

Outrage as Iga Swiatek smashes ball at ball boy and gets booed at Indian Wells

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Outrage as former world No. 1 smashes ball at ball boy, gets booed

Tennis star Iga Swiatek has been booed by spectators after smashing a ball at a ball boy in an ugly act of sportsmanship.



Tyson Otto



Iga Swiatek is at it again.

The polarising former world No. 1 was on Saturday booed by spectators before she was eliminated by rising star Mirra Andreeva in a blockbuster semi-final at Indian Wells.

The clay court queen had been riding high on a 10-match winning streak at the Californian tournament and was chasing an unprecedented third Indian Wells title, but she was stunned by her 17-year-old opponent 7-6 (7/1), 1-6, 6-3 in an encounter that turned spiteful.

With the match slipping away from her in the third set, a visibly frustrated Swiatek complained to the chair umpire about what she claimed was movement from ball kids from behind her when she was preparing to receive Andreeva's serve.

Minutes later the Polish star lost the plot when thrown a ball by a ball boy only for her to turn and smash the ball back at him at the back of the court.

You can watch the incident in the video player above.



Iga Swiatek has got priors. Photo: X.

The ball kid managed to lift his arms in time as the ball narrowly missed him before shooting into the crowd.

Taken aback by Swiatek's furious outburst, the crowd responded with a wave of boos.

The crowd had already been cheering against the five-time grand slam champion and the support for Andreeva rose again after Swiatek's ugly act.

Swiatek, the four-time Roland Garros champion, has a long list of prior acts of poor sportsmanship and Saturday's outburst has only added to the general dislike of her around the globe.

Swiatek has also been widely criticised for the circumstances behind a one-month suspension she was handed after testing positive to a banned substance.



Video of the ball boy spike has gone viral with hundreds of thousands of views on X.

The incident was highlighted by tennis analyst Pavvy G on X with the social media commentator highlighting Swiatek's previous poor behaviour.

“In the last few months Swiatek failed a drug tests, negotiated a ban in instalments so that she didn't miss the WTA and BJK finals, didn't own up to a double bounce, tried to distract Madison Keys when about to serve, smashed rackets and now launched a ball towards a ball boy,” he posted.

Other tennis fans were even more scathing of Swiatek's behaviour.

One author posted: “Swiatek literally hitting a ball back at a ball kid. Poor sportsmanship and dangerous play. I've never seen such ugly behaviour before”.

Another fan wrote: “Swiatek is the poorest sport in the WTA. The second things don't go her wait out come the stall tactics. She's extremely hard to root for”.



Mirra Andreieva celebrates match point against Iga Swiatek. Photo by CLIVE BRUNSKILL / GETTY IMAGES.



Iga Swiatek of Poland shows her frustration to the umpire. Photo by Clive Brunskill/Getty Images.

The outburst didn't help Swiatek pull out of her third-set slump and Andreeva held her composure to wrap up the set 6-3.

The Russian will now face World No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka in the final.

Andreeva is the youngest Indian Wells finalist since 17-year-old Kim Clijsters in 2001.

Swiatek, who hadn't dropped a set in her prior 10 match wins in the California desert, looked supremely confident as she dropped just one point in her first three service games.

But Andreeva claimed the first break of the match for a 5-4 lead, Swiatek opening the door with a double fault and a forehand into the net before firing a forehand crosscourt wide.

Swiatek broke back in the next game and they went to the tiebreaker, where Andreeva opened with a stinging backhand crosscourt winner to launch a dominant display.

Swiatek put her frustrations aside and broke Andreeva to open the second set, breaking her twice more as the Russian's errors multiplied under pressure from her opponent.

"I saw my mum's nervous face in the big screen," Andreeva told the crowd.

"I tried not to look there." But the roles reversed again when Andreeva broke Swiatek to open the third and she sealed the victory with her third break of the set.

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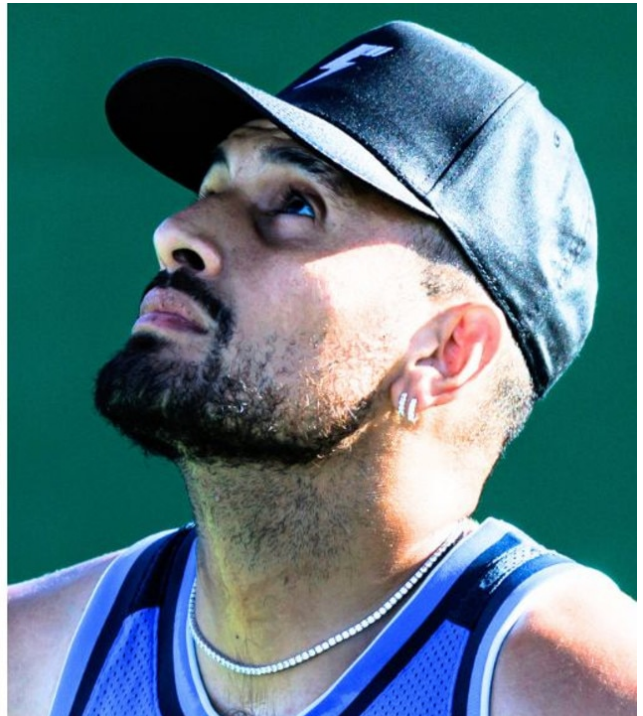


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