

Internazionali BNL d'Italia

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Roma, Italia

Simona Halep

Press Conference

S. HALEP/D. Yastremska

7-5, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Can you just talk through the match today? What do you think you did well? How were you able to, especially after starting off maybe a little bit slow, kind of get the match back into your favor?

SIMONA HALEP: Well, it was not easy against her, because you don't really have the rhythm. She hit very strong. It's tough to return her balls.

But after I lost the first three games, I had just to focus a little bit better and to stop giving her the ball that she likes.

So I tried to change a little bit, to make her move, a little bit up high. I think during the match I found some solutions that were good to win.

Q. How much confidence do you take out of a win like that against a player who hits very big on a very hot day in Rome, that ball can kind of skid through the court? Seemed like you were moving very, very well and covering the court very well. You have to be pleased with that.

SIMONA HALEP: Yeah, I'm very pleased with the way I move. I feel good. My body feels good. Physically I'm really, really good.

Also, the serve helped me a lot today, so in important moments I served very well and I won some easy games on my serve.

Return was not bad, because she has a very good serve. The kick is unbelievable.

Yeah, big picture, I think it was a great match. Yeah, it gives me confidence that even in these conditions with a big hitter I could win in two sets.

Q. Fighting back from 3-Love down in the first set, is it



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harder to fight back on clay than any other surface in tennis?

SIMONA HALEP: Oh, it's the most easier, for me, to fight on clay because you have a little bit more time.

Well, here in Rome it's a little bit faster than normal clay, but still I had time to adjust my time on court and to be able to come back.

Q. The fans coming to Rome for the finals, how do you feel about that? It's supposed to take place on Sunday and Monday. Also, the French Open announced they are going to have 5,000 fans. I don't know how they are going to lay out the tournament, but you could be playing one match without fans and one match with fans. So it would be kind of a hard difference.

SIMONA HALEP: We will have fans here if we play at the end of the tournament? I haven't heard this.

So it will be interesting and it will be nice to have some people in the stands. Good energy for us.

And for French Open, yeah, it's one more week to go until it starts, so for sure it's gonna change something again, because, you know, the safety is really important for everyone.

But it's nice to have some people in the crowd, that's for sure.

Q. Obviously you are very motivated to win this title. I know that you want it very much as part of your collection. Does that make it a little bit different or easier for you in terms of the focus to treat this event as a full actual event as opposed to a warmup event or something like that to get ready for Roland Garros?

SIMONA HALEP: I never treat a tournament for warmup, to be honest, in my life, because every week is important. I always said that every match I play I have to be 100%. So I'm doing that here, as well.

I'm a little bit nervous. I know I have the game to win this tournament, because I have been two times in the final and few times in the semifinals.



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So I think there is a good chance. But all the opponents are very tough. The level is very high. So I have no expectations. I just want to go there like today to fight for the match.

Q. Looking ahead to playing Yulia Putintseva in the quarterfinals, she won today, can you talk about the challenge of playing a player that's probably going to give you more rhythm but I think it will be a much more physical match?

SIMONA HALEP: Yeah, she's fighting a lot. She's very strong physically, and I know she can play very good tennis.

Yeah, I expect a tough battle. I expect long rallies.

But I feel fit. I feel good with my body. So I'm ready to face her, and tomorrow hopefully I will play better than today.

Q. I'm sure you heard that Naomi Osaka announced that she won't be playing in Paris today, and obviously Ash Barty won't be there, as well. Wondering if you're sorry that your top competitors won't be there, or are you seeing this as more of an opportunity for yourself? How strange is it this year that some players are skipping New York, and then other players are skipping Paris?

SIMONA HALEP: I never look for opportunities like this, that the best players are missing. I just took every tournament very serious. I feel like every match is very tough.

So I don't have to think that some great players are not coming. Every match is a challenge. Every match is a tough day. I'm focused just on myself.

Firstly, I want to finish here and then to think about French Open. As I said, every match is a challenge.

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