

# Internazionali BNL d'Italia

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Roma, Italia

## Simona Halep

### Press Conference

S. HALEP/Y. Putintseva

6-2, 2-0 [Ret.]

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Can you just talk about the match today? Obviously it didn't end the way that necessarily people would like, but what did you take out of that match? How pleased were you at least with the tennis that you were playing?**

SIMONA HALEP: Well, I'm really pleased with the game I did. I felt really good on court. I felt much better than previous match.

Of course it's a different style, but still is not easy to play against Yulia all the time, so I had to be very focused and to do my job, my plan.

It was really good that I didn't miss much, and I felt like I feel the court. So I could move her and I could open the court so well. Serve was great. The return was not great, but still, I take it as a very good match. Maybe the best of this tournament.

**Q. When you go into a match preparing for Yulia, she had a few very significant comeback wins this week. She's a fighter. Everybody knows this. She battles until the end. What's the mindset that you have going into that match, and how do you break down a game like hers?**

SIMONA HALEP: Well, yeah, I always expect these kind of opponents when they are fighting till the end and they never give up not even a point during the match. My setup is just to do the same, so I try to be strong mentally. Even if the pressure is on for both of us on court, I just try to not giving up at all.

So I did this in the last period, and it helps me to stay there. And even if I don't play great, to win the match.

To break her, I think in my opinion, is just to play a little bit aggressive but also a little bit of height, changing the



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rhythm. Because she's changing the rhythm is not easy to find your own rhythm.

So also the dropshots was not easy, because she has a very, very good hand. So is not easy.

But I paid attention. Some of them I got it. Then maybe she missed because she felt stressed because I'm there and I'm focused on the ball.

So I think the big picture is just to be focused against the very fighter players.

**Q. Obviously for tomorrow, you'll play either Azarenka or Muguruza. You have had very significant, big matches against both of them in your career, wins and losses. Can you talk about the challenge of playing each one.**

SIMONA HALEP: Well, both of them are playing similar. So it's gonna be a big hitter tomorrow, like yesterday.

So again, different style, but I can say I'm used to this game because most of the players are hitting fairly strong these days. They are big fighters, as well. Azarenka is full of confidence because she played really well in U.S. She was amazing. And Muguruza, as well, she feels really well on clay court and here, as well.

It's a big challenge. I'm in the semifinal again for I think the fifth year. I have just to enjoy and to try to play the best game against them.

**Q. What do you make of Azarenka's kind of comeback? We put it in quotes, because I don't know if it counts as a comeback. But just the way she's playing especially after maybe two or three years of not playing her best tennis and then going on this absolute tear.**

SIMONA HALEP: She's working hard. I feel like she's very motivated. Even if you don't play a period very well, it will come. So she's very patient on that direction.

I really admire the way she is on court after giving birth and after so many years being No. 1 and winning Grand Slams.

So, yeah, she's a very, very great player. I think she's able

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mentally to do these big things.

**Q. With Muguruza, when you have been able to play well against her, especially I think the Roland Garros match that you guys had, what do you do well in the matches where you feel comfortable against her? And what does she do well in the matches where maybe she's gotten the better of you?**

SIMONA HALEP: (No audio)... hit the ball. She can beat anyone. I have just to do that, to be less comfortable for her, the game.

Every time I played well against her is to be as much as possible aggressive. If I play my best game and if I feel great physically on court, I have a big chance to win the match.

But every time is different, because she's playing so hard. You don't really know what to expect. It's tough every time.

So I don't plan for a match, specific match, because you never know on court. So I'm just trying to focus on myself, and then we'll see.

**Q. I'd like to know, even if it's now more than one month, when you were supposed to go to Palermo, and then at the last minute you didn't go. It was true that in those days there was a decision by the Italian government that Romania and other countries were not allowed to come to Italy, but it was not your case because, as professional tennis, you could have come. So why did you change your mind so suddenly? Were you afraid of COVID? I mean, how do you explain it? Because it was kind of surprise, and of course for Palermo a big, big disappointment.**

SIMONA HALEP: Yeah, I heard it was a very disappointing thing for Palermo tournament. But I took that decision because I didn't feel safe mentally. I was not relaxed about putting quarantine for Romanians in Italy. So it was just a moment decision, and I felt more secure to take it and to do that.

So if is the case, I apologize to the tournament once again because I didn't play, but I just felt much better to take the decision to stay home. That's only my decision.

**Q. I do understand. I have spoken with Virginia Ruzici, and she was quite confident that you would have come. Just in two, three days things changed quite dramatically. So you feel safe, but is it true that also you're always very much concerned about the health in general more than maybe other players and that was one of the reasons why you didn't go also to**

**New York or not?**

SIMONA HALEP: Is the same reason. If I don't feel relaxed mentally about the health, I don't go. So that's why I didn't play Olympics few years ago. That's why I didn't play US Open. I just feel stressed. And when I feel stressed, I prefer to stay home.

**Q. You have never won Rome, but you played two finals. Is it an important, let's say, goal for you since -- you know, in a way Italians love you a lot, not only because of Tiriac, Nastase, you have all these great relationships with Italy. I'd like to know how important is for you, even if after you won Roland Garros, nothing probably so important?**

SIMONA HALEP: Yeah, it now is the most important goal. I really want to win this tournament. I love playing here, and I did semifinals five times, five years, so probably I will have a chance in this future, close future.

Yeah, it's one of the biggest goals now. I love Rome, I love Italy, and every time I have a chance I come in holiday here, so I feel really good when I play here in Italy.

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