

# Internazionali BNL d'Italia

Monday, 9 May 2022

Roma, Italia

## Novak Djokovic

Press Conference



INTERNAZIONALI  
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THE MODERATOR: Questions, anyone?

**Q. Alcaraz is winning everything. People start making comparison because his tennis and the tennis of you guys, the big three, what do you think? Do you think there is any similarities with your game, or Federer or Nadal or Murray?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, I generally don't like comparisons. I think everyone is authentic, everyone is special.

He definitely is special. I mean, already he's breaking a lot of records as a teenager, you know, winning two Masters events this year, a couple of 500s. So far he's the best player in the world, no question, this year with the results that he's been doing.

The way he was dealing with the pressure, I mean, in our match few days ago, how calm he was all the way till the end, was impressive. He deserved to win the trophy.

Everything about his game is really impressive. He's a really complete player, can play equally well offensively and defensively. He's the talk of the sport.

I think it's great in general for tennis to have somebody that young who is bold enough to challenge the best players in the world and win big trophies, but at the same time be humble and nice off the court, which he is. Yeah, definitely wish him all the best.

I'm sure there's going to be a lot of interesting encounters with him on different surfaces, with other players, with myself hopefully. He brings a lot of energy on the court, which is nice to see. That's why people like him, they follow him closely.

Of course, him not playing here, he wanted to take some time probably to recover after intense couple of months, which I think was a good decision from his part.

Roland Garros, he's definitely one of the main favorites, no doubt, even though he has never reached the second week of a Grand Slam. With everything recently that he

has achieved, he deserves to be one of the favorites.

**Q. Roland Garros is going to mark a full year since both you and Rafa played at the same Grand Slam. What's the significance of that for you, for the tournament, and for the sport in general?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, I think the tennis fans and the biggest tournaments in sport always want to have the best players in the world participating. I think from that point of view there is significance to that.

Grand Slams are the ones that historically always counted the most, of course. So having both of us and all the other best players in the world is great. Probably Roger is the only one from the big names that is missing.

It's always a big blow for the tournament if you don't have one of the biggest names in the sport, but it's always beneficial if you do. I guess it's logical.

**Q. Playing in Rome, playing in Belgrade, what is the difference? Where do you feel more pressure, to win in front of the Serbian crowd, your home family tournament, or Roma where you've done well but not as well as Nadal who won 10 times?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, better pasta here, for sure, than in Belgrade, even though we have some good pasta. Pasta in Italy, in Rome, is unprecedented.

Well, of course, there is difference because Belgrade is my hometown, that's where I was born, that's where my home is. But, of course, Rome could be the second home, I mean, in terms of support that I've been getting, in terms of the sensation I have every time I come back here. I think speaking a little bit of Italian helps connect with people. Italian mentality is close to Serbian mentality in terms of passion, emotions. So it's always a joy for me to come back.

I think the success I had in previous years, winning it five times, playing more finals as well, it's a testament to how I'm feeling here.

I look forward to this week with a good I think confidence level and tennis level. Hopefully I can go far.

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**Q. Where do you assess where your game's at now going into the French Open?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, I think it's closer to desired level every week. Madrid, even though I lost in semifinals, I still think I played really good tennis. Felt physically hundred percent, even after almost three-and-a-half-hour battle against Alcaraz. I recovered well the next day, was ready to go. That's a positive and encouraging factor prior to Rome and also, of course, the big goal which is Paris.

I think I'm in the right direction. I know I can always play better, and I know that I'm very self-critical on the court. At the same time, realistically looking, I think the tennis, quality of tennis, level of tennis, is really high now.

Hopefully I can maintain that level throughout this week and build, go deep in this tournament hopefully - that's the goal - and come to Paris well-prepared.

**Q. You played here in Rome many times. Every appearances you always played at least the quarterfinals. Is there any match you played here in Rome that you remember with a good memory in specific?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: I mean, I had some really epic matches. I don't remember exactly the year, I think it was 2014 that I won, I think I played more or less every match three sets. Had some really tough battles with Nadal. I mean, I guess those are the matches that I would take out as highlights of my performances here in Rome.

To win against him in 2011 final, any win against him on clay I probably put as a highlight because we know how good he is on clay. Of course, it's an ultimate challenge to beat him on this surface.

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