

# Mubadala Citi DC Open

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Washington D.C.

## Mattia Bellucci

Press Conference



M. BELLUCCI/M. McDonald

7-6, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Well done today. How is the body holding up after a crazy last few days?

MATTIA BELLUCCI: It was pretty strange actually because I never find myself in this situation. I flew at 5 a.m. I was not prepared at all to play three matches here, continuing playing very well after a good week in Atlanta.

I was quite surprised with my level yesterday actually 'cause I didn't sleep well. You guys know when you don't sleep one night, it gets a little bit difficult also with jet lag. I mean, I tried to fight as much as I could. I think that was the most important thing I did in these three matches.

Tomorrow hopefully I'm resting for the first day after a few. Let's see how it goes in the next round.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Last Friday night, the quarterfinals in Atlanta, 1:30 you wrapped up, how quickly did your focus turn to getting on a plane and coming to Washington?**

MATTIA BELLUCCI: To be honest, I think I did pretty well the after match, the post match since I was obviously upset because I had many opportunities. I tried to stay on what went well about my game. That is something that I normally don't do because I request a lot from myself. This was the most difficult thing to do.

Sometimes staying up late during the night brings important news to your life. That's what actually happened.

Yeah, I would say the first match I played here was more of improvisation because obviously the conditions were unknown for me. I didn't even know my opponent very well. Maybe in a certain way that was the most difficult match.

But, I mean, every player you play here is difficult, so I'm

happy.

**Q. You didn't sleep Friday night?**

MATTIA BELLUCCI: No, Friday night I actually didn't. I flew at 5 a.m., then I got here, like, at 9. I slept from 9 to 12. I was on court at 4, so...

**Q. How are you doing all this?**

MATTIA BELLUCCI: I mean, clutch moments in this period are from my side. I'm trying not to focus much on the result, but more on what I'm trying to do on court, even if sometimes I'm a super emotional guy. When I play these players that I used to watch on TV, it gets a little bit more difficult because you want to win.

I'm not even used to these conditions. I'm used more to challenger tournaments. Everything here for me is absolutely new, even the player I have around.

I think the Grand Slam experience I've had in these two years have helped me a lot. I qualified for Wimbledon this year. That's maybe the biggest stage a tennis player can have. Even if I was not prepared physically, I was mentally. Yeah, maybe that's the reason.

**Q. I'm sure you have bigger goals than winning a round or two here. When you look at Atlanta, what you've accomplished here in Washington, you have to be pretty proud. Different than where you were two weeks ago...**

MATTIA BELLUCCI: Absolutely. I started, like, a very important let's say trip in the last three years, practicing with my coach and his own staff. Three years ago I actually started from futures. I did futures, then last year it was mostly challenger, and this year challenger and these ATP events.

I'm really proud also because I know where I'm coming from. I played also many national events, which many Italian players actually didn't. As you guys can see, there are many, many young guys from my country that are playing really well.

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I think I got used to things a little bit quickly. I know that something very difficult is coming. Actually two years ago I wasn't prepared at all for this. It was a little bit more difficult to set in the challenger tour.

So let's see how the ATP Tour is going to bring to me.

**Q. How much did those matches you played at the Grand Slams against Tiafoe and Ben Shelton help your development, being competitive in those matches?**

MATTIA BELLUCCI: Actually a lot because it was two times five-setters. For me the most difficult thing sometime is to stay in the focus, stay in the rhythm of the match.

I remember I played a practice match this winter before Australia with Safiullin. It was in Spain. I was just up and down, up and down. That's maybe the most difficult thing I actually did.

When I play three-setters match, I feel that right now I'm more used to it. Even if I lose the first set, it doesn't matter. Also I played two American guys. We are in America right now. Last week I was saying that there was a qualifying that was going against Shelton again. I said that I would love to have another matchup with him.

I mean, I'm very happy I did quarterfinals.

**Q. You mentioned the success of all the young Italian men especially. What do you think the magic recipe is for Italy to have so many players right now?**

MATTIA BELLUCCI: I think the federation did a very good job. But also, like, tennis teacher and coaches really developed a lot in the last 10 years. There are some realities, like where you just train. There are academies, but it's not just that you pay and you get coached. Some coaches are really investing in the player they believe in, as my coach did with me. That's I think the main thing.

At the same time I really think that Italian players right now are super hungry. Yeah, I would say this.

**Q. What should we know about you? How do you want to introduce yourself to the world as a player and a person off the court?**

MATTIA BELLUCCI: I really think that tennis right now is going in a right direction by one side. Performance is at the top of the game. Everyone is really trying to improve every day they step on court.

At the same time I think there aren't many personalities.

Many years ago there actually were. I think the person behind the player is more important.

What I'm trying to do is, like, when I go to a place, I try to visit as much as I can. Here in Washington I actually couldn't because of my schedule. The last days that was crazy. But in Atlanta I want to Little Five Points. It was a good experience.

I would say this, that tennis is obviously important. But when you have many passions, like for me sneakers is a passion, when you have many passions, then even if you lose a match, I mean, obviously you do care, but you have many other things that you care about, so...

I would say this.

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