

Internazionali BNL d'Italia

Sunday, 8 May 2022

Roma, Italia

Emma Raducanu

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Emma, welcome to Rome. How does it feel playing at the Italian Open and being in the city in this tournament for the first time?

EMMA RADUCANU: Thank you, yeah. I've been really enjoying Rome. I haven't been out a big amount, but went out for dinner. Yeah, it's a great city with so much history. I can't wait to hopefully explore.

But the tournament is great. Like the venue is so picturesque. Yeah, we'll get started here soon.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. You played on clay in Stuttgart and Madrid before arriving here. Which are your feelings on this surface?

EMMA RADUCANU: Clay is very new to me. It's something I've kind of been learning as I've been playing. I definitely feel like I have been progressing with each week, improving, just getting a better understanding of how to play the points, when to stay in the point or when to stay aggressive.

Yeah, I am liking the clay, to be honest. I don't think I'm like the finished product at all. But, yeah, heading in a good direction.

Q. How are you feeling physically after last week, this week? What have the last few days been like in terms of training and also resting?

EMMA RADUCANU: Yeah, I think after the match, it was obviously pretty difficult because it was a long match. But my body is something that I'm just managing week in, week out, just trying to adjust to the level and the intensity.

Keeps kind of happening. I guess it's just my body's also learning on the job.

Q. Exciting first-round match playing another US Open champion in Bianca Andreescu. What are your expectations for that matchup? Without a normal coaching situation, what is your scouting process like? Are you watching tape or videos yourself? How



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do you come up with a game plan for this match?

EMMA RADUCANU: Yeah, I mean, it's going to be a good match. Like, of course, we are both pretty good players. It's going to be a good matchup, for sure. She's a great athlete and obviously a champion. She's got a really good attitude. Yeah, I think it's going to be interesting.

But, I mean, the preparation, I've really been loving it, to be honest, kind of going, just exploring, seeing how I'm doing on my own. But I've definitely got Iain, as well, who really has been helping out. He's great to have in the meantime.

But, yeah, I mean, he'll give me some tips. I'll get some tips myself. We'll see.

Q. How do you get tips yourself?

EMMA RADUCANU: Just from people or myself.

Q. How is your back in particular after last week? Has that been an injury that perhaps has been clay-specific almost?

EMMA RADUCANU: No. I think, well, it's just coming from a lot of intensity and overload. My back, I mean, I'm managing it. Like it's fine.

But it's just trying to adapt again to the long matches, to the intensity. I think that all of the small sort of niggles I'm getting, they're all related and connected to each other, when something is overcompensating maybe perhaps.

Yeah, we'll see.

Q. I was wondering whether you had felt different sort of strains physically playing on clay?

EMMA RADUCANU: Yeah, I think that clay for sure is more physical. Actually Madrid and Stuttgart, they were pretty quick conditions, so it wasn't like the longest rallies, I would say. The ball is traveling through the air pretty quickly.

I think here is completely opposite. It's quite heavy and slow, so there's going to be a lot longer points. It will be interesting to see what the differences are. But I can already feel them on the court tennis-wise.



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Q. There are some players who know and like the history of the game, the history of the tennis. Are you one of those or you don't really care that much? Do you read or do you know anything about the Italian Open, the past winners, or you know almost nothing?

EMMA RADUCANU: I think it's pretty incredible. I mean, I was walking to the gym from the locker rooms. You just have a tunnel, a very long tunnel. It's just a wall of winners. I was actually just very interested in looking at all the winners, how far back the tournament has dated. I thought that was very interesting.

But I definitely have a lot of respect for some of the players that were playing back then. I think that the way they played is definitely very interesting.

But I just feel like right now the game is so much physically, like, more advanced because the points are so long and they hit so hard, as well.

But I think it's incredibly skillful to be able to play, for example, with such a small racquet. I mean, to be able to time and hit the sweet spot, I think that is very interesting.

Q. You mentioned how you're enjoying the independence of coaching yourself in a way. Is that a specific quality of yours? Outside of tennis, would you describe yourself as an independent person?

EMMA RADUCANU: Yeah, I mean, I'd describe myself as a loner (laughter).

No, I mean, I do like being on my own, but of course I love being in groups as well. I can easily and very happily spend a lot of time on my own. I think it's something that is off court as well as on court.

I mean, for the past year, I'd say I've had a lot of people around me a lot and very often. To be kind of on my own is interesting because I'm kind of finding out a lot about myself, understanding what I need and what I don't need.

Q. On Bianca, how much did you watch her in 2019 when she broke through? People compare you a bit because you were both teenagers when you broke through, Romanian heritage.

EMMA RADUCANU: Yeah, I watched that tournament. I thought Bianca was playing incredibly well. I think her physicality is one of her strengths, how good she is moving, how low she stays. I think that's really cool and probably something I can learn from myself.

But, yeah, so I think that, you know, maybe we both won the US Open, yes, but, I mean, it's completely dependent on the day as well at this level.

Q. At the US Open you broke out at the same time as Carlos Alcaraz. He's doing well, has been the talk of tennis the last few times. How much of him have you watched? What do you make of his continuing success like beating Nadal and Djokovic back to back?

EMMA RADUCANU: Yeah, I think it's incredible what he's doing right now. Being so young and being so consistent is really impressive. I think the way that he moves is really gracious and elegant. If you watch him, it just looks like he's flying through the air.

But, yeah, he's super aggressive, can just take the racquet out of someone's hands. What he's doing at the moment is really a good inspiration for everyone on the tour.

Q. You hadn't played on clay before this year famously. Presumably you had practiced on it before this year's clay season. You must have had some idea of what you want to do. You said you told your team that one day clay would be your surface. I was wondering how your expectations have been? Do you play the way you envisaged playing?

EMMA RADUCANU: Yeah, I think I practiced on clay for two weeks, like, last year or Fed Cup in Bratislava. To be honest, if I'm not playing a tournament on clay, I wouldn't really train on clay. I haven't trained that much either on clay.

I did have some sort of vision how I would play. But I think my expectations, when I went into the clay season, I was just with thinking every additional match is just a bonus. Every time I got one, I was just so happy to be able to have another opportunity to put my game on the court.

Yeah, I've definitely been pleasantly surprised. I'm feeling really good on the ball and actually really confident in how I'm hitting my shots. But definitely learning more what works and what doesn't work on this surface.

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