

Internazionali BNL d'Italia

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Roma, Italia

Simona Halep

Press Conference

S. HALEP/Ka. Pliskova

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THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Congratulations. Remember, you always said that you really wanted to win this tournament, so I guess how does it feel that you won this title?

SIMONA HALEP: Yeah, finally I won it. I love this tournament, and every year actually I played really well. Not last year, but the year before. I played really well. I had two finals.

The start of my going up in the ranking was here in 2013. So I really dreamed to have this title. I'm really, really happy that it happened today.

Q. I'm wondering, looking ahead just to Paris, obviously with it being staged in different dates, the weather is probably going to be a bigger factor than usual. How do you see that element? Does it affect kind of your confidence or anything or plans or preparations for the French Open?

SIMONA HALEP: Well, it's just another tournament. I'm not gonna put pressure on myself. I played really well this year. I have three titles already. I played so much on clay. I feel confident. I feel happy that I will have a chance to play another Grand Slam this year.

I'm not gonna let myself be bothered about, like, for the weather or something like this. I just try to be happy, to take the positives from this tournament, and to go there smiling.

Q. Congratulations. You have played really well all week. The way you're playing right now, do you see yourself as one of the favorites for Roland Garros to get the title again?

SIMONA HALEP: Well, it's the dream that every player has it when we start a Grand Slam, so my dream is to do that, of course, but I'm not thinking that far. I just want to



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go there, to get used to the courts again, to get used to the atmosphere, and to try to win every match I play.

Every match is a battle. So I'm ready for it, but we will see what is gonna happen.

Q. You spoke this week about tournaments and being safe and sometimes when you don't feel safe it mentally affects you. I was wondering if the news coming out of Paris, the COVID tests of two players have tested positive, does that worry you at all?

SIMONA HALEP: Yeah, I heard before the match, and of course it worries me. But I'm sure that measures will take place there, and we will be safe enough to be okay to play and to be safe.

I don't know yet because I'm not there. So after I will get there, I will have a feeling.

Q. Congrats. Well done. You didn't get to face Karolina today, but you have faced her before on hard court and on clay many times. I'm wondering how are your preparations to face her on the clay different from maybe when you face her on the hard court? How is she a different player on clay? Is she maybe underrated for her abilities on that surface?

SIMONA HALEP: Well, I just remember the game we played in Shenzhen last year, and I knew I was leading the match and I had my chances but I didn't take. I did some wrong playing there.

We analyzed that. Today everything I had in my head is just to be quick, to not giving her time to hit because she has a very powerful shot, and to move her, which I did. And I did it very well. Today I felt my game 100% in my hands.

Q. You say it's very similar preparation no matter which surface you face her on?

SIMONA HALEP: Yeah, it's exactly the same, because she has a strong serve. Her forehand is unbelievable, backhand as well. She has all the shots.

Here, it's a little bit faster than on normal clay. So that's why she won last year. That's why she's feeling good

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Q. How does it feel to at least, with everything that has happened this year and the crazy season and all that sort of stuff, that with that trophy it's kind of you do have one goal that you checked off in 2020 of being able to get the Rome title?

SIMONA HALEP: Yeah, I really dreamed for it, as I said before. I played so many matches here in many years, since 2013, and I really wish that I will have it home.

I'm happy. I love to play in Roma. I love to play on these courts. I'm happy to have it, and I just want to smile now (smiling). I really enjoy it.

Q. In terms of just the way that you won with the retirement and all that sort of stuff, does that take anything away from kind of how you feel, or is it regardless just getting your hands on that trophy is just happiness no matter what?

SIMONA HALEP: Of course it's not the end of the tournament that we wish for, but I felt amazing in the first set, and I was very confident that even if we would kept playing, I had the chance to win the match.

So, no, I don't take negative from that. Of course it's bad for her. I feel sorry, because an injury is an injury and is never easy.

But, no, doesn't change with anything. This trophy, it's mine now (smiling).

Q. How much confidence out of the physical work that you have done over the lockdown and everything like that to come through? Because Putintseva, Muguruza, Pliskova, they played in the U.S., as well. They came in, and it seemed like just physically you were able to kind of wear them down and break them down. Does that give you extra confidence?

SIMONA HALEP: Yeah, it gives me extra confidence. And here I want to mention that my two coaches, Arti and Darren, helped me with the physical part for this six months, so it's good how I keep doing that.

But I was very strict to the schedule, and I have worked a lot and I have improved a lot physically back home. That's why I can run, I can feel fit every match.

You know, my legs are stronger and stronger, which gives me confidence during the matches, and also on clay it's much better.

Q. I just wanted to get your thoughts on who else do you think could make a good run in Roland Garros? We know there is no Naomi, no Barty. We don't know Serena yet. As far as we know she is going. Who do you see as the other favorites for the title?

SIMONA HALEP: As I said always, many girls from top 10, top 15 have a chance to win Grand Slam. Roland Garros is very open, because it's clay court but it's a little bit faster, so also the big hitters can win it easy.

So the girls that were here also, they have a chance, we have a chance. So I don't want to name who is favorite. I just want to take every player very serious and with a chance to win the trophy.

Q. How will you celebrate this win in the next few days? Do you have any time prepared for yourself?

SIMONA HALEP: No, because we are in a bubble, so I'm gonna enjoy with my trophy, yeah, in the room. So I'm gonna drink a little bit of Champagne from it, and that's it (smiling). The most boring celebration, that's for sure.

Q. I'm curious, the stuff you mentioned about your fitness during quarantine, I wonder if you feel you're coming into Roland Garros maybe fresher than ever because you don't have so much wear and tear on your body from the whole clay season? This year is a little bit different in that sense.

SIMONA HALEP: Yeah, it is different. It is true that I am fresher. Of course I did work hard home, but I didn't have matches, many matches, so my body is not that used. So, yeah, it's a plus, in my opinion, that I feel fresh.

With these matches here, I feel also confident. So, yeah, it's a better chance.

Q. Speaking about Roland Garros, I don't know if you know that by winning the title you can become the new first player in the world. Just wondering if you are thinking about that, if it's an objective for you.

SIMONA HALEP: Not really. Is not a goal, the main goal. Of course is gonna be beautiful to finish again No. 1, to get the place No. 1, but it's too far.

I cannot think about winning the title in Roland Garros, because the tournament didn't start yet. But I am there. I will give my best. I will dream for it, for sure.

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