

Internazionali BNL d'Italia

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Stan Wawrinka

Press Conference



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THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Today was tougher physically or mentally?

STAN WAWRINKA: No, I think in general I was feeling good on the court. Physically I was feeling great. For sure when you don't win a match in more than a year, you start to think always about it more than what you should and not focus on the right things.

In general I think it was a great match, great battle. I stayed positive. I start to feel much better with my tennis by the end of the second set, and the third set. I'm really happy with this victory.

Q. Down a set and a break to a big server like Reilly, how were you able to stay positive? How does it feel to win a match after so long?

STAN WAWRINKA: Yeah, you just have to stay positive and try to fight. You know if you get a bit lucky, if you show him that you going to stay there, you going to get some chance. I got some chance. I played better. He start to miss few, start to change a bit.

Yeah, I'm really happy. I think it feel great because so much time I was away from tennis. I was completely outside of the tour. I did a lot of hard work to come back, so it feel great to finally win a match, to see that things are getting better.

I'm feeling much better in practice. I've been practicing really hard to move better, to feel better. I know that my game will get there. I feel confidence with that. I just need a few more months to be where I want to be.

But in general it's already a big step ahead.

Q. Today even in tough times you had a lot of love from supporters. How much did this help to elevate your game, also considering the next part of the year?

STAN WAWRINKA: No, it's help a lot. It's the main reason why I'm still playing and why I came back after a year out. It's because of the fans, because of the emotion that you

can get on the court playing matches here in Rome. With great support, it help a lot to still be positive, even if I wasn't happy with what I was doing on the court.

But, again, it's a big chance to be playing those matches and I'm really happy to get through this one, to be able to play another one.

Q. You seem in very good physical shape. You lost weight since I remember. How many efforts did you did in the gym? How many hours per day in order to be fit as you look it?

STAN WAWRINKA: Way too much. Way too much (laughter).

There is no shortcut. I needed to do those time on the court and off the court. It was a long time with two surgery that I was out. I gained some weight. It was tough. With the feet surgery, you can't do much. I needed a lot of effort to be back. Already last few weeks since Monaco is much better.

As I say, I still need few more months to feel really where I want to be. I still have a lot of hard work to do, to play better, to have those time on the court, in the gym and all.

As I say, it's a good, positive step today. Hopefully the week will keep going.

Q. Is it a big sacrifice? There is still a goal for the end of the year more or less in terms of rankings? One tournament or...

STAN WAWRINKA: Of course it's a sacrifice, but it's more discipline. As I say, if you want to be an athlete, professional athlete, I know what it's cost to be at that level. I'm happy to take that road again.

As I say, after two surgery, at my age I could easily stop playing because my career is way better than what I expected when I grew up, when I was young. But I still have this fire on me. I still believe that I can play great tennis. I still believe that I make some big results, maybe not now, but in few months.

Is no ranking goal for the season. As I say, my goal is really to be to a level where I feel confident with myself and

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I know that I will be able to win big matches and go far in tournaments.

I need few more months for that. When I will be there, I will decide which goal I need to put in myself.

Q. It's been awhile, so I'm wondering if you look back, were there moments where you didn't want to come back and just wanted to stop? Can you just talk about the mental journey of keeping yourself in the head space to actually come back.

STAN WAWRINKA: Yeah, of course, last year was some tough moment where you feel that you are way too far to be able to come back. It took me a lot of time, a lot of physio, a lot of rehab, a lot of time in the gym just to be able to start running again.

Of course, the mental part was important. But as I said many time, for me was few reason. Main reason, I didn't want to stop by being injured just like that. The second reason is anyway I needed to do kind of rehab to be able to walk, to be able to run, to be able to live a normal life anyway.

I took the option to just focus on day by day, to be really patient, to try to do other stuff outside tennis, trying to stay positive all the time, and accept that it takes a lot of time.

Q. What are some of the things you did outside tennis that you never had a chance to do before?

STAN WAWRINKA: I start to do all the stuff, like producing movie. I start to spend a lot of time learning other things that I love to do.

Of course, as I'm still a tennis player, you need to have still the discipline. Even in rehab you need a big discipline to keep doing every day the right thing. You can't just say, whatever, I will see you in two days or three days.

Q. You produced a movie?

STAN WAWRINKA: Yes. In France.

Q. Since the time you've been out a lot has changed at the top of men's tennis. Can you comment on coming back and seeing the changes, in particular players like Carlos Alcaraz?

STAN WAWRINKA: Yeah, I think in general I left only one year, but I was still following. I think not changed too much last year. This year, yes, with Carlos playing so well from the beginning of the year, it's been really impressive the way he's playing, the way he's handling the pressure, the

way he's winning and beating the top player. That's something amazing. I enjoyed a lot to watch him play and win.

Q. In particular is there something about his game that impresses you the most?

STAN WAWRINKA: I think, like everybody, the way he moves and the power that he can still have. He is amazing player, of course. He's tough to find weaknesses. He show again and again that he can play against the top player. He beat Rafa, he beat Novak, he beat Zverev, he beat Tsitsipas. He beat all those players by just playing the game and being better than them.

Q. By coincidence you came back at the same challenger tournament as Dominic Thiem. A lot of people put those stories together that week. Do you see any similarities in what you think about what it takes to build back, if you saw any of that or talked to him about any of this? What do you make of his journey also and yours?

STAN WAWRINKA: Yeah, we came back same week more or less. We didn't talk much about injury and all, but we've been practicing quite a lot over there. Already here, too. I always enjoy to practice with him. He's amazing player.

But I think every injury are completely different. We all having a different mindset to come back. The reality is that it takes time, takes time. You need to accept it. You need to do the right work to do. He is a hard worker player. He will come back for sure. But it takes time.

It's not only about the fitness side. It's not only about the tennis game. It's also about the mental part. You have to connect everything together to be able to play your best tennis again.

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