

Internazionali BNL d'Italia

Saturday, 15 May 2021

Roma, Italia

Novak Djokovic

Press Conference

N. DJOKOVIC/L. Sonogo

6-3, 6-7, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. How do you feel after this crazy day? Can you get a fighting chance tomorrow against Rafa? How can you recover from this?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: I'm just hungry. I want to go and eat (smiling). I hope we can make this short.

I'm very proud of what I have achieved today. It was a very long day. Spent five hours almost on the court. Dug myself out of a very difficult situation versus Tsitsipas. He was so close to win it. Somehow I managed to turn it around.

I thought I played even on a higher level against Sonogo. I have myself to blame for allowing this match to go to a third set because I served for the match, had match points, made some double-faults on 4-2 in the tiebreak when I was up.

But nevertheless credit to him for fighting. The atmosphere was electric on the stands. Obviously Italians supporting him. It was very, very loud, but also fun to be part of such match with crowd. Italians are known to be very passionate. Of course I knew coming into the match that it was going to be a lot of support for him.

It was great to play in such atmosphere. A lot of great energy that I experienced today.

Q. There's been a lot of talk about the NextGen guys ready to step up and take over. With you and Rafa back in the final again, does it feel good to reestablish who's in charge?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, Rafa and I had a little laugh today in the locker room after I won against Tsitsipas. We kind of joked around that the old guys are still not giving up. I saw he said somewhere a few days ago that Roger, him and I are old, but I disagree with him. I think we're



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showing some different, fresh energy. We had a laugh about it.

It's great to play him again in the final. He's the guy that I have encountered the most in my career. Definitely my biggest rival of all time. Playing him on clay in the finals of one of the biggest tournaments in the world is always extra motivating for me.

Even after all we have been through in our careers there's still this excitement when we have to face each other. I mean, at least from my side I know that that's going to be the case as long as we play against each other on this level. I'm really glad that we are showing we're not backing off from the NextGen attacks.

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