

# Internazionali BNL d'Italia

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## Denis Shapovalov

Press Conference

D. SHAPOVALOV/P. Martinez

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THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Just wondering how you're still going so strong after so many hours on court in New York, singles and doubles, playing doubles here. How are you still going?**

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: I mean, luckily I'm still 21 years old, so the body is very, very young. But for sure it has not been super, super easy, especially, you know, wasn't easy matches in New York and it's definitely not been easy matches here. So it's been a lot of tennis.

For sure I'm feeling it physically, no question about it. But, you know, I'm getting good treatment every day. Yeah, I mean, I'm just pushing through it.

Of course it's very tough. You know, especially after the Grand Slam, your body just kind of naturally wants to relax. Going into a match here is definitely a little bit difficult, but I'm really happy with the way I have been able to maintain my level and maintain physically.

**Q. And you're going to continue playing singles and doubles in Paris, as well, I assume?**

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: Yeah, I'll play in Paris, both, yeah.

**Q. I'd like to know if this year that you seem to be a little more lucky in the draw, since last year you lost to Djokovic in Rome, two years ago to Nadal. I mean, couldn't be worse. So this time you have better chances. How do you make the transition from hard court to clay? How do you think you can improve your clay game? Because sometimes maybe with your great shots, you're a shot maker, on clay is much easier for your opponents to react and force you to do ten different winning shots instead of two?**

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: Yeah, no, definitely, of course. I mean, it's not super unlucky, the draw, because I don't play



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Novak or Rafa second round, but it definitely hasn't been easy, either, playing Pablo and Pedro. They're both very good clay courters. Me, I'm a hard court player, so it's definitely not easy matchups for me. I'm really happy to be through and really happy with the way my game's transitioned from the hard courts to the clay courts.

But, yeah, for sure, I mean, I'm trying to play the same way, trying to play aggressive. But of course, like you said, my shots still have more time to react, have a better chance to defend. So I'm trying to stay patient.

I was kind of doing similar in US Open, playing a lot of counterpunchers, so it's been similar. A little bit more rallying, a little bit more building the points, but I'm really happy with the way I have been doing it.

Of course I have definitely some tougher matches ahead of me, for sure. Hopefully I can keep doing the same thing that I have been doing, because I feel like against these clay-court players the last two rounds, it's worked really well.

**Q. How difficult is for you to be patient? Because you are an explosive player. Must be a stress sometimes to say, Oh, I have to be patient, I have to be patient?**

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: Of course it's something that me and Mikhail have been working on a lot. Obviously I like to pull the trigger and go for my shots as early as possible, but it's definitely something that we worked on a lot, especially during the pandemic.

You know, we had a lot of time to really build up the game. He's really trying to make me more of all-rounded and smarter player. I really feel like he's helping me a lot with that. Definitely being patient is a big thing that we worked on.

**Q. Continuing the theme of all your hours on court and singles and doubles, there has been some discussion about perhaps reducing the men's matches at the Grand Slams from best-of-five to best-of-three. Just wondering what your take on that would be? Keeping TV viewers, you know, tuned in. What do you think about that? Four of the last five Grand Slam finals have gone to five sets.**

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DENIS SHAPOVALOV: For sure. I mean, definitely a lot of pros and cons. You know, of course it's more difficult when you're playing singles and doubles. Especially if you have a five-set match, kind of takes you out for the next day if not the next two days.

There it really depends on the draw, because you might play next round against someone who had a fairly easier first round and then he's coming in fresh, you're coming in off of a difficult match. So it's definitely, you know, tough.

Of course, there is a lot of pros and cons. You can say five-set matches are more exciting. They're longer, more entertaining, like the finals against Rafa and Medvedev. Medvedev maybe doesn't have that comeback in a two-out-of-three, but I also think two-out-of-threes are very exciting, as well. And there have been a lot of great matches between the top guys in two-out-of-three sets.

You know, you can look at it both ways, but I wouldn't be against trying the two-out-of-three in Grand Slams and seeing how that goes.

**Q. Next round you could face Fabio Fognini. In the past you played with him twice but also on hard court. Your first challenge with him on clay court. What do you think about that? Can be little more difficult than to play him on hard courts?**

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: No, definitely. He's known to be very good on clay courts, on the red dirt. He's beat some unbelievable players on this surface. You know, for example, last year he beat Rafa in Monte-Carlo, which is definitely not an easy thing to do. He could definitely play some really good tennis.

Like you said, clay court is the court that he does prefer, so it's definitely a very difficult challenge for me if I do end up playing him. Yeah, I mean, I feel like I have been playing some good tennis, so I'm really interested to see how my game matches up against his on this surface.

**Q. Looking ahead to Paris, Rafa obviously has a great chance to win another one. That would put him on level with Roger's 20 slams. What do you think that would mean for his legacy and the way people kind of compare him to Roger?**

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: I think it's super interesting as a fan of the sport to see these three guys battling it out for Grand Slam, for weeks of No. 1. It's very exciting for everyone.

Of course we're trying to stop them as much as possible, but, you know, they're very good at what they do. So,

yeah, it's definitely very, very exciting.

I think as legacy stands, no matter who has the most Grand Slams, who has the weeks at No. 1, those three guys are going to be all remembered as the GOATs, as the greatest of all time.

I just think it's super exciting for tennis to have those three guys fighting for, like you said, legacy, but at the same time, the young guys battling it out, as well, and pushing these guys. You have guys like Danielle and Dominic right there and so close to beating them at the highest levels.

It's super exciting for tennis, I think, overall.

**Q. Specifically now with Rafa in Paris.**

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: Yeah, no, I think it's a great chance for him to tie Roger. He's never been in that situation before that he's come so close to tying Roger.

For sure, like I said, they're all going to be the greatest of all time, but I'll be there trying to stop him, trying to, you know, win my first slam, and I'm sure everyone is the same.

For sure, it's very exciting to watch and be a part of this.

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