

# Internazionali BNL d'Italia

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Roma, Italia

## Kiki Bertens

### Press Conference



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THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Your decision to not play in the US Open, how are you feeling about that now? Was it a tournament you watched and seeing how it all went?**

KIKI BERTENS: Yeah, well, actually I'm still, to be honest, I didn't really watch a lot of the US Open. I was still preparing myself for this clay court swing.

Yeah, I don't have any regrets not going there. I think my decision was clear where I stood for. So I just prepared as good as I could for this tournament and for Paris. And, yeah, unfortunately it was not possible for me to go to New York for that.

**Q. You've talked about wanting to be on small courts, away from the spotlight. We thought a tournament with no fans could be perfect for you. We thought you could win this tournament, maybe 6-Love every match. Were you thinking that too? Were you interested to see how you play in front of no fans this week and going forward if there are other times?**

KIKI BERTENS: Yeah, I'm curious to see how it's going to be. I have no idea if you feel like the same if you play a practice match or not. I think I just have to wait a few more days and see how it's gonna be.

But, yeah, normally I'm not the person who gets to play better like when there are more fans or when they are really cheering for me. For me, personally that doesn't really do much, but I think it's going to be really strange, as well.

To be honest, I really have no idea.

**Q. Can you talk about what your seven months was like? How did you treat that time? Looked like a lot of puzzles and quiet time for you. I would think it was an enjoyable time, knowing your personality, of just being able to be in one place for a long time.**

KIKI BERTENS: Yeah, to be honest, I quite liked it, yes. I didn't play tennis for the first time I think in my career for

nine weeks. Yeah, that was different.

Of course physically I did still work out, but then it's just like two hours a day, and the rest of the day I had off. So I really liked it. Mentally it was really good I think for me, as well. I appreciated to be home, to see my family again after a while.

Yeah, just completely rested. Did a lot of puzzles. Funny that you asked. Today they launched a puzzle of myself in it, as well. So that's something cool.

Yeah, let's see, also some new partnerships were evolved, so I think it was a good time after all.

**Q. What was it like once you started having to hit again and get back on the court after nine weeks of being away? Was it hard to find the game or was it pretty easy? How was it?**

KIKI BERTENS: It was weird, because after the first ball I missed I got pissed already. That's, like, still how I am, I guess.

For me, it's just always I have to be 100% even like after not playing for nine weeks, which I know it was impossible, but, yeah, no, I'm still just hungry to achieve more, to progress in my game and just work out again.

Yeah, let's see how my level is at this moment. I have no idea. It's tough to say that in practice, so, yeah, let's see on Wednesday or Thursday how it's going.

**Q. Then just here traveling to this event, first of all, what's kind of your coaching setup, traveling coaching setup at the moment? Can you go into Rome and Roland Garros with the same kind of approach or expectation as you would normally go into a regular clay court season, or are things so different right now that it's hard to have expectations? Where do you stand on that?**

KIKI BERTENS: Yeah, for me at this moment, it's really hard to have expectations. At this moment I don't really have to, or I don't really have expectations of myself. Maybe it's different once I'm on the court. I'm not sure.

But, yeah, I'm just trying to enjoy it, trying to enjoy playing



... when all is said, we're done.®

tournaments again, and then just take it match by match and see where my level is and try to improve again.

**Q. You were able to defend your Madrid title. How did that feel? That was unexpected. Took probably a different skill set than your original title.**

KIKI BERTENS: Yeah, it was really strange, but I was happy I could still take part of it. I never played on a PlayStation before, so it took a while to figure it out.

But I had so much time at home, so I had time enough to practice, and, yeah, no, it worked out well. At least I have already two titles won this year (smiling).

**Q. And the second, I remember there was a moment, I don't remember exactly, there was a moment in Rome a couple years ago where I think either you threw your racquet or you almost hit someone during a match. I was wondering if you saw what happened with Djokovic during the US Open and if that all made you think to be more careful in the future, seeing what kind of consequences that can have.**

KIKI BERTENS: I'm not sure. I'm not sure like what I did, or...

**Q. Just answer the Djokovic part. Seeing something like that happen, does that make you feel to be more careful, throwing a racquet or hitting a ball?**

KIKI BERTENS: Of course we always have to be careful, and I think in the first place, yeah, we don't want to smack with our racquets or hit any balls into the fans.

But sometimes I think in the heat of the moment you're not really thinking clear anymore and it's just happening. Of course it's not a good thing at all, but, yeah, it happens. Once it happens, you just have to deal with the consequences, I think.

Yeah, I think Novak also knows that, and he learned that already during his career. Yeah, perhaps this is helping him again.

**Q. You obviously play quite a lot of tournaments and particularly last year was a lot when you were trying to make the WTA Finals. What does a long break like this do for you as someone who has also been around for a long time and seems like might have been a good time to have a break and then start up your career again?**

KIKI BERTENS: Yeah, I think the break was really good for me to really mentally and physically feel good again, feel really ready to compete.

We always have such a short break, and during the break you already think about next season again. So, yeah, I really liked it, but, yeah, we have to see how it's going to be for the long term. At the moment I have no idea.

Because normally I always like to play a lot of tournaments because I like to get into the rhythm. I think every match normally I play I play better and better, so, yeah, I'm just gonna see and see what happens in these upcoming weeks.

**Q. Do you like practicing, given that you do tend to play a lot of tournaments? Are you a fan of practicing?**

KIKI BERTENS: No, I'd rather play tournaments than practice, yeah, but I guess everyone is doing that. Everything I'm doing I think general in life I want to win, and that's more tough in practice than in matches.

So, yeah, no, I just like to compete, just like to have that winning feeling, yeah. So I definitely miss that.

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