

# Internazionali BNL d'Italia

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Roma, Italia

## Novak Djokovic

Press Conference



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THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. I saw you practicing with Andy Murray today. Wondering how you thought he was playing and what you make of his sort of continuing efforts to get back to the top of the game.**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, I was very happy to see him. I haven't seen him in a while, and it was great to hit with him. I thought he played very well on the court.

He moves well, you know, considering it's clay which is not the best surface for his hips. But considering what he has been through lately, I think it seems like he's been feeling well on the court. That's what he's saying, and that's what it appears on the court itself.

We had a nice chat and had a few laughs on the court as well. It was just great. You know, it brought back the old times when we spent a lot of time on the court together, whether it was training or playing against each other.

**Q. I wanted to ask whether you get the sense that the younger generation of guys maybe has a stronger belief these days that it might be time for there to be a shift from your group that's been at the top for quite a long time to theirs and them having more and more success?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, I mean, the results are showing that. I mean, obviously these guys are playing, you know, every week more or less. There are guys like Tsitsipas, Zverev, Berrettini, Rublev that are winning against all of us and playing a lot and building their ranking points. Medvedev as well, of course, and challenging for the top spots. Dominic Thiem of course has been there for many years.

It's inevitable that it's gonna happen. The change on the men's rankings, top of the rankings is coming. Whether it's gonna happen in a month or a year or whatever, I don't know. I'm not personally paying too much attention anymore to the rankings as much as I am to my game for the Grand Slams. You know, those are the biggest focus tournaments right now at this stage of my career.

I have managed to achieve the milestone of the historic ranking No. 1, and that was the focus up to recently. Now it's more about really trying to peak at Grand Slams and make those count for my career.

**Q. You mentioned after you won Australia that because you did get the record for the most weeks at No. 1 you weren't going to play as much because you don't have the pressure of trying to keep that No. 1 ranking the whole time. So you don't play Miami, you don't play Madrid, which are some of the biggest tournaments in the period between Oz and now, so coming to Rome does it feel strange to you you haven't played these big tournaments? Do you feel you're short on match play at that level?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, I mean, it is a different schedule from what I had for so many years. Of course it does feel different. I don't want to say strange because it's not strange. I'm actually looking forward to take that next step in my career and my life where I'm gonna spend more time with my family and just do other things that interest me.

But at the same time, I do play specific amount of tournaments that would prepare me as best as possible for the Grand Slams. So I did play two tournaments on clay. I didn't have too many matches. I didn't play so great in Monaco and Belgrade, but I'm hopefully going to change that here in Rome and then another week in Belgrade before the French.

Four tournaments before French is I think enough in terms of the match play. So I'm building my fitness and I'm building just my game slowly step by step in order to peak in Paris. That's definitely where I want to play my best.

**Q. Back in Monaco you mentioned your documentary that is gonna come out later this year. Can you give us some more information about it? Are you still shooting some scenes? Is it going to come out on a platform like Netflix or Amazon or is it going to be in theatres?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, yes, we are still shooting. The crew is going to be also in Belgrade after I finish with the Rome tournament during the Belgrade Open tournament in



... when all is said, we're done.®

a couple weeks' time. They are also shooting different interviews with different people that have been part of my life.

As I said, you know, so to say the title or the focus of this documentary is the milestone, the historic No. 1, and kind of a journey to reach that goal throughout my entire career, my entire life.

There is a plan, so to say, or a timeline that we're going to come out with it just before or during US Open. Hopefully we can make that happen -- it depends on a few things -- but definitely by the end of the year.

I can't share information where we are going to air it for now, because we still don't have that finalized, so once we have that you'll be informed.

**Q. You took a break in the tour, and you hiked the Rtanj Mountain. Correct me if I pronounce it bad. I would like to know if you could describe how was the journey and if you discover something new about yourself.**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: I love to hike. I love to spend as much time as possible in nature: forests, lakes, mountains, rivers. You know, I try to be, whether it's with my family or friends or by myself, I try to be outdoors as much as I can.

We did hike Rtanj Mountain in Serbia for the second time in a year, and it's very powerful mountain. Very mystical as well. Has a great view, great energy.

I did that with my wife, so it was quality time that we spent together. We always feel like we can reconnect when we are together in nature. With kids it's a little bit more difficult. They are still a bit too small to climb a mountain like that.

Yeah, I got time to spend with my wife, with my kids, with my brothers, my parents, friends, just enjoy life, dedicate myself to some other things that are interesting me, that are consuming some of my private time as well. I enjoyed it. I enjoyed it a lot.

I'm trying to engage myself in the activities that I have put on hold for 15-plus years, because I never had time for that. So now, all of a sudden, I have a little bit more time and a little bit more windows of opportunities to do these things. It makes me very happy.

**Q. You have always been willing to, as a top player, express your passion, your emotions on the court, and I saw a lot of other young players now seem to be a little bit more expressive. There has also been some**

**negative emotion besides a lot of racquet throwing, some defaults. Is there a resurgence of people feeling free to express their emotion, becoming more emotional in this game, and why would you think that would be, do you think?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: I mean, it's difficult to talk in the name of others. I mean, it's tough for me to say what's right, what's wrong. Everyone is different and everyone should have the right and freedom to express themselves.

I mean, I think I can only speak on my own behalf, when I play I experience a lot of different varieties of emotions inside of me. They vary and they change very quickly. It's a very dynamic game. You're by yourself on the court, so you experience a lot of weight on your shoulders. You can burst and explode, and that has happened to me and I'm not proud of that, of course, and I never supported the racquet breaking or anything like that in terms of negative outbursts, but it does happen. When it happens, you know, I have to kind of accept it and move on and forgive myself for doing that.

I have been hard on myself for many years until I just accepted that that's who I am, as well. I'm working on it, and there are times when I can control myself more and sometimes control myself less.

In terms of the younger generations, yes, you're right, there is more emotional transparency, so to say, in terms of their reactions on the court, off the court (smiling). I personally am fond of that. I like when there is charisma, when there is movement, emotional movement happening, when you can, you know, see a human side of the tennis players.

Of course there is this power of self-control is very important, you know, not just for your tennis success but also for, you know, being an example to the younger generations and kids that are watching you play, of course, but, you know, it's not always possible to stay at your best, I mean, particularly in individual sport.

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