

Internazionali BNL d'Italia

Tuesday, 6 May 2025

Roma, Italia

Madison Keys

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Welcome to Rome. How are you feeling ahead of the tournament start?

MADISON KEYS: Really excited to play here in Rome. I have some amazing memories here and always enjoy being here. Happy to be back.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Maddie, as great as you've been playing in Madrid, is it at all kind of satisfying to come here and not feel the ball flying, feel like you have time on the ball?

MADISON KEYS: I always feel coming back to sea level feels pretty good. You don't have those balls that are kind of just taking off out of nowhere.

So yeah, definitely always feel really comfortable. I'm glad it's this way versus the other way (smiling).

Q. What do you think the feeling is going to be, I hate to look ahead already, but coming into Paris as a Grand Slam champion for the first time going to another major?

MADISON KEYS: I haven't really gotten that far. I mean, to be completely honest, it will probably feel the same as going into any other Grand Slam.

Q. How do you feel like your game has evolved for the clay versus in past years? What's the adjustment like for you? Is there a process that it goes through where you get used to it more and more as the clay season goes on or is it flipping a switch?

MADISON KEYS: I think it took me a few years to kind of figure out how much of my game I wanted to kind of tweak for the surface. I think some years I probably played a little bit too passive and tried to become a clay-courter. Then in other years I tried to be as aggressive as I would on a hard court.

I feel like the past couple years I've kind of found that happy medium of how I want to mostly play my game with just minor tweaks.



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I mean, I feel like it's one of those surfaces where it's similar to everything else: the more matches you get, the more comfortable you feel.

Q. Picking up on that point earlier, given how long you've been on tour and wanting to win that slam, are you surprised to not feel that different now that you finally achieved something that you've wanted for so long?

MADISON KEYS: A little bit. I mean, like it's the first time that I know I no longer have that as my main goal. I think there's kind of some personal things where you kind of start shifting your perspective a little bit. In that case it's different.

But I think at the same time the reality is you've just won another tournament. Yes, it's the biggest one. But at the end of the day I think you'll hear all of us say you win the one and you're not really satisfied and you want to go win another one.

In that way it's kind of, Okay, that was great and fun, but kind of want to worry about the next one and try to get another one.

Q. What do you think about players, they go out from the tour, come back after to have a baby, a mother they come back? Yourself, too, do you see yourself going out and then coming back like a mother? You have a situation like your coach is your husband. All these things together do you think means the husbands of this generation are better than in the past?

MADISON KEYS: I think it's amazing that there's so many moms on tour. I think it's showing how resilient women are. I think the support of the tour is incredible, that there's been so many opportunities for so many of the women to start a family and come back and still have the sport.

I don't know if that's going to be me. I haven't gotten that far yet (smiling). We'll see one day and then I'll have a better answer for you.

I mean, I think I've obviously really enjoyed having Bjorn be my coach the past couple of years. It definitely wasn't something that we were planning. It's nice to actually see



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your husband every day, so that's a bonus.

Q. A question about generations in tennis. For you, all the players born in 1995. You're going to turn 30 this year and have very different careers. Is it something that over the years you've kept an eye on, felt a kinship with Krejčíková or Jen Brady, the rivalry, or kept an eye on them because they're your age?

MADISON KEYS: I don't think that I've ever really thought that much. I mean, Jennie I've known just because we were the same age group growing up in juniors. I think the first time we ever played each other, we were 10. So we've known each other for a long time.

I think it's more just to do with the fact that we train together and have been together for so long, that we're as close as we are.

I think more so it's just kind of the group I guess at the time girls that are now women that I kind of grew up with. I think it was a much broader age group and birth years. I think it's more so just recognizing all the people that I played juniors with that made it to the pros.

Q. Back to the point about developing the game on clay. Have the conditions changed at all in the last few years either with balls or courts that have pushed you in one direction versus the other? Is that something you've had to adjust for? Some other players have talked about it. Maybe it's too much to think about and you just have to play your own game.

MADISON KEYS: I think this surface is the most noticeable as far as weather conditions. I think Madrid obviously plays much faster, especially when it's warmer. But here, if it's sunny, it's pretty bouncy. If it's rainy and cold, it plays a lot more dead.

I think it's more so, at least in my opinion, the conditions that you're playing in. I think for the most part the courts are playing similarly. Balls I think can be different. Some play faster, some play slower. I think it's much more to do with the actual weather conditions.

Q. Over the years of seeing how players sometimes struggle when facing an injured opponent, even though the opponent is hampered, it can get in your head and be difficult that way. What is your experience with that? How tough is that? Have you ever had a match where that really kind of affected you, you weren't able to play freely?

MADISON KEYS: I can't remember an exact experience, but it's for sure happened. If you kind of know someone is

dealing with something or maybe it's like every time they start walking towards the net, you're like, Are we done? Did I win?

I think it's hard because you have to focus so much more on your side of the net. I think on the other side, sometimes when you're injured, you kind of just go for everything and anything. Sometimes they land in, so you play a little bit freer.

It's a tricky situation.

Q. In terms of electronic line calling on clay, is it something that you like? Do you think it should be streamlined to include the French Open as well?

MADISON KEYS: I don't know (smiling). I have mixed feelings on it. I think it's great in some ways because it takes kind of the arguing out of it. You don't have the chair coming down and you're arguing over what's touching, what's not.

I also know that electronic line calling has a margin for error. I think it gets a little bit tricky when you're staring at a mark that's clearly out, but the board is saying that it's touching.

So I don't know. I don't know where I stand on it quite yet. I do think it's nice that you kind of have to keep going and playing, and there's no room for arguing.

Q. Do you agree that today there are many players that can win at the beginning of a tournament, maybe 20 or more? How can you explain this which the level is growing up all the time or is this type of game which means that? Maybe more physical, so it's more the technique?

MADISON KEYS: I think there's definitely a lot of players... It's happening on both tours now more and more, where you can think that there's, like you said, 20 different people that you wouldn't be surprised if they end up winning the tournament.

I think part of it is because we've kind of lost some of our legends obviously. Like there's no longer Serena Williams in every draw where you just assume she's going to win. On the men's side you don't have Roger, Rafa and Novak every single week.

But I also think the base level has gotten much higher. I think the margin for error has gotten smaller. I think you're kind of seeing that with some of the wins and the losses just because it's so much closer, where if they're both playing well, you're going to have a great match. It could

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be two points that's different.

I think just overall everyone has just gotten so much better.
The game has become so much more physical. I think everyone's doing such a great job at investing in their own careers and having the physios and the fitness and all that.
I think more and more people are getting faster and stronger while also staying healthy for longer.

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