

Internazionali BNL d'Italia

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Petra Martić

Press Conference



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P. MARTIC/J. Pegula

7-5, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Can you just first and foremost talk through the match, just the close score and how tight it was, and what the key was to get the win.

PETRA MARTIC: Yeah, definitely really tough match today. She's a different player from the three opponents that I had so far. I had to adjust a little bit. The ball was coming faster, it was lower.

Again a slow start, but it took a bit shorter than -- you know, 2-Love is better than 4-Love down, I guess. So that's a progress, I would say.

Yeah, the key was to overtake, to not let her play and take control of the points, of the rally, and just make me run. So I tried to do that before her. I tried to use my serve. Obviously she didn't like my kick so much, so I knew I had to really be sharp on those first shots after return of serve and not let her overtake. I think I did that pretty well for the most part.

Q. I mean, she's had such a great improvement over the last year or so, but she always says, you know, I'm not a clay-courter, I'm still learning how to figure out what to do on this surface. How much of an advantage do you feel like that is for a player like you who doesn't have to necessarily think so much about the surface when you're playing on it? Like you can just focus on your game.

PETRA MARTIC: No, I mean, definitely I wouldn't want to be in a position where I'm thinking how to play, how to move, how to do whatever.

But to be honest, I think once you're confident, it's not so much of a struggle. Two days ago she beat Osaka like she's been beating top players consistently lately. So I think she's such a good player that the surface doesn't really matter so much, especially like when you, like I said,

have so many wins in your pocket.

So I'm really happy that I got this one.

Q. What does it mean to make the semifinals in Rome, a WTA 1000, to have your game kind of coming together, getting these wins with Roland Garros right around the corner? There is a lot to be proud of with respect to what you have been able to do in Rome this week.

PETRA MARTIC: No, definitely. I mean, I came here, I don't know how many wins in total I have in Rome. I think this will be my most successful tournament of all (smiling). I just couldn't perform here, for some reason.

I'm really happy that, you know, especially not having a good start to the season. Rome is hopefully gonna make a change for me and things are gonna start going upwards for me from now on.

Q. Maybe a little bit of Italian inspiration now? Has Francesca given you any keys to succeeding and doing well in Rome?

PETRA MARTIC: No, I mean, definitely to have her around, to have a crowd behind me and people know that she's my coach and all those things, you know, you try to take whatever you can. Obviously my game started really coming together, like pieces are really like being like put together. Now it looks like a whole picture finally, and I don't need to think so much on the court anymore.

Especially today, I just played. That was not the case for so long, like the whole beginning of this 2021. I'm really just starting to enjoy the game out there.

Q. Yeah, what is, do you think, the difference between kind of how you were playing and what your tennis was looking like and feeling like when you were struggling a little bit compared to kind of how clear things seem to be right now for you? How do you explain what that difference feels like or looks like for you?

PETRA MARTIC: I mean, I think I just, to be honest, like last year, end of last year, I was winning matches, okay, I played fourth round US Open, third round of Paris, but I

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wasn't happy with my game already then.

Then prep started and I still wasn't finding it. Then you lose one match, you lose another match, and then the struggle is real. In your tennis, in your mind, it's everywhere, it's just pure panic (smiling).

Like I said, I couldn't find the confidence in my shots, and then I lose the picture of how I should play tennis overall. Like once you get insecure out there, things just start rolling downhill really quickly.

Once I got Francesca onboard, I really, like, that was one of the first things I told her, like, I just need to find confidence in my shots, and then it's gonna start rolling. We really just worked on the basics, because then once I'm confident from the baseline, then the net game is gonna work, my serve is gonna come, things around are gonna be okay. I just needed to find my baseline game, and that used to be my strength.

Beginning of the season, my matches really looked like, I mean, I was making so many unforced errors, just really giving it away. So that was hard to watch and to be out there and feel like I don't know who I am anymore out here.

But right now it seems like I got past it. It's not the case, and I really feel like I'm getting more and more confidence with each second that I spend on the court.

Q. It sounds like, from a lot of the players, this week in Rome you get one or two hours to roam if you want to. How much has that helped at all in terms of just feeling comfortable, feeling a little bit of the freedoms of before the COVID time? Seems like people are a bit happier this week in Rome.

PETRA MARTIC: No, definitely this played a big role for me as well for my mind, to be able to live somewhat normal life again and to be out and just walk around and not to just be playing tennis and being in your room watching TV or whatever, thinking, overthinking tennis.

It's been really hard. So this change really just meant so much for my mind. Maybe it also helped my tennis. I don't know.

Q. Looking ahead to the semifinals, either Pliskova or Ostapenko who are battling it out as we speak. Can you talk about the challenges of playing each and what it will feel like to kind of play that big of a match in Rome on clay?

PETRA MARTIC: Well, from the first match here, to be honest, we hardly focused on my opponents. I mean, I

would tell Francesca, like, Do you want to talk more about my opponent or do you want to tell me more?

She's like, No, it's what you need to be doing. You need to focus on your game.

And this is the only game plan we have. So to be honest, I don't check the draw. I don't know who my next opponent is. Right now that's the case even more because I really want to gain confidence in my game. I want to be going out there and just trying to dominate with what I have and what I have to offer out there.

Either one is gonna be tough. Obviously we are in semis whoever it's going to be next match, but once again, I'm gonna be out there doing my own thing and let's see how far it gets me.

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