

# Internazionali BNL d'Italia

Saturday, 20 May 2023

Roma, Italia

## Casper Ruud

Press Conference

H. RUNE/C. Ruud

6-7, 6-4, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Tough luck, Casper. What do you think changed a set and 4-2 up?

CASPER RUUD: Oh, good question.

It's tennis, I guess. I mean, I had the lead and felt like the finish line was close, but it wasn't in the end. Holger broke back. I played some poor shots, did a couple of bad mistakes. That's how it goes.

4-All, I'm close to breaking him back. I have a break point. He hits a forehand that just skids barely off the line. If that ball is, I don't know, a centimeter or two centimeters out, it means I can serve for the match. Doesn't mean I will win...

Things weren't maybe going too much in my favor there towards the end. Nothing more to say on this. I can also blame myself that I didn't serve good enough when I had to there.

Yeah, Holger built on that second set and played very aggressively. I played not good enough in the third set.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

### **Q. Do you think the medical timeout was a tactical decision of Holger?**

CASPER RUUD: I would like to think not, but I don't know. It was for the shoulder. I don't know, when I broke him, he didn't serve particularly slow I think. I don't know. It would only be guessing. But I think if you have pain, you have the right to take the physio.

The rule should maybe be discussed a bit I think because there are many cases where someone takes medical timeout and it's before the opponent's serve, which I know a lot of people kind of dislike a little bit because it can interrupt your rhythm and you have to wait when you're about to serve. I don't know if that's something that might



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change in the future.

It's completely allowed to take a medical timeout. It seemed like it helped him a lot. He played very, very well in the second and third set coming back.

Yeah, if there was pain, sure it obviously helped him a lot I think.

### **Q. How difficult is it to finish off points against Holger? Like you, he runs down so many balls. Spectacular points from both of you.**

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, it was a well-played match until maybe the third set. I didn't play too well unfortunately. There were some great rallies. Both of us, we can chase down balls. I think we like to run around on clay. I think Holger plays also very aggressively. But he can run and slide around there and defend as well.

It was some great rallies. I was very happy with the level that we played at for almost two sets. Like I said, third set was unfortunately poorly by me. I'm going to try to sort of erase that from the memory as quick as possible.

There were some great rallies. It was a fun match to play. Also I think I crowd enjoyed it.

### **Q. Obviously you had a great record against him, 4-0. Seems like he's raised his level the past year or so. What level do you think he's at right now? Do you think he's up there with Carlos in terms of being one of the overall threats for Roland Garros?**

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, definitely. I think he plays very fearless, takes the ball early, which is really impressive to do on clay. It's not very typical to sort of do too well on clay because you have some wrong bounces and all these things. He did it really well. A couple times I played heavy, he just went on the rise, hit the clean winner back. I think that's really well done.

I think best-of-five sets, it's a little different. I think to me he's obviously one to look out for and someone who can do really well. I think there are a lot of guys that can.

I think he's probably going to get his best Grand Slam result yet in Roland Garros this year. There are others that

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will want to do the same.

I think he's definitely one to watch out for in Roland Garros, yes.

**Q. Which feelings do you leave with from Rome? I saw you in Madrid, and here for a set and a half you were a completely different player.**

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, good feelings overall. Was a pity today that I wasn't able to sort of close out the match, but that's how it goes. A couple days ago I could have lost in the third round. I mean, I was very happy to be in the semis. Played some good matches, got some good wins.

Hopefully I can build on this further. There are two more tournaments on clay now before grass comes up for me - Geneva and Roland Garros - where last year I have some of the best memories of the year. I hope that I can sort of awaken those memories again and keep building and be strong and fit and ready for Roland Garros.

**Q. It's not about today's match. But Rafa announced that maybe next year is going to be his last year. Can you give us any thoughts on that.**

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, obviously was a lot of speculation whether he was going to play Roland Garros or not, I guess. I'm sure he tried the best that he could to be ready and fit. He's obviously always going to be the favorite if he plays.

I think he was sort of chasing something that was impossible physically. I think he had a lot of pain and sort of decided that I gave all this effort for sort of nothing and not be ready for Roland Garros.

I think it's going to be smart decision to take some months off, like he said. Next year might be the last. Who knows. I hope that he can have a nice finish and end to his career. I'm sure he hopes that, as well.

I mean, it's inevitable that a player, no matter how good and great you are, will at some point end their career. Roger did it last year. Might look like Rafa is one of the next sort of legends to do so.

I think that we will see him around in a year or so here maybe in Rome, Roland Garros maybe. Who knows. I think that's his goal and wish, and I hope that he can fulfill those goals and wishes.

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