

Internazionali BNL d'Italia

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Belinda Bencic

Press Conference



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THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Welcome back. Good to see you at an event. Can you just talk what it's like to actually be at a tournament for the first time in a long time? Just talk about your decision-making over the last six months, seven months or so in terms of figuring out when to come back, which tournaments you wanted to come back, all that sort of stuff.

BELINDA BENCIC: First of all, I'm really happy I'm here. I'm happy. I feel like tournament feeling again, competition feeling, seeing similar faces that I haven't seen since March.

Yeah, I mean, it was actually pretty nice time at home, I have to say. I was flying for the first time since March to here. So I obviously got used to the life at home, a little bit different, but I think you get used pretty fast to something.

Yeah, I mean, my decision-making was obviously really tough, like everyone else's, because you never know which tournament is next or is canceled or not canceled, and the whole summer was a little bit uncertainty, which was really difficult to practice like that and to keep yourself motivated.

But I actually played all the time on clay court, and then my decision-making was just that I would skip the U.S. swing and I would start here, and also because I feel I think pretty comfortable now on clay. I have been practicing the whole time on clay. I hope I can show it in the matches here, but generally, I just feel like I want to get through this year (smiling).

Q. When you were kind of going into the shutdown, what was your mindset with respect to how you wanted to use that time and how you wanted to spend that time?

BELINDA BENCIC: I mean, of course you want to spend the time to stay in shape and stay kind of ready for everything. Like if you have to play in five days, you have to be ready for that. If you play in five months, you have to be ready for that.

So, yeah, I mean, it was difficult obviously to plan, to plan practicing, to plan the kind of preseason, but also I felt like I really rested a lot at home. I saw my family. I felt like a normal person, you know, just doing normal things. Of course I was still having my full practice days, but still, yeah, it was much different and I enjoyed it.

I think the goal was definitely just to, yeah, stay flexible and just do the best in what you can make, and of course the things that you cannot change, then you cannot think about them.

Q. What has it been like to be on-site, see people, play under new, at least practice so far, under new protocols and new rules? I haven't been to one of these events yet so I don't know what it's like to kind of navigate it.

BELINDA BENCIC: Yeah, it's definitely much, much different. Of course I understand all the protocols that they are making with the masks and the social distancing, everything.

It takes some days to get used to this, and I feel like I am always asking someone, Can I do this? Can I do this? I'm asking all the rules.

Yeah, it's just really sad here in Rome that we cannot get out of the hotel. I mean, it's just, when you go to the car from the site to the hotel, you see all the people walking outside and having ice cream and everything, and you feel like really locked. I think that's the only thing. And you spend a lot of time in the hotel room, which is really mental sometimes.

So I have been here three, four days, but, I mean, it's okay. We are here for work, and it's not best thing but it's how it is.

Q. Now that you're back in tournament mode, can you approach this normally? Can you approach this with normal expectations and just like any other Rome that you have played before, Rome and Roland Garros you played before, or is this different for you?

BELINDA BENCIC: Yeah, for sure. I mean, my expectations are not super high. It's still the first official tournament I'm playing. Of course I played some tennis



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during the summer, so I don't feel like I should be super rusty.

But still in the U.S. swing some players have already played three tournaments. I don't know. I just feel like I want to get some good matches in and just enjoy as much as I can.

Of course this for me is a preparation for Roland Garros where I want to do well, of course. And I hope it's gonna happen, but otherwise, you know, if I lose here, it's not the end of the world and I keep on going. Yeah.

Q. What was the most enjoyable thing about your seven months off?

BELINDA BENCIC: I think the most enjoyable thing is we adopted a puppy from a dog shelter, so now she's with us three or four months -- three months, I think.

Q. Is this a new dog? You had the other one?

BELINDA BENCIC: Yes, the black one now. We have a white one and a black one. But the white one, he's like my mom's dog now. I brought the dog to her.

This one we didn't actually want like to adopt a dog. We always said we don't have time and it's going to be difficult and we are traveling, but then sometimes we go to the dog shelter just to walk dogs sometimes on the weekend, and we just came there and we saw her, and we were, like, Okay, looks like we have a problem. Yeah, we adopted her.

So I think it's the best thing what happened in lockdown.

Q. What's her name?

BELINDA BENCIC: Her name is Paola.

Q. So Snowy and Paola?

BELINDA BENCIC: That's correct. She already had the name before so we didn't change it.

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