

Internazionali BNL d'Italia

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Roma, Italia

Daniil Medvedev

Press Conference

DANIIL MEDVEDEV: Hello, everyone.

THE MODERATOR: Daniil, welcome back to Rome. Just update us on the status after the injury you suffered in Madrid.

DANIIL MEDVEDEV: I'm feeling good now. I had minor injury, I would say. Like, what was it, three days stayed in Madrid, recovered a lot. I came here, hit with the sparrings to control my movement. Today I hit full. The match, even have an extra day tomorrow, so ready to play.

Yeah, normally no risk to do anything like worse to the injury, so I will play and see how it goes.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Speaking about injuries, some top players with injuries on clay court. Is just a coincidence, in your opinion, or more different reason?

DANIIL MEDVEDEV: I think injuries in general, in my opinion, are coincidence unless it's the same injury for everyone.

Like, for my personal body, I know that on clay I have more chances of it's not even getting injured but I would say getting tired. When you get tired, you get more injured.

When I was young, I played more on hard courts. When I play on hard courts, I don't think I get injured that often in my body because everything that I do, I control my movements. On clay, I force everything because I don't know how to slide. Every practice I would slide more and more, but I would force it a little bit.

When you go for the dropshots on hard courts, you block your legs and it's done. Here you have to slide, then come back, et cetera.

For my body, clays is worse. It's always been the case. Many, many times I get injured in Madrid before Rome.

Again, for everyone is different. I think, in my opinion, it's just a coincidence.



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Q. You've talked over the last year about how strange or surreal it's been to be a Rome champion. Does it feel any more surreal to be here as the defending champion?

DANIIL MEDVEDEV: It feels great, to be honest. There's photos of me with the cup, the nice tunnel where they show all the champions, I'm there. Pretty good feeling.

Again, I changed my perspective on clay courts. I play better now in Madrid. I was playing very good. I had good victories. Coming to quarters, it's not even disappointed because what happened can happen, that's sports. That's how it is. In a way I lost the match by getting injured. But it's a pity. I would want to see if I could go far without the injury. It's okay. I have the chance here.

Yeah, as I say, I feel like now on clay courts I can do big results. Not as surprising as last year (smiling).

Q. You mentioned the difference between your movement on hard and clay. What have you done in terms of your movement to make it feel more comfortable? What kind of drills do you do in training?

DANIIL MEDVEDEV: I would say practice and experience. Two, three years ago, when I would slide, when I would hit a shot, I would always kind of doubt myself if I've done the right thing, where now I kind of know what I have to do. I just try to do it. If it doesn't work, I'm like, Okay, I try to do better next time.

In practice now we can practice more precisely things we want, where before it was the same: Let's practice this, kind of let's see if it works.

Last year we kind of found the right exercises, the right movements. We just continued it this year. Again, it's working great. Yeah, I'm happy.

Q. When you play in a tournament you have won the year before, do you feel more pressure?

DANIIL MEDVEDEV: I think I should maybe, I don't know, feel more pressure. Normally, no. But I never defended a title anywhere. Maybe I should feel scared or pressure



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(smiling).

Normally, no. When I was young someone told me - I find it very good advice - that you cannot defend points. A new year is always a new year. You continue winning points.

Now I'm second in the race. I feel great about it. I want to go better. So even when I lose the thousand points, actually I will probably stay No. 4. By this year's ranking, I'm still No. 2. If I continue to play good, in the end of the season I can maybe become No. 2 or 3, whatever.

I don't feel pressure at all. Like, I'm feeling only happy that I won here last year, and I want to do well this year. But maybe it's not the right approach. Maybe I should change it, I don't know (smiling).

For the moment, I don't want to change it. I like being relaxed. Let's see. Maybe one moment I will have to be more stressed.

Q. It was mentioned that some players are missing from the tournament, but one who isn't is Novak Djokovic. How good a clay court player do you think he is? Do you think it's almost been lost how good he is on clay because of how dominant Rafa is?

DANIIL MEDVEDEV: Well, for sure. When we have Rafa in the same generation winning 14 Roland Garros, I don't know, 10 Rome, I don't even remember the exact number, it's tough to find anyone close to his legacy on clay.

But Novak, he's amazing on all the surfaces. Maybe because of Rafa on clay, he has a bit less titles than he could have had. It works the same for Rafa. If there would not be Novak on the hard and grass, maybe Rafa would have more titles there.

Yeah, he's an amazing player on every surface.

I do think in his game, grass court and hard court is, like, his game is more suited for these surfaces. That's where I find Novak amazing. Even if my opinion from the side is that on clay his game might have been a bit more vulnerable. He still wins three Roland Garros, I think Monte-Carlo two times, Rome maybe three or four. It's amazing. That's why Novak is definitely one of the best sportsmen in the world.

Q. Do you see yourself as a favorite of the tournament because you won last year? If not, who can be the favorite this year?

DANIIL MEDVEDEV: Well, I think Novak definitely. He's No. 1 seed. I think I'm there. Again, in Monte-Carlo I just

had two matches. In Madrid, I managed to go to quarters, was feeling good.

It's never easy after injury to get back straightaway to the good level. First match is going to be very important to see where I am. I think if I play good the first match, then I can be in the favorites, yeah.

Thank you.

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