

# Internazionali BNL d'Italia

Thursday, 12 May 2022

Roma, Italia

## Denis Shapovalov

Press Conference



INTERNAZIONALI  
BNL D'ITALIA

BNP PARIBAS

D. SHAPOVALOV/R. Nadal

1-6, 7-5, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Nadal spoke about his foot. But anyway I would like to have a comment about the match. In the first set you made quite a lot of unforced errors, then I think something changed.**

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: Yeah, just I think he was outplaying me in the first set. Especially the first set, beginning of the second set, he was just dominating me, playing super solid.

Honestly, I didn't change much. I just tried to hang in there. Kind of freed up after I won the service game, the first service game, in the second set. I was able to free up and play loosely from then on, elevated my game a little bit.

He threw in a couple mistakes. It helped me get back into the match.

**Q. This year you didn't make big results in the Masters 1000s. Compared to last year, this time you have more fight. What is your comment on that, what do you think you miss for make a big result in Masters 1000?**

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: Yeah, definitely I think fighting is a big part of that, turning matches around. Like today, for example, it's a big thing. I think a year or two ago I would have gone away. It's something I'm working on as well as mentally just staying calmer on the court.

Obviously I'm still not perfect. I have a long way to go. It's something I definitely want to work on and just become better, just become a role model to other players, other kids. Yeah, just slowly day by day try to get better.

**Q. Obviously playing Rafa has been a big part of your career. What does this mean to you personally? You could see he was hurt at the end. I don't know what you said to him.**

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: Yeah, definitely tough to see him in pain there at the end. I never want to see that, especially with a great legend like Rafa. I mean, hopefully he's okay.

He brings so much to our sport. Hopefully he's fit and ready to go for the French. Obviously he's got a lot of matches under his belt this year. It's been difficult.

He's been winning so much, I think it's almost been difficult for him to stop playing and kind of take it easy. Looks like it's torn on his body a little bit. Hopefully it's nothing too serious and hopefully he's ready to go.

**Q. What does it mean to you to win?**

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: It's definitely incredible to me to beat him. Having match points against him last year was kind of a hurtful feeling. Coming back here this year, I definitely remember that match. Obviously great tennis, but that one really hurt. Happy to get the win this time around.

Yeah, I think someone mentioned it's been like five years since the first time I played and beat him. Definitely great that I was able to do it, especially on clay.

**Q. You beat him the first time you met him in Canada. Today you beat him on clay. Which gave you the biggest satisfaction?**

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: I think both are very satisfying. He's very difficult to beat. I think the first win will always be very special. It was kind of my opening scene onto the tour. Yeah, it was just super special the way it happened in a third set tiebreak being down 3-0 and coming back.

Of course, today is definitely a great, great win for sure as well. Having match points last year against him, not being able to convert. Coming back this year and turning the match around, it's super satisfying to beat the greatest player on clay of all time.

Super happy.

**Q. How hard is it to close out a situation against the greatest player on clay knowing he's not quite right but**



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**you have the opportunity?**

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: For sure. For sure. I think it's extremely difficult, especially against Rafa in particular. You see all these matches that he's come back from match points. I have some experience with that, as well, unfortunately with him. Definitely not easy.

But you gain experience every time you play against these guys. Yeah, I mean, I learned from last year when I had those match points, how to deal with it. 15-40, went back to deuce, played some great points after that.

Yeah, I think the experience was huge for me today.

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