

Internazionali BNL d'Italia

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Roma, Italia

Casper Ruud

Press Conference

C. RUUD/L. Darder

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THE MODERATOR: Questions for Casper.

Q. There is a possibility that you face Jannik in the final. He's winning the first set easily. If it's him, you played against him last year here in Rome, what are you going to do maybe differently from last year's match?

CASPER RUUD: Well, I just have to try to approach it as any other match, try not to think about the big wave in front kind of with all the momentum he's building, all the confidence and the records that he's kind of building and breaking.

At the end of the day he's human. I have to try to think that way as much as I can. Last year I was kind of blown out of the court by him. We will both remember it, of course. I hope that's not the case.

I will just try to stay in my lane, stay focused on the things I'm doing well, know that against him you have to not raise your level but two or three times in order to hang with him. That's the goal I will think about for tomorrow in practice and the match.

Q. Earlier this week you mentioned you thought you were a better player than a couple years ago, but other players had better curves than you.

CASPER RUUD: Yeah.

Q. I'm curious, is that ever a difficult thing to accept? My perception is you're a hard worker, doing everything you can to improve.

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, sometimes. Sometimes you have to look at yourself in the mirror and realize it wasn't maybe meant to be in some matches that you lose or seeing how there was sort of some openings for someone to kind of take over the throne after the big three when they seemed towards the end of their domination. Obviously Novak is



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still around, still has a chance in my eyes to win the biggest titles when he's on.

I was one of the players that kind of entered my name into the discussion for a few years. I was not able to follow up. I was over- and outplayed by others. Then you have Jannik and Carlos who have become sort of the unicorns that they have become.

At times I can be at home and wish that it was me and not them. At the same time I'm realistic in thinking that they have something special in them. They also work very, very hard. It's not just because they're talented or this or that that they're so good, they also work very hard.

Their curve has been far better than mine in the last years. Has it been frustrating? A bit. But you cannot think too much about the other players. You have to stay in your own lane in this sport, try to focus on yourself as much as you can.

It's an individual sport after all. Comparing yourself to other players I think is the biggest mistake you can do. You have to trust yourself, you gut, and trust the things you're doing are right.

Yeah, I realize I will not probably break any huge records in this sport, but I can do as well as I can along my journey and along my career.

Q. Which part of your game has improved the most in this tournament, in your opinion?

CASPER RUUD: My game?

Q. Yes.

CASPER RUUD: Not sure. I mean, it's only been two weeks since last tournament in Madrid. Only so much you can improve in just a matter of few days.

My forehand seemed to be causing problems for the opponent. I think I'm playing pretty solid from my backhand side. In Madrid when I lost to Blockx, I was a little bit all over the place with the forehand and was not creating any problems from my backhand corner.

Here in Rome I've been returning really well and setting up

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the points really well after that. I'm happy with how I'm feeling on court.

It's sort of easier to hit more full swings when you're in Rome than in Madrid because the ball doesn't fly as much. You feel like it goes down and in. It's a good feeling obviously. I think return and baseline game is even better than what it was in Madrid, yeah.

Q. Not the first time you played this good in Rome. I would like to know for the final, in which kind of aspects do you find really well here? The conditions, the atmosphere, shots? What are the things that you could use to try to win?

CASPER RUUD: Well, I came here early. I think I came here on Saturday two weeks ago to prepare and get ready. Obviously these two tournaments back to back are quite long because they're played over the total amount of a month or four weeks. We know that now.

Honestly the first days I was not feeling the ball great. I was feeling quite tired because the rallies here are a bit different than in Madrid. In Madrid you get much more free points with your serve. The big servers really can take use of that. But here you have to build and play more points.

I was thinking if I feel a bit tired or feel these conditions, the opponent probably feels the same. So we are all in the same situation.

I got off to a good start in the tournament and built some confidence from there. I think the match with Lehecka that I won in third round was building momentum and confidence for me. From there I've been trying to focus on the things that went well there and keep it going, improve even more if I can.

Every day I felt a bit better and better. The couple of sets against Khachanov and today are some of the best I felt on court in a long time. So that's a good feeling.

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