

Internazionali BNL d'Italia

Monday, 14 September 2020

Roma, Italia

Kei Nishikori

Press Conference

K. NISHIKORI/A. Ramos-Vinolas

6-4, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. How much fun is it simply to be competing again? I know it's not the first week you have competed, but just to be out there and playing on tour.

KEI NISHIKORI: I was very pleased to be on the court today. Even last week I was maybe more enjoying, first match on the tour.

It's been one year from I haven't played tournament since. Yeah, very happy to be on the court. I still not feeling 100% tennis-wise, but I still enjoy. You know, even if I miss, it's still fun.

Now it's important to have many matches if I can. Keep winning is most important. Even if it's bad, I think I start getting in a good tempo, good rhythm. I'm sure couple more matches will help me to get more confidence.

Q. I know you say you're not 100% yet, which is understandable, of course. What are some things you're happy with with your game?

KEI NISHIKORI: Today was much better than last match last week. I would say twice better. Everything was good today. Serving much better. I think I was serving still low percentage, but hitting good serves to use in my forehands after and hitting backhands better.

I think some of the moments I still don't have, maybe still don't have confidence, and I get a little bit back off and I cannot hit through. I think that's something I have to fix for next match.

But I think little by little I'm getting better.

Q. We know that it's your first victory in a year. Was the meaning to be here in Rome in so important tournament like Rome and knowing that Roland Garros is it's an important tournament for you and for your



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play?

KEI NISHIKORI: Yeah, for sure. I mean, I wanted to come back from US Open and Cincinnati, but I feel like I wasn't ready for playing five sets, so I chose to play last week in Austria.

I mean, it was good, good choice to play there because I'm not rushing myself to be 100%. I'm sure that I need many more matches to have many more confidence and play my tennis back.

So I think many matches, many weeks if I can have before French Open is good. For me, I think this year is going to be one by one, one match at a time. I think slowly I'm getting recovered. My body is trying to ready for playing three-set match or five-set match again. It will take some time, but I'm happy to be here in Rome.

Q. How do you work mentally?

KEI NISHIKORI: I was okay. I was happy to be on clay because I think it's a little bit easier playing on clay, coming back after one year. I think clay has more rhythm so I can feel more balls better.

It sucks, you know, of course missing Grand Slam, big tournaments, but this year is going to be a little bit strange anyways.

So I try to be ready whenever I can, and I'm actually really enjoying being here. It's been long time, especially for me. It's been one year not competing on the tour again and seeing these guys close again, and it's really fun being here.

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