

WTA STORYLINES AUSTRALIAN OPEN / JANUARY 2026

Setting The Scene

Tournament	Champion	Runner-Up
United Cup	Team Poland	Team Switzerland
Brisbane (WTA 500)	Aryna Sabalenka	Marta Kostyuk (UKR)
Auckland (WTA 250)	Elina Svitolina (UKR)	Wang Xinyu (CHN)
Adelaide (WTA 500)	???	???
Hobart (WTA 250)	???	???

Off-court initiatives

- To launch the 2026 season, the WTA produced a **cinematic hero spot** that celebrates the swings that define life on Tour – a swing of the racquet, a swing in momentum, a swing in emotion. [Click here to watch it.](#)
- Croatia's **Donna Vekic** (four-time WTA title winner, Olympic Silver Medalist and former World No.17) recently launched her own jewelry range – DASH DIAMONDS - designed to be worn as part of an active lifestyle, especially while playing sport. Vekic is no stranger to the world of business and also has her own candle brand called DNNA.
- Several WTA players have featured in marquee publications this month – **Aryna Sabalenka** graced the cover of [Tatler Asia](#), Australia's **Emerson Jones** landed on the [digital cover of Vogue Australia](#), and **Coco Gauff** was named [Forbes' highest-paid female athlete](#) for the second straight year.
- On the charity front, during the off-season the Iga Swiatek Foundation awarded [scholarships to five young Polish athletes](#) and **Carole Dolehide's** *Serving Chicago Style Foundation* held its [second annual fundraiser](#).

WTA Legends Milestones

- 10 years since **Angelique Kerber** won her first Grand Slam title at the Australian Open (2016).
- 20 years since **Yan Zi** and **Zheng Jie** captured the doubles title in Melbourne, becoming China's first players to win a Grand Slam title (2006).
- 20 years since **Amelie Mauresmo** won her first Grand Slam title at the Australian Open (2006).
- 25 years since **Jennifer Capriati** won her first major, coming at the Australian Open (2001).

On-Court Storylines *(for statistical queries, please contact WTASTATS@wtatennis.com)*

- Venus Williams** will be making a record-setting appearance at this year's Australian Open. At 45 years old, Williams will become the oldest woman to compete at the Australian Open in the Open Era as she returns to Melbourne 28 years after making her main draw debut in 1998.

- **Aryna Sabalenka**, the 2026 Brisbane champion without dropping a set, has a stronghold on the PIF WTA World No.1 Ranking and will extend her stay at the top beyond the Australian Open. Sabalenka has reached the final in the last three editions of the tournament, winning in 2023 and 2024, while finishing as runner-up in 2025.
- **Iga Swiatek** is bidding to complete her career Grand Slam having already won titles at Roland Garros (2020, 2022, 2023, 2024), Wimbledon (2025) and the US Open (2022). If she wins the Australian Open title, Swiatek would be the third youngest woman to complete the career Slam behind only Stefanie Graf and Serena Williams.
- The Moms on Tour are already making noise in 2026 as **Elina Svitolina** captured her 19th career singles title at Auckland and **Belinda Bencic** played a pivotal role in Team Switzerland's runner-up finish at the United Cup (and also returning to the PIF WTA Top 10).
- Seeded for the first time at a Grand Slam, **Maya Joint** will be the first Australian to be seeded in Melbourne since 2022. Joint will try to advance beyond the R64 at a Slam for the first time.
- **Madison Keys** returns to Melbourne to make her 12th career main draw appearance at the Australian Open, and steps on court this year as defending champion having won her debut Major in 2025.

Partnerships / Commercial

- Last week the WTA **renewed broadcast deals with key Chinese rightsholders** for the 2026 season following soaring fan engagement. The extension of streaming partnerships was agreed with Migu and Tencent to provide coverage at WTA 250, 500 and 1000 events in addition to the WTA Finals, with Youku also continuing to show the WTA Tour as part of their three-year agreement (2024-26).

WTA 125 Snapshot

- The WTA 125 Circuit crowned its first champion of the season with Chinese Taipei's **Joanna Garland** triumphing in Canberra earlier this month. Get to know her [here](#).
- Later in January sees the inaugural **Philippine Women's Open** in Manila taking place, a milestone moment for the country as it marks the first time hosting a professional women's tennis tournament. A 2500 capacity crowd is expected for trailblazer Alexandra Eala's first match in front of her home crowd.
- This all follows a **record-breaking** year in 2025, where over 50 125 tournaments were staged for first time.

Up Next

- The 2026 season marks the debut of an exciting new era for the Tour with **Mercedes-Benz** joining as the WTA's long-term Premier Partner and Exclusive Automobile Partner. The iconic Mercedes-Benz star will appear on net post signage at approximately 30 tournaments throughout the season, officially debuting at the Mubadala Abu Dhabi Open and the Ostrava Open in the first week of February.
- Following these events the first two prestigious WTA 1000 tournaments of the season take place, at **Doha** and **Dubai**. Both tournaments last year provided the springboard for breakout seasons for champions Amanda Anisimova (Doha) and teen sensation Mirra Andreeva (Dubai).