

Internazionali BNL d'Italia

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Naomi Osaka

Press Conference



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N. OSAKA/M. Kostyuk

6-3, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Naomi, a big win against a top-20 player. Your thoughts on the match...

NAOMI OSAKA: Yeah, I mean, I thought I played really well. I came out with a lot of intentions, and I think I executed them. I'm really happy.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Through the first set, it seemed like you were kind of trying to get your bearings maybe in terms of her game or the court conditions, whatever, then opened it up. Is that kind of how you felt that match went?

NAOMI OSAKA: Yeah, definitely. I feel like I was trying to learn a lot about my opponent in the first couple of games, but then also I tried to remind myself that I need to focus on what I'm doing and my side of the net.

Yeah, that was a pretty good analysis (smiling).

Q. How happy are you with the way you did that in these conditions? Obviously it's heavy, slow with the rain. How happy were you with how you handled that?

NAOMI OSAKA: Yeah, I think this match is apparently a lot of firsts for me, so I'm very happy about that. I was pretty nervous coming back after the rain delay, just knowing that I really want to capitalize on that break point. Excited that I was able to do that.

Overall, if I had to give myself a rating, I'd say that I can see a lot of progress from my last match to now.

Q. In terms of finding balance or harmony in terms of not just your tennis but coming back, off court balancing everything, what has that journey been like for you? Do you find it bleeds over, like from the off court to the on court, vice versa? Where do you feel you are in that quest for balance in your game at the moment?

NAOMI OSAKA: Yeah, I mean, I think honestly I don't know why, but today I just woke up very peaceful. I just feel like, I don't know, no matter what happens on the court, nothing will change for me off the court. Like, my daughter will still love me. I have so many people around me, so...

Yeah, I think maybe that showed today. I hope that mentality stays and continues.

I don't know. I'm just really excited to learn more about clay court and develop and go to Paris. Shai is coming to Paris, so that's something that's keeping me very, I don't know, happy.

Q. How difficult is it during a rain delay to keep the focus, especially if you're probably going up a double break, you're in a good position? Secondly, was this maybe the best match you played this year?

NAOMI OSAKA: I think normally it would have been difficult for me to keep focused, but I was just reading my notes and stuff. I think it kind of kept my head very locked in the game.

In terms of performance, I would say it's one of my top two matches. I can't tell if my Svitolina match was better. But I think in terms of execution I really came out here with a plan today and I was able to do well. On top of it, it's clay court, which isn't my most result-wise best surface.

Yeah, the fact that you're asking that question means I did a good job (smiling).

Q. You talked about reading the affirmations from the notebook. More broadly, do you write, keep a diary, or is it just about the affirmations?

NAOMI OSAKA: No, it's a little bit of everything. I think just more how I'm feeling that day, what I want to achieve, what I want to believe in kind of thing.

Q. We're seeing players with bigger entourages, more people in their teams. Sometimes you have a core group of people, other times there are more. How different are those dynamics when you have a small amount of people around you versus when there are a



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lot? Is it possible for there to be too many people in your team?

NAOMI OSAKA: I think maybe I do have a bigger team than most people. I don't know. I think what works for everyone is different.

I was looking at Rybakina, and she travels so light for a top-three seed. But I travel with a hitter. I think some things are a little different.

How many people do I travel with? Four? Four isn't bad, right? It's light for me (laughter).

Yeah, I really do think it depends. Obviously slams, Stu is there and stuff. It depends on the tournament.

Q. After Madrid, where did you go for training and what did that effectively training block focus on before Rome?

NAOMI OSAKA: So I went to Mallorca. Honestly, I did a really solid block of just focusing on what I want my clay court tennis to look like. I watched some videos. I watched Rafa. I watched Alcaraz. I watched Rublev actually which is very inspiring because he's smacking the ball.

I kind of thought to myself, like, I don't want to have regrets when I leave the court. In Madrid I did kind of have regrets of not swinging fully. Focusing on that a lot, yeah.

Q. How much time do you spend with your team? Is there ever any time when you just need space from them and need to not be around them so much?

NAOMI OSAKA: It's weird 'cause I think I spend a lot of time with my team. Like, almost every time I leave the hotel is probably with them. I actually enjoy being around them. It doesn't make me feel like I'm being suffocated or anything like that.

Usually for me, like, for example, Simone will go to the bookstore and things like that. It's pretty peaceful, so...

I don't know. Just the clay season now, so maybe during US Open time I might tell you a different answer.

Q. Looking ahead, a familiar opponent but weirdly you haven't played since Indian Wells, Daria Kasatkina. You'll play another top player who is having a very good season.

NAOMI OSAKA: Did she play today?

Q. She did. She won earlier.

NAOMI OSAKA: Did you ask her about me, too?

Q. Maybe (smiling). In terms of facing her, what is the energy going into that match and what do you think the challenge will be on clay facing her instead of Indian Wells?

NAOMI OSAKA: I think she's my first top-10 player I'm playing this year, no? Am I crazy? She's 10, c'mon (laughter).

Yeah, honestly, like, I think I've said this before, but she smacked me in Madrid real bad. It was actually embarrassing. I felt like I had to apologize to her after that practice.

But I'm going into this match knowing that she has way more experience than me on clay. I feel like I'm still a baby giraffe, like I'm trying to learn my steps. I'm just extremely humble. I want to learn from the match I played today and hopefully apply that.

I know she's an amazing player. She does really well. She moves really well. Overall I'm just really excited. She's so nice and her brother is really kind, too, so...

Thank you. Thank you.

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