

WTA STORYLINES

STUTTGART, ROUEN, MADRID & ROME / APRIL & MAY 2026

Setting The Scene

| Tournament | Champion | Runner-Up |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| BNP Paribas Open (Indian Wells) | Aryna Sabalenka | Elena Rybakina (KAZ) |
| Miami Open presented by Itaú | Aryna Sabalenka | Coco Gauff (USA) |
| Credit One Charleston Open | Jessica Pegula (USA) | Yuliia Starodubtseva (UKR) |
| Copa Colsonitas Colsubsidio (Bogota) | Marie Bouzkova (CZE) | Panna Udvardy (HUN) |

Off-Court Storylines

- During Madrid the **Bernabeu** (home of **Real Madrid FC**) will be transformed into a practice facility by installing a clay court in the [center of the pitch](#)
- WTA Legend **Garbiñe Muguruza** returns to Madrid this year as **co-Tournament Director**, sharing the role with Feliciano Lopez. The former WTA World No.1 is also Tournament Director at the WTA Finals Riyadh
- Another key initiative at Madrid this year involves improving the **fan experience** for people with **ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder)**. New measures introduced include intuitive signage, noise-cancelling headphones and a dedicated calm space
- In **Rouen**, single-use plastic water bottles will not be allowed as part of the tournament's **commitment to reducing waste and promoting sustainability**. Players will receive personalized reusable bottles with water fountains available across player areas and courts
- Turning our attention back to the Sunshine Double, the **Tennis Channel** recently announced their live coverage of the title matches at Indian Wells and Miami have claimed the top two spots for the **most-watched women's matches** in the broadcaster's history
- March also proved to be a **record-breaking month for the WTA's social media platforms**, generating over 267.3m views. This included all-time high performances on YouTube (29.4m views) and TikTok (22.9m views), marking the first **time both platforms received over 20m views**

WTA Coaches

- The FFT and WTA's **French Coach Inclusion Program** will begin its inaugural onsite season in Rouen
- As with other regional versions of the Program, the all-women group of participants will **shadow WTA Tour coaches** and players throughout the tournament to gain real-world experience and insight
- WTA Coaches acting as mentors for Program participants in Rouen include **Chris Bint** (Coach of Janice Tjen), **Flavio Cipolla** (Coach of Daria Kasatina), **Andrei Cociasu** (Coach of Elena-Gabriela Ruse) and **Pol Toledo** (Coach of Paula Badosa)

WTA Legends Milestones

- 10 years since **Angelique Kerber** won the second of her back-to-back Stuttgart titles
- 15 years since **Julia Goerges** became the second German to win the Stuttgart title
- 10 years since **Simona Halep** won the first of her back-to-back titles at Madrid
- 15 years since **Petra Kvitova** won the first of her three Madrid titles (also 2015, 2018). She shares with Sabalenka the record for most Madrid titles among women
- **Ash Barty** will turn 30 during the first week of Madrid, on April 24

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

- **Aryna Sabalenka** continues her stay as the PIF WTA World No.1 and has held the **top spot** since October 21, 2024. With a 2,917 point lead, Sabalenka will reach **80-consecutive weeks on April 27, 2026** which will tie her **at No.10** on the most consecutive weeks list
- **Sabalenka** (Brisbane, Indian Wells, Miami) and **Jessica Pegula** (Dubai, Charleston) are the first players to win multiples titles this season
- Key **breakthrough performances** so far this season include:
 - **Talia Gibson** has risen 80 places in the PIF WTA Rankings, going from No.136 at the start of the year to rank inside the Top 60 at No.56. The Australian enjoyed a **quarterfinal run at Indian Wells** and also reached the **Round of 16 at Miami**
 - **Yuliia Starodubtseva** has leapt up the rankings over 60 spots courtesy of reaching her first Tour-level final at Charleston
 - **Sara Bejlek's** fairytale run to the title in Abu Dhabi as a qualifier has seen her peak at No.34 in the rankings, having started 2026 outside the Top 75
- Clay-court outlook:
 - Last year **11 different players won titles on clay**, the first time in the Open Era without a player claiming multiple clay-court titles in a season
 - **Coco Gauff** won more matches and collected more Race to the WTA Finals points on clay than any other player in 2025, a path that included six Top 10 wins on clay (the most by an American since 1986)

WTA 125 Snapshot

- Former World No. 88 **Aliona Bolsova** has announced that she will step away from tennis and **retire at the La Bisbal 125 event** in Spain at the end of April. Bolsova made her professional debut in 2012, posted two Top 20 wins in her career and reached one doubles final, at 2021 Budapest

Race to the WTA Finals

- As we enter the fourth month of the season, the **current Top 8 on the Leaderboard** is top and tailed with **Aryna Sabalenka** in pole position and **Mirra Andreeva** at No.8
- The Top 8 **includes two teenagers** (Mboko and Andreeva) and two players over 30 (Svitolina and Pegula)
- With Svitolina among the Top 8 there is also another **mother on Tour** close to entering the qualification positions in the form of **Belinda Bencic** at No.9