

Internazionali BNL d'Italia

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Roma, Italia

Diego Schwartzman

Press Conference



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BNL D'ITALIA

BNP PARIBAS

D. SCHWARTZMAN/R. Nadal

6-2, 7-5

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. What was the key tonight after having lost so many times to Rafa?

DIEGO SCHWARTZMAN: Well, I played against him many times, nine times before today. I think four or five times I was close enough to feel like maybe if I play my best tennis I'm going to have chances.

Also, he was coming back this tournament after seven months, more or less, eight months. And I was thinking, okay, tennis, sometimes it's really crazy and I was not playing good, but today maybe I have the chance. The conditions for me are good. The bounce is not really high, and the conditions are slow.

So I was just thinking to have chances first, and then trying to take that chances. I think the first set I did great, and in the second I was taking a few chances but not converting the chances with my serve.

I was thinking, okay, maybe it's not the second set but maybe the third, because it's not easy to coming back after many months. I was really focused every single time in the match, and I think that was the key.

Q. Can you just talk about the stretch towards the end of the match from 3-3 in the second set when there were five breaks in a row and kind of how you managed to keep it together, keep fighting and stay positive, knowing that Rafa can turn a match at any point?

DIEGO SCHWARTZMAN: Well, on my side I can say break, it's a classic way (smiling). Break the serve of the opponents I think is the best thing I do on court.

Many times at night is not easy to get the advantage with the serve, you know. You are just trying to put the serve in, trying to go close to the line and take the second ball

and moving the opponent.

We are really clay specialists, and we know how to put every single serve on court and try to play every point.

Was not easy at the end. I think when I was serving for the match, I did good points. I was really close, many balls really close to the line. I was thinking, okay, I have to do the same, and maybe he's going to miss one or two balls and then I have to do one great point.

It was happening that in the last game.

Q. You have won titles in your career. You have won many big matches. Where would you say this ranks, beating Rafa to reach a Masters semifinal on clay?

DIEGO SCHWARTZMAN: I played few times against the three big champions on tennis. I never beat them until today. I'm very happy.

It's sad to don't have people watching the match today. Feeling like it's a weird tournament and is not the best tournament do for the first time against Rafa, but it was my best match ever. I'm very happy.

But also I have to recover and still focus, because I have a big match tomorrow, and I want to do the final here.

Q. Is this something you think can give you a lot of confidence, especially because it's a crazy season, hard to get a rhythm, is this something that can be big for you for Roland Garros and even further beyond that?

DIEGO SCHWARTZMAN: It's really big, you know. I was not playing good before this week, for sure. I was playing bad in U.S. I finish with a lot of pain in my left hand.

This week I was improving my hand. I was playing the first match without pain. I was improving my tennis. The first match was a good match. The second match was weird. I have moments yesterday.

And today I played again my best tennis. So tennis many times is crazy, because the last three weeks, if you saw my matches, for sure, you bet for Rafa on this match.

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And today I played my best, and that's why these kind of individual sports are really nice to watch because we can do this. That's why I'm very happy, because I was thinking before the match, maybe, okay, I did a good tournament, I have to go to Hamburg, try to get the confidence to Roland Garros for the end of the year. But I think I take a lot of confidence, but you never know what is going to happen after this.

Q. What about Shapovalov? Because you're going to play him now, a brilliant player but sometimes he has some ups and downs and you're much more regular.

DIEGO SCHWARTZMAN: Well, first, I want to say I respect in every single part of these people, you know, Rafa, Nole, Federer, all the big champions in tennis, because they are the best.

But on court, I go and I walk on court trying to not respect them, you know. And many times I did well, but I didn't take the chances to beat them.

And today I did. So it's a big step for me, and maybe for the next matches when I'm going to be close enough, maybe I'm going to take again the chance.

You never know about that. I'm very happy, because they are, I think, the best of the history in tennis, and I'm very happy today to beat him, to beat Rafa.

And then Denis, great player, new top 10 right now. We practice many times before U.S. in Bahamas each other. We know each other. He's a very good guy. He's playing every week better and better. He's going to be tough.

It's a different game than Rafa. He's, like you said, maybe have three, four games unreal and then you have the chance because he does mistakes.

But he's playing regular the last few weeks, so it's going to be really tough.

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