



Roland Garros 2026 Women's Draw: Sabalenka Hunts Paris Crown As Gauff Defends

Description

Roland Garros 2026 is here, and the **Roland Garros 2026 women's singles** draw has served up a mouth-watering prospect: world No.1 Aryna Sabalenka and defending champion Coco Gauff have landed in the same half of the draw, setting up a potential semi-final collision before either can get their hands on the Suzanne Lenglen Cup. With the main draw beginning on 26 May, the clay courts of Paris are ready for another fortnight of drama, grit, and breathtaking tennis.

Sabalenka: The No.1 Hunting Her First Roland Garros Title

Aryna Sabalenka arrives in Paris as the world No.1 and the clear favourite and she knows it. The Belarusian has won the Australian Open twice and the US Open once, but the French Open remains the one Grand Slam missing from her trophy cabinet. She has come close: a semi-final in 2023 and a final appearance in 2024 showed she can perform on clay at the highest level. But Iga Świątek now seeded second this year has twice denied her at the last hurdle.

This year feels different. Sabalenka's clay-court form coming into Roland Garros has been formidable: she won in Madrid and reached the final in Rome, losing narrowly to Gauff in a match that will add extra spice to any rematch in Paris. Her serve is one of the most powerful in women's tennis is more consistent than it has ever been, and her forehand on high-bouncing clay is a genuine weapon.

Her section of the draw is not without threat. Jelena Ostapenko, the 2017 champion who can produce explosive clay-court tennis on her day, is in Sabalenka's quarter. So too is American teenager Emma Navarro, who has been one of the breakout players of the 2026 season. But the expectation and the weight of it falls squarely on Sabalenka's shoulders.

Gauff: Defending Champion With A Target On Her Back

Coco Gauff won Roland Garros 2025 in extraordinary fashion, defeating Sabalenka in a three-set final that had the Court Philippe-Chatrier crowd on its feet from the first point. The American returns to Paris as champion and second seed, with the added pressure that comes with defending a major title on clay — the slowest, most physically demanding surface in the sport.

Coco Gauff Roland Garros 2025 French Open champion trophy
Coco Gauff celebrates her Roland Garros 2025 title. Source: Roland Garros official website (rolandgarros.com)

Gauff has grown enormously as a player since her first major title at the 2023 US Open. Her game on clay has developed to the point where she is no longer just a hard-court specialist — her heavy topspin groundstrokes, improved movement, and tactical maturity make her a genuine threat on any surface. The Rome run — that final against Sabalenka — confirmed she is in form at exactly the right time.

Landing in the same half as Sabalenka means a semi-final between the top two seeds is possible as early as Thursday of the second week. For the tournament, it's a potential box-office blockbuster. For both players, it means there can be no looking ahead to the final — the biggest potential obstacle stands in the way before that.

Gauff's path to the semi-final likely includes a quarter-final test against either Barbora Krejčíková (the 2021 champion) or a resurgent Elina Svitolina, both of whom are dangerous on Parisian clay.

Á?wiÄ tek: The Five-Time Champion Lurking In The Bottom Half

Just because **Iga Á?wiÄ tek** is seeded outside the top two does not mean she can be overlooked. The Pole won Roland Garros four consecutive times between 2020 and 2023 and remains the greatest clay-court player of her generation. A dip in form mid-season saw her ranking slip, but Á?wiÄ tek on Parisian clay is a different proposition from Á?wiÄ tek anywhere else. She moves better on the surface, her spin is more effective, and she seems to draw confidence from the Paris crowds.

In the bottom half of the draw, Á?wiÄ tek will be expected to reach the final — and if she does, she will face either Sabalenka or Gauff with the experience of five Roland Garros titles behind her. Do not be surprised if the bottom half produces a Á?wiÄ tek victory and a repeat of that great rivalry in the final.

Rybakina and the Dark Horses

Elena Rybakina is the most dangerous outsider in the draw. The Australian Open 2024 champion and Wimbledon 2022 winner has struggled at Roland Garros relative to her performances elsewhere — her flat, aggressive game is less naturally suited to heavy Parisian clay. But Rybakina has been working on her clay-court game, and her sheer power and consistency make her dangerous regardless of surface. She is in the bottom half of the draw, and a potential Rybakina vs Á?wiÄ tek semi-final would be a fascinating contrast of styles.

Keep an eye also on **Mirra Andrejeva**, the Russian teenager seeded in the top ten for the first time at a major. At just 19, Andrejeva's heavy topspin game is tailor-made for clay, and she has been developing quietly into one of the most interesting players on the WTA tour. A deep run in Paris would

not be a surprise.

For the full draw details and order of play, visit the [Roland Garros 2026 official draw breakdown](#) on LBRD.

Singapore Watch: Who To Follow From South-East Asia

For Singapore tennis fans, Roland Garros is the one Grand Slam that demands the early alarm â?? matches begin from 3pm Paris time, which is 9pm SGT, making evening viewing very accessible. The womenâ??s singles schedule typically sees the marquee matches on Court Philippe-Chatrier in the afternoon Paris session, meaning Singapore viewers can catch Sabalenka and Gauff matches from around 9pm to midnight SGT.

If Sabalenka vs Gauff does materialise as a semi-final, expect it to be scheduled for the Friday of the second week â?? roughly 5 June â?? in what could be a late-night appointment for Singapore tennis followers. Block out the calendar now.

The Verdict: Sabalenkaâ??s Year?

On paper, this is the year Sabalenka finally claims Roland Garros. Her form, her ranking, and her experience all point toward Paris being the next chapter in what is already an exceptional career. The draw has been unkind in placing Gauff in her half, but in another sense, defeating the defending champion on the way to the final would make the eventual triumph all the sweeter.

Gauff will fight. Å?wiÄ tek will threaten. Rybakina will spoil. But the Suzanne Lenglen Cup has Sabalenkaâ??s name written on it â?? if she can silence the what-ifs that have followed her to Paris in previous years.

Roland Garros 2026 main draw begins 26 May, with the womenâ??s final scheduled for **7 June 2026**. For more French Open coverage, read our [Roland Garros 2026 menâ??s preview](#) and follow the [LBRD Sports section](#) throughout the fortnight.

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