

Internazionali BNL d'Italia

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Simona Halep

Press Conference



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THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. I don't know how much of the US Open you watched while it was going on. I'm curious, if you did follow it, what you made of the tournament from afar and how do you feel about your decision not to play there?

SIMONA HALEP: Well, I didn't watch a lot. Just a little bit of the final, the first set, because was a little bit late here. And at the beginning, a few matches but not full matches.

So I don't really know what happened there, but I have no regrets with my decision. Of course I'm sad that I didn't play. It's normal. But I feel like my decision was great for the health issue and to feel like relaxed inside. I always take these decisions just related to myself, how I feel mentally and stuff like this. So it's all good.

Q. On the health side and your comfort, how are you feeling now playing this tournament now in Rome in terms of that side? And also, how are you feeling about the French Open that's coming up?

SIMONA HALEP: Well, I'm closer to my home country, so in Europe it's easier to travel. I came with private (phonetic) so it's much easier.

Yeah, I'm a little bit scared of what is going on in the world, but here I feel safe. Everything is well-cared really well. We cannot leave the hotel, we cannot leave the bubble. We have a better chance here at the club, because it's really big and now we can enjoy it. We can stay wherever we want.

But I feel good. I feel ready to start the tournament, and also looking forward to the French Open. But for the moment, I'm focusing just on this week.

Q. Can you tell us where you have been the last two or three weeks? Have you been practicing? Who have you been practicing with?

SIMONA HALEP: I have been home. I have been practicing with the second coach that I have, the Romanian

one. Darren just came Sunday, and he had to isolate, so I just had a practice with him after seven months, so it was a great feeling.

But home, yeah, with some girls also and some boys I have been practicing.

Q. Do you think you'll have an advantage over players who have been in New York because you have had more time to practice on clay?

SIMONA HALEP: Yes and no, because yes, because I had the chance to practice on clay only, and no, because I didn't have official matches. So both sides I think have advantage if we know how to take it.

Q. On the same subject there, how much of a challenge will it be having not played a match for so long to go into a big event like this and obviously with a Grand Slam only a couple of weeks away?

SIMONA HALEP: Well, it was great that I had those matches in Prague. I think the level of the matches was like big, because I played against Mertens, and Mertens, she played really well in the US Open.

Yeah, I don't feel unsecure. I feel good. I feel ready to start the tournament. You never know. So I'm going to give my best every match I play, and let's see what's gonna happen.

Q. Just on the French Open, do you have any concerns about the fact that there is going to be fans allowed in the grounds?

SIMONA HALEP: I didn't really get involved in this, so I don't know exactly what it's going to be. I just read that they will have fans.

But I'm pretty sure that it's going to be very strict. We cannot be with the fans, we cannot be with the people that are not in the bubble, so I think they will be separate.

Hopefully it's gonna be safe, and we will feel like here, like in the bubble.

Q. When you said you watched the final, did you watch the men's or women's final of the US Open?



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SIMONA HALEP: No, and I was very, very sad I didn't watch it, because I saw the score. I woke up around 4:30 a.m., and I had a message from my brother, like, earlier and he said that it's 2-0 down, Thiem, so poor guy, another final.

And then, when I saw -- I went straight on site, on the app, and I saw the score, so I was really happy for him, because, you know, he lost three finals. But I'm sure that it was a drama match, so I feel sorry also for Zverev.

Yeah, I'm sure it was high level. So they will be the future, for sure, future finals.

Q. With your own experience in Grand Slam finals, were you rooting for Thiem even more because of that, you could relate to him?

SIMONA HALEP: Yes, exactly. I have been there. I have been three times down in the finals, and then I won it. So I feel like he's really deserving it.

Q. How comfortable are you feeling on clay? We know how much you love clay. You're not getting as many tournaments on it as you would in a normal year, but what's your comfort level with everything that's happened?

SIMONA HALEP: Well, I feel good on clay. I always have been, like, secure and happy on the clay.

Now I have, like, four or five months playing only on clay (smiling). I'm not used to that, because the previous years we play just a little bit.

I feel comfortable, and I feel all ready to play here. I love this tournament. I love French Open. Hopefully I can play my best and win some matches.

Q. I don't know if you saw, guessing you heard about what happened with Djokovic at the US Open. I'm wondering if seeing that kind of moment will at all make you more careful hitting your balls on court, seeing how big the consequences can be for something like that?

SIMONA HALEP: Definitely. I was, like, Whoa. We have to really be careful because people are around us. We don't have to react that bad during the matches, because it's just a tennis match.

But, yeah, it was not nice for anybody.

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