

Internazionali BNL d'Italia

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Serena Williams

Press Conference



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THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Just wonder how you have been feeling physically, mentally, how everything has been going?

SERENA WILLIAMS: Everything has been going pretty good. I feel pretty good. Had a good time training and getting ready for the clay court, so it's good.

Q. You haven't played a match since Australia, so I guess you must be pretty fresh?

SERENA WILLIAMS: Yeah, pretty fresh. But at the same time, it's good to start fresh but it's also hard to start fresh. Whatever.

Q. You can play with Nadia Podoroska who had amazing games against top-10 players like Svitolina, Kvitova in the past. How would you describe her game?

SERENA WILLIAMS: She, you know, definitely knows how to play. She plays with a lot of power. I was watching her earlier this year actually so it was good. I was able to see her game a little bit.

Everyone gears up for top-10 players, and so if I'm in the top 10 I will be ready. Am I? I don't even know where I am, but somewhere (smiling).

Q. I just wondered if you had been following the guidelines for Wimbledon and the requirement that you can't stay in private housing, maximum of three in your entourage, how it would affect your experience, let's say, when you come to Wimbledon.

SERENA WILLIAMS: I feel like it will be a good experience still. I mean, we have been through this all last year, having actually sometime some tournaments were maximum of two.

So, you know, thank goodness that I have experienced it before so I can kind of be ready for it. It's definitely going to be different staying in the city. It's going to be really nice, for one, but then it will be, like, Oh, I have to leave an

hour in advance instead of five minutes. So that will be really different.

Q. I know you have been training a lot for the past weeks, but I saw that you didn't post much and so people were wondering about that. You mentioned that on Instagram. Are you aware of kind of what people say about you in that way?

SERENA WILLIAMS: Not too much. I really try not to get involved in too much of what people say about me, because I feel like it can make you nuts. Whether it's good or bad, it could be, like -- you know, I don't really try to think too much of myself in that way at all.

I think that's one thing I'm really good at is just to not really even engage so much, but I do feel like, because I don't do a lot of sport content, so I do feel like people are wondering if I'm playing, and I have to say I always am, you just don't see it. I don't show what I do. I don't always show my cards.

Yeah, but I feel like for the most part I just never ever, ever, ever, ever like pay attention, which is good.

Q. You decided not to play in Madrid. I was wondering if it had anything to do with the comments that the owner said about you this year and in the past?

SERENA WILLIAMS: Comments from that guy? That old, old guy? Yeah, I don't know. Like, he's still...(smiling).

Q. Just wondering if you could give us some more details what you have been doing tennis-wise over the past three months. Were you training at Patrick's academy in France? How many days on the clay? Can you give us some details? That would be great.

SERENA WILLIAMS: Yeah, no, I trained for the past two-and-a-half weeks at Patrick's academy, and then training a lot on the clay in the United States with team members. Mackie came back and other people joined, and that was really exciting for me.

So we had an intense, you know, several weeks of training, very intense. So it was -- yeah, so that's kind of what happened for me.

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Q. Are you feeling pretty good about your clay court game, or is it just tough to gauge at this point having not played?

SERENA WILLIAMS: I feel good. You know, I feel like I'm good. I'm in Rome. I'm going to have some good matches here hopefully, and then I will be, you know, at another Grand Slam which always makes me excited. So I think either way I'll be ready.

Q. For the Tokyo Olympics there are a lot of traveler restrictions as of now. Would you still go to the Olympics if your daughter couldn't come to Japan? And how confident are you that you will be able to bring her to Tokyo?

SERENA WILLIAMS: Yeah, you know, I haven't really thought much about that. That's a really good question. I haven't spent 24 hours without her, so that kind of answers the question itself. We're best friends.

Yeah, so, you know, I think there is other reasons. I haven't really thought much about Tokyo, because it was supposed to be last year and now it's this year, and then there is this pandemic and there is so much to think about. Then there is the Grand Slams. It's just a lot.

So I have really been taking it one day at a time to a fault, and I definitely need to figure out my next moves.

Q. I want to ask you how is your relationship with our city? We know that you love it, and I would like to know how do you find it? If you can tell us something more about your relation with Rome.

SERENA WILLIAMS: Yeah, I love Rome. It's really one of my best cities in the world. You know, I was asking my daughter, I was, like, Okay, what's your favorite place? Mommy's favorite place is Italy. She copies me, so she says, Italy. So it's kind of funny.

I love this city. I have some really good friends here that I have had since I was a teenager, so it's always cool to come to a place where you have friends. It's like an experience to bond, even though we can't bond right now, which is unfortunate, but it's really, really, really, really, really amazing, and I love it here. So yeah.

Q. It will be your first time in Rome without crowd, how much your feelings are affected by lack of spectators the fact there will be no crowd in the first two rounds.

SERENA WILLIAMS: I have been getting used to the crowds not being there, so in a way it's kind of -- it's a

different experience. I think we can always go back and say, you know, I remember that time we had to play without a crowd or whatever. That was, you know, really interesting.

So I just look at everything as an experience. It will be hard without the Roman fans, because they are special, but it's always something.

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