

Internazionali BNL d'Italia

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Victoria Azarenka

Press Conference



INTERNAZIONALI
BNL D'ITALIA

BNP PARIBAS

V. AZARENKA/V. Williams

7-6, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. About your meditation, when did you start to do it and what kind of meditation do you practice and which benefits do you find?

VICTORIA AZARENKA: Which benefits did I find?

Q. Yes.

VICTORIA AZARENKA: There is no specific one. It's just simple quietness. That's what I have been doing. I have been trying to kind of find the balance of, you know, dealing with some anxiety, uncertainty, to kind of just pause for a second. That's why I started doing it.

I have been going through some difficult personal things, so I have just been trying to find my balance. It's been helping.

I have always been kind of curious about this part but never really committed myself to do it before, and now I have. I'm pretty happy about it.

Q. Can you talk about the transition from coming from New York within the bubble over to Rome, totally different circumstances, what the travel was like and what the transition to playing on clay has been like for you.

VICTORIA AZARENKA: Well, the travel has been good. It was a direct flight, so it was pretty okay.

The transition obviously is not easy. Going from staying in the house to a hotel, it was also a little different, but I think it's not too bad. Obviously, you know, different surface was definitely challenging, but I feel like I have adapted pretty well.

I knew it wasn't going to be easy. I knew I wasn't going to play a perfect game today. But it was all about trying to

find the right intentions to do today.

I think it worked out okay. I'm actually excited to be in Rome. I haven't been to Europe in forever. So I have been appreciating the last couple of days the food and everything. So it's been good.

Q. Continuing on that same thought, wondering what the exact thought process was to stay committed to this tournament after having gone so far in New York and having to travel right here.

VICTORIA AZARENKA: I think the best way to transition is to play matches, for me. I know physically it's quite challenging, on your body is quite challenging. I wanted to do this. I knew I was going to come no matter what.

I don't think before -- I don't even know how I got into this tournament. Is it a wildcard or did I make the cut? I have no clue (smiling).

But I knew I was going to get a wildcard if I don't get in. So I was very grateful for the opportunity. I knew I'm going to commit to the tournament and come here.

I'm very happy that I did. As I said, I think there is no better way to adapt than playing matches. You know, staying in the bubble is tough, but might as well commit to these few more weeks that we have left in the year and then go back home.

Q. Looking forward to Paris, do you think there will be a division in performance or something about the players that did play in New York and the players like Simona and a bunch of them that are here that did not do the travel to New York?

VICTORIA AZARENKA: What is the question?

Q. Do you think there will be a disparity in the results moving forward in terms of the players who played in New York and the players who did not, talking about this week and Paris.

VICTORIA AZARENKA: I don't think about it for a single second (smiling). But if you want me to think about it for a bit, I don't know. I honestly don't think that can impact, because change of surface can be a challenge for a lot of

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players, actually. And for some who have maybe practiced longer on clay and maybe played some matches on clay in Europe can be a benefit.

I think there is no prediction like this. You know, sometimes, like last year, for example, I didn't prepare at all for clay season, and I played really well and I felt really comfortable on clay. Kind of the same this year. But years before, I would go and practice for three weeks and have really shitty results.

I don't think you can really guess here sometimes.

Q. Can you talk through today's match against Venus? Seemed like you had good control for most of that match. Seemed like she was able to keep it close though and force you to really get over the finish line.

VICTORIA AZARENKA: Yeah, I feel like I started pretty well. I felt like she was trying to be really aggressive and changing up some pace, you know, and I think she gave me some free points in the beginning, which was helpful. Then I felt that she was getting in a better rhythm.

I mean, I needed to find my game, and I felt that the longer I played I felt the better rhythm. I wasn't really comfortable in the beginning with my range of shots. You know, clay is different. Selection of shots, even though I had the right intention, like sometimes I was making wrong choices at the wrong time, but it's all about adaptation. I felt that this was a great match for me to kind of figure it out, the first match on clay.

Venus I think played a really good match. It was good to see her, you know, adapting also to clay and changing and trying different shots.

I'm pretty happy. I felt that, as I said, the longer I played, the better I was finding my rhythm, and in the second set I felt that I was starting to play pretty well.

Q. For you, in transitioning your game to clay, is it more about finding rhythm or is it a movement issue? What is kind of the biggest transition or change that you have to make either tactically or mentally?

VICTORIA AZARENKA: Well, a little bit of both, because, you know, on hard court I'm pretty comfortable with staying and hugging the baseline and taking everything early. And I think you have to be a little bit more adaptive on clay where sometimes you need to move back and have that transition, a little bit longer rallies. The building of the point has to be a little bit more constructive.

Yeah, so movement definitely, you know, the sliding and

being able to also cut angles, because on hard court I can just stop, you know, with the hard court, even though I slide sometimes. But on clay, there is not really ability to stop you. So you have an extra movement. So it's a lot about that.

Mentally I believe there is also an adaptation where the rally may be longer. You know, some balls may not bounce as well as on hard court. So I feel those three components is a little bit by little you have to adjust.

Q. When did you leave New York? What kind of jet lag, what did it take for you to get past that once you got to Rome?

VICTORIA AZARENKA: I left New York on Sunday at 5:35 p.m. I actually, you know, I actually adjusted pretty well, because I kind of slept on the plane a bit. Then we arrived in the morning. So I was very -- I feel like I have scheduled my day, the first day really well to be able to kind of adjust right away.

I slept through the whole night. The next day I woke up three minutes before my alarm, which was amazing.

So, yeah, I feel like I have adjusted quite well. I was very strategic with how I'm gonna plan my day, so, yeah, it worked out well.

Q. Did you practice on Monday when you arrived?

VICTORIA AZARENKA: I came on-site and I did fitness, and then I didn't play tennis on that day.

Q. You'll play your fourth consecutive major champion in playing Kenin in your next round. Can you just talk about the challenge of playing her.

VICTORIA AZARENKA: Yeah, it's gonna be an interesting match, because Sonya has been my doubles partner for the last two tournaments. We haven't played, I believe, since Acapulco last year if I'm correct.

I think it's the only time we actually played. I have no idea. My memory sometimes lets me down.

I mean, we practice a lot, because she also lives in Florida, so we know each other quite well. I think it's going to be a really interesting match. It's going to be, for her, first match on clay. For me it will be a second match.

But I'm looking forward to it. She's a great player. She's obviously been playing exceptional this year. In Australia I was very happy to see her win a first title.

I'm looking forward to it. As I said, I feel like I'm playing all these players who I have lost to before, so I'm kind of given an opportunity to redeem myself. So I will look forward to doing that.

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