

# Internazionali BNL d'Italia

Friday, 18 September 2020

Roma, Italia

## Casper Ruud

Press Conference



INTERNAZIONALI  
BNL D'ITALIA

BNP PARIBAS

C. RUUD/M. Cilic

6-2, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Congrats on reaching your first quarterfinal in Rome. Can you just tell me a little bit about where you are confidence-wise, getting back on the clay after having really a lot of good experiences with hard court?**

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, you know, especially after these three matches here, you gain a little bit of confidence after every match, and today was a big win for me against one of the best players in the world for the past 10, 15 years.

He's one of the few players who has been able to kind of break the big three and win a Grand Slam, so it really shows how good of a player he is and how dangerous he is. From all sides, all aspects of the game, he can hit winners from basically anywhere.

So I was really ready for it, especially today, and tried to make many balls back and tried to play heavy with my groundstrokes.

It's been working well, not only this match but yesterday and the first round I felt like I have played pretty solid and good from the baseline, serving smart. You know, I'm not the type of guy who serves 210 every first serve, but I have been serving pretty well. The clay allows me to do more with the serve, trying to do some different spins on the serve, some kicks and trying to mix up a little bit.

So I feel like I have been doing good in many aspects of the game. And also with the returns, I have been making a lot of returns, so that helps to get the ground stroke rallies going.

**Q. Dominic Thiem taking that Grand Slam title, with you as a 21-year-old player, one of the players on the rise and is going to have a bright future, does it give you a little bit more hope that your time may come maybe sooner than you think?**

CASPER RUUD: Well, yeah, I mean, like I said earlier in the last, the previous question, it hasn't been easy to break through those three guys. You know, like I said, Cilic is one of the few who has been able to get it, and now Thiem has his first title which I think we are all happy for him that he was able to do it.

I think definitely the tennis world will be a bit more open whenever it will be very unfortunate when they retire, because they are all such big legends of the sport and they have given so much to the tennis.

But we have to face that one day they will retire, and I think after that tennis will be a little bit more open for the big titles, will be more open for grabs. I think there are plenty of young players coming up now who are all hungry and will try to reach their maximum potential.

Yeah, I think we are all fighting for those top spots in the world. For the moment, I think Medvedev, Zverev are maybe the two, and Tsitsipas, are the two or three that have been doing the best, but we are also many more coming after.

Like I said, it will be a little bit more open, especially around the big titles. I think we will have more variation of Grand Slam champions the next 15 years than the past 15 years, if I have to be honest.

**Q. We have been talking also recently because you played Berrettini. You told me that it was also thanks to you that beating him last year in Paris afterwards Berrettini became a much better player and a top 10. I'd like to know now, on clay, since you beat him Roland Garros but you lost on hard court, do you think you have more chances here even if he's playing at home? Don't you consider yourself a bit lucky that tomorrow still there will not be crowd? There will not be public, while Saturday there will be 1,000 people cheering for Berrettini if he was there?**

CASPER RUUD: It's like you said, you know, it's a little bit sad of course that there are no crowds, but for me tomorrow I think it's maybe better because playing against an Italian in Rome and in the quarterfinal of a Masters 1000, I can only imagine how the crowd would be like.



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I'm a little bit lucky, you can say, I don't have to play against Berrettini and also the crowd tomorrow. So at least we will be even in this way.

It's okay. I'm kind of used to playing many times -- I'm always playing away from my home country, so it's not many times that I have the full crowd with me. So it's not something that I have been used to, but I think it's a good thing for me tomorrow that, like you said, that there will be not 10,000 Italians in the crowd.

It will be a good match, anyways, I think. I'm trying to look for revenge from New York, and I have good confidence from last year in Paris. You know, I played a very good match against him, and clay is a little bit different, of course, than hard court. It's a little bit slower. You know, hopefully that can be for my advantage tomorrow.

But, you know, he's still a dangerous player. He's been doing well on clay. He's also in the quarterfinals, so he's been playing some good matches.

You know, he has an unbelievably good serve, so I have to really be ready for tough returns and try to make many balls back, and then we will just see what happens.

I'm looking forward to it, and it will be hopefully a good match.

**Q. I think you said everything you could. The strategy is quite clear. You have to return more balls and avoid his forehand and that's it. Are you thinking to play more aggressively or just wait and wait and defend yourself as, for instance, today Dimitrov did versus Sinner? He was always playing a lot of slice shots from the baseline.**

CASPER RUUD: No, I think we all want to try to play aggressive all the time, all the points, but it's not possible to play every point of a match aggressive. Sometimes we have to play defense.

But, you know, Berrettini is a very aggressive player. He has big shots from the baseline, and, you know, whenever I can, I will try to be aggressive. Sometimes I have to run tomorrow and I'm prepared for it.

I'm sure that he will also hit many winners, which I'm also prepared for, but I will try to just answer back with also some winners and then try and be as aggressive as I can.

You know, I feel maybe a little bit more comfortable on the clay than hard to sometimes step in and play heavy with my shots, but we will see. You know, I have been able to play pretty aggressive these two, three matches here in

Rome, and I will try to keep it going for tomorrow.

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