wuhan title
- Made Top 10 debut on January 28, 2019 following 3r run at 2019 Australian Open
- Ended 2019 at No.2 in WTA doubles rankings after capturing first Grand Slam doubles trophy at US Open (w/Mertens, d. Azarenka/Barty in F). Earlier in the season, the pair claimed the 'Sunshine Double' by winning back-to-back titles at Indian Wells (d. Krejčíková/Siniakova in F) and Miami (d. Stosur/ Zhang in F)
- Qualified for WTA Finals Shenzhen in doubles (w/Mertens), going 1-2 in the round robin stage
- Enjoyed breakthrough season in 2018, lifting two titles, at New Haven (d. Suárez Navarro in F) and Wuhan (d. Kontaveit in F), winning 46 matches and finishing at No.11 in the rankings
- Also in 2018, was R-Up at Lugano (l. Mertens) and Eastbourne (l. Wozniacki), made SF at Cincinnati, reached five QFs and produced a career-best Grand Slam run to R16 at US Open
- Entered Top 50 on April 16, 2018 (after Lugano) and Top 20 on August 27 of same year (after New Haven)
- Broke into Top 100 at No.76 on October 16, 2017 after reaching first tour-level final at Tianjin (l. Sharapova). Also in 2017 made SF run at Tashkent (l. Babos) and lifting WTA 125k Series title at Mumbai (d. Jakupovic)
- Made Grand Slam main draw debut 2017 Wimbledon, falling in 2r (as qualifier, d. Khromacheva, l. Witthoeft)
- Fell 1r on main draw debut at 2017 Dubai (as qualifier, l. Ka.Bondarenko)
- Member of Belarus Fed Cup team that lost to USA in 2017 final – scored first Top 20 win of career with defeat of No.13 Stephens during 2017 Fed Cup final in Minsk
- WTA qualifying debut came at 2016 Rabat
- Made debut on ITF Circuit in Minsk in 2012. Lifted first three ITF Circuit titles in 2015, including a 13-match win streak towards the year's end, bringing back-to-back trophies in Antalya, Turkey

KUDERMETOVA:

- Upset No.10 seed Kontaveit in 1r and saw off qualifier Turati in 2r and Badosa in 3r, becoming the sole Russian in the last eight after a tournament leading seven started the main draw here in Abu Dhabi
- Recovered from a set and break down to upset World No.5 Svitolina in QF. Came within two points of defeat in the final set before bouncing back to complete third Top 5 win of her career, having previously beaten No.5 Svitolina at 2019 Moscow and No.3 Ka.Pliskova at the 2020 Western and Southern Open
- Before this week, owned 0-4 career record in SF matches, advancing to the final four at 2019 's-Hertogenbosch (l. Riske), 2019 Hiroshima (l. Doi), 2019 Tianjin (l. Watson) and 2020 Hobart (l. Zhang)
- In the fifth – and most prestigious – WTA SF of her career, edged 18-year-old Kostyuk in two close sets (saved a set point in 1st set tie-break) to reach the championship match for the first time; it also marks her 50th MD win on tour

MATCH NOTES: ABU DHABI WTA WOMEN'S TENNIS OPEN

ABU DHABI, UAE | JANUARY 6-13, 2021 | USD \$565,530 WTA 500

- Takes on No.10 Sabalenka in today's final for maiden WTA singles title, having lost the pair's only previous meeting on the ITF Challenger Circuit in 2015
- Owns five Top 10 wins in career (all on hard court); now also has a chance to beat two such opponents in one tournament for the first time
- Previously, won her biggest singles title to date at WTA 125K Series event in Guadalajara in 2019 (d. Bouzkova in F)
- By reaching the final, is guaranteed to improve her career-best ranking, at least to No.36; will rise to No.33 and surpass Alexandrova to become Russian No.1 if she wins the title
- During last year's Middle East swing, made 2r at both Doha and Dubai
- Began 2020 season with qualifying exit at Brisbane and then SF run at Hobart
- Scored first win over a Top-3 ranked opponent by upsetting No.3 Ka.Pliskova at 2020 Western & Southern Open. Other highlights in 2020 included aforementioned Hobart SF and closing out season with back-to-back QFs at Ostrava and Linz
- Won 27 main-draw matches during 2019 – had previously won six across entire career – to rise over sixty places in the WTA rankings, making Top 100 debut on February 4 and Top 50 debut on September 9
- Singles highlights in 2019 included reaching maiden WTA SF at 's-Hertogenbosch (l. eventual champion Riske), 3r at Roland Garros (d. No.13 Wozniacki in 1r – her maiden Grand Slam main draw win and also first over a Top 20 opponent – l. Kanepi) and winning WTA 125K Series title at Guadalajara (d. Bouzkova in F)
- Posted first two Top 10 wins of career in final weeks of 2019, over No.10 Bencic at Wuhan and No.4 Svitolina at Moscow
- Fell 1r on Grand Slam main draw debut at 2019 Australian Open (as qualifier, l. Kenin)
- Won career first WTA doubles title at 2019 Wuhan with Duan (d. Mertens/Sabalenka in F); also in 2019 was R-Up at Charleston (w/Khromacheva) and Lugano (w/Voskoboeva)
- Posted maiden career WTA QF runs in 2018, first at 's-Hertogenbosch (l. eventual champion Krunic) and then Gstaad (l. Bouchard)
- Reached 2r on WTA main draw debut at 2018 Stuttgart (d. No.25 Suárez Navarro, l. eventual champion Ka.Pliskova)
- WTA qualifying debut came at 2014 Moscow
- Made Billie Jean King Cup debut in 2014 vs. Australia (l. Stosur – her first Tour-level match)
- On ITF Circuit, owns four singles – most recently at 2018 \$25K Keito-JPN – and 16 doubles titles
- Made professional debut at \$50K ITF/Kazan-RUS in 2014