

# Internazionali BNL d'Italia

Tuesday, 9 May 2023

Roma, Italia

## Casper Ruud

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Welcome, Casper. You've been here for a few days. How is the preparation going? You went to the golf, the Italian Open.

CASPER RUUD: It's been great. I've been here since last Thursday. After Madrid I went home for a couple days, but it was a little cold still in Norway, so it was better to come here early and prepare, feel the courts, feel the conditions and all these things. I've been here for quite a bit.

On Sunday I enjoyed, yeah, my time at the Marco Simona Golf Course, watched the Italian Open on the DP World Tour. It was a very fun experience.

Many of you probably know that I love playing and watching golf. Was fun. Was the first time I got to see a professional golf tournament live, so it was a good experience.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. You've got a great record at this event, semifinals twice. What is it that you like so much about playing in Rome?**

CASPER RUUD: I think that coming from Madrid, this tournament, the conditions are quite slow because Madrid is very fast. It sort of feels like you have all the time in the world to play. I think that's something that maybe suits my game a little better. I have more time to set up my shots. I have more time when I'm returning from the back of the court and all these things. I think that can be a reason why it's been going well.

But I think also just it's pretty bouncy here. The weather is nice, not too hot, not too cold. Typically on nice days, sun, 25, 26 degrees. I think the condition suits my game well.

Last year was sort of the turning point of the clay season for me here in Rome. I hope this year, of course, as well that I can have a good result, sort of get a good result in a big tournament this year. That's sort of not been happening so far. Hopefully can turn around here in Rome.



INTERNAZIONALI  
BNL D'ITALIA

BNP PARIBAS

**Q. After Madrid, obviously it's two weeks now, did you like the fact that you had extra time to go home, or would you have preferred to have played another tournament?**

CASPER RUUD: I think for me, when I lost early, it's easy to say I would like to play something last week. I know that the ATP is trying to work on some options for the coming years to see for top players who lose early, if they can have another tournament to play between tournaments because it is, like you said, two weeks in between which can be a little bit long for players just in the middle of the clay season to have two weeks off.

I can only blame myself because I lost early. I would obviously like to do better in Madrid than I did. But if you lose early, you lose your first match in Madrid, it is two full weeks before you play again in Rome, which can be a little long.

At the same time the year is so long anyway, to have a little break, to go home for me was very nice. I hadn't been home very much since February anyway, so it was a nice, nice opportunity to go home a little bit.

We're back here in Rome. It's still three, four more weeks of the clay season. Four, five weeks even. I'm hoping this last sort of stretch of clay tournaments can be giving for me and sort of try to remember from last year what I did well.

**Q. You had an incredible 2022. You were one of the men to beat everywhere. How tough is it to confirm this kind of level? Where are you now in your condition?**

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, it can be difficult. I knew that this year was going to be a big challenge because the things that I did last year is not maybe going to happen every year you play. To reach two Grand Slam finals, obviously the Nitto ATP Finals in the end of the year, it's not something that I expect to do every year. Obviously I'm trying my best.

The thing is, when you've done something before, to reach for example a Grand Slam final, you know that it can happen again because you have been able to do it before, so why not again? I think your expectations are a little bit higher coming into tournaments, which can be dangerous.

**ASAP** sports . . . when all is said, we're done.®

If it doesn't go well, you think, What am I doing wrong? What happened? Last year I was able to do this, why can I not do it this year? It can be a little bit challenging.

I said the main goal this year is just to try to defend some of the tournaments, some points, try to keep myself in the top 10 in the end of the year, is something that will still be my main goal.

It has not been the best start this year. I have a lot of points and tournaments to try to catch up on. But I think it's still many months to go during the year. It's a long year, as we know. Maybe the fact that I didn't play too many matches in the beginning of the year can help me maybe for the rest of the year, that I'm feeling fresh, motivated, ready.

I feel good, like, playing-wise. I've just been losing some matches here and there to players who have been playing really aggressive, really well. Last week in Madrid when I lost to Arnaldi. He said after the match it was the best match of his life.

It's sort of like when players play like this, you have to accept there are so many great players these days that have a big potential. There's so many Italian players who are top 100, top 200 in the world. It's incredible to see how many Italian players are coming up.

Yeah, I feel good, but of course I want to try to do better in the next months.

**Q. What is the challenge of trusting the process, the things that got you to this point, versus making small changes?**

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, it's a good question.

I mean, things will obviously go up and down in one's career. You won't be able to perform at your best every single match you play for the rest of your career.

For me, I've been sort of expecting like a little down period to come at some point in my career. But it's not fun when you're in it. You just want to get out of it and try to find your game, try to find your best level.

It's like I said a little bit earlier: when you've done something in the past, incredible, last year where I reached two Grand Slam finals, and this year I haven't been able to do well in the big tournaments, I'm sort of thinking, What's going on here? I did it last year, so why can't I do it this year?

It shows that I'm able to do it, but have I just sort of stopped in the place with my level and all the players have become better or how is it?

I realized that so many matches during the year, it's decided by a couple of points. The margins are small. Last year maybe went too much in my favor. This year it's been going a little bit opposite direction.

But I'm still doing the right work, practicing hard, motivated. It's a long year, and I still have many years hopefully in my career to try to find my form again.

I'm just going to try to have a good tournament here, maybe get a couple of wins hopefully, and see what can happen now in the nearest future.

**Q. I've been writing a piece on returning deep. What is the challenge of being far back, particularly also in different tournaments where there's different space behind the baseline?**

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, it is. Some courts on tour can be smaller or larger than others, not stadium-wise, but on length behind the baseline. So there are a couple of courts that to me can be a little bit small sometimes.

Just speaking my honesty here, you look at maybe myself or a player like Daniil Medvedev, for example, and last week in Madrid when we played, center court is obviously very big in Madrid, for example, but Court No. 2, if you look at where me and Daniil is returning, we're very close to the line umpire. It can be a little tricky sometimes.

You feel like you can't hit your ball when you have the line umpire and all these things like just half a meter behind you. You feel sort of like a little in a cage kind of way.

Again, it's sort of our own fault because we choose to stay that far back. I think both of us feel when we stay back or when I stay back, I win more points than when I am staying in. That's why we do it. Some players like to stay no matter what.

To me, I like to stay back on the return on clay. I feel like I have more time and try to play a heavy shot. That's something that also exposes you a little bit for players who play serve and volley, which can be tough. People who have a good dropshot maybe on the second shot. You are more exposed in the back.

To me, I feel like in general if I play 100 points returning from back, 100 points returning from in, I will win more returning from back. So that's just sort of my mentality about it.

Here in Rome should be fine. I mean, the courts here are big. They're made for typical clay-court players kind of with how big they are and how deep they are.

I think it should be fine this week.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports