

Internazionali BNL d'Italia

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Roma, Italia

Victoria Azarenka

Press Conference

V. AZARENKA/D. Kasatkina

6-6 [Ret.]

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Can you just talk through just that match and how it ended, what you saw from your side of things? It looked like it was a little bit emotional out there towards the end.

VICTORIA AZARENKA: Yeah, it ended in a really shitty way. I'm really sad for Daria, because we were playing such great tennis. I felt that it was such a great fight.

She's such a talented player that I felt like is always on the verge of kind of that breakthrough where she's going to pick it up. I felt like this was maybe closer to be her moment. So it's very unfortunate that she has an injury.

You know what, I feel like and I hope that this moment is going to be a turnaround for her. I know it's an adversity, but I hope she takes the best out of this situation and pushes forward. I feel like she can. I wish her that. I hope she's able to recover before French Open.

I offered her my help and my team's help if she needs it. Yeah, I really hope she will recover, because she's been playing so beautifully, so smart on the court, putting me in very uncomfortable situation where I had to, you know, really push myself. It was really great battle out there. I was enjoying it a lot.

Q. It looked like when you guys exchanged words at her bench, you had said what you were going to say and you were walking away, and she kind of shook your hand and pulled you back and you both kind of kept talking. What did she offer to you in response to all of that?

VICTORIA AZARENKA: Well, I think it's difficult to find the words when you have emotions. I know how sad she was.

And I could see that, you know, she worked really, really hard. It's like these moments where you feel like I worked



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so hard, why did this happen to me right now, why again?

It's hard to find the words. She was very gracious. She said that, you know, my kind of comeback inspired her. I told her that, you know, just keep going. Never think it's over. You can always try harder. Just do the best out of the situation.

And I think she will. She's a strong girl. She has big personality. I think she'll be fine.

Q. I know the match didn't finish, but what do you take out of those 12 games that you guys played going forward into your next match and the rest of the tournament?

VICTORIA AZARENKA: Well, as I said, I think it was great tennis. It was a lot of rallies. There was a lot of tactic going on in the court.

I think that what I would say for myself, I feel like I could shut up a little bit more today. I was talking a little bit too much. Not necessarily negative. Just too much. Just shut up and keep going.

I felt like actually at 6-5 I was getting into a better rhythm. You know, the situation happened.

But I felt that I was finding, you know, the quiet space for myself to kind of step, maybe step a little bit on another level.

I don't know if it would have happened, but that's how I felt. So going further into the tournament, my next match is going to be very different from today, so I don't think I can really take that much from today, just maybe a little bit of how I can be more quiet (smiling), more quiet with myself.

But I think, you know, it just was a tough transition from playing an amazing match against Sonya and today, everything was going to be going slice, going up, going down. It was a lot of adjustments. I knew it wasn't going to be easy.

So as I said, tomorrow it's going to be a new day. I will have to adjust again to a different ball.

But I'm actually very excited about this match. Garbine, we



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played last year here. It was a good match. She's been playing great. I watched a little bit her against Coco Gauff, which was a great match. It's going to be a great battle. I'm sure it's going to be fun.

Q. You speak about your next match against Muguruza. What kind of match in terms of tactics? What do you think you should do to have a chance to advance?

VICTORIA AZARENKA: Tactic-wise? Guys, it's kind of silly where you expect us to talk about tactics in a press conference before a match. I mean, really (smiling)? That's just silly.

But in terms of what I can do is I have to focus on my game. I think that's where what I do best is when I focus on my game and kind of imposing my way of playing and obviously adjusting a little bit because of the clay and bring a little bit more variety this time.

I don't really expect tomorrow to have long rallies like today, so it will be an adjustment. But we'll see how it goes. I haven't really thought of a game plan. It's too quick of a turnaround.

Q. I know you face every match with intention of winning, but do you feel like this tournament you could use it to gain, like, more rhythm facing Roland Garros, or do you actually have any other goals for this week?

VICTORIA AZARENKA: I mean, I don't consider a tournament being necessarily like a warmup. I mean, it's a preparation leading up to, in a way, because you get matches, but I in no way think this is a warmup tournament where we'll see what happens. Not at all. I take it very seriously. Every tournament I go, I take very seriously.

So I think for other people maybe there is a different expectation when there is a Grand Slam, and obviously there is maybe more importance that you bring.

But for me, every match is important. Really my expectation don't change at all.

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