

# BNP Paribas Open

Sunday, October 10, 2021

## Matteo Berrettini

Press Conference



M. BERRETTINI/A. Tabilo

6-4, 7-5

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. I heard you say on court that it kind of made you feel a bit young that this was the first main-draw match win that you have had. I'm curious, because this tournament is kind of giving us that perspective, because it's been two-and-a-half years since it's been played, how do you feel your progress has been in the last two years? Is it weird for you because there was a pandemic and different things? Does it feel fast? Does it feel slow? How does it feel in your mind?**

MATTEO BERRETTINI: I mean, definitely the conditions are different, because normally we play in March and it's way cooler than now. Today was pretty hot but nothing crazy. It's pretty dry, so it's fine.

The conditions are desert, so the air is pretty dry. The ball is flying sometimes but the ball is so slow, courts are pretty slow, so it's a little bit tricky at the beginning, but then you get used to it. It's fine.

I feel good. Sometimes the first matches are the most tricky one, but I'm happy for today.

**Q. Overall, where would you say your level of tennis is at the moment?**

MATTEO BERRETTINI: It's always a tough question to answer, because I feel good. I think overall in the whole season, I played like really good tennis. The level was really high.

Sometimes also it's about the opponent. You know, there are some opponents that they don't make you feel comfortable, they don't make you feel good. I know I can play better than this, but the same time I can play worse than this.

Today it wasn't easy. I struggled the past days with my body, so I knew that I wouldn't -- I told myself to not expect

like the best performance, but I'm pretty sure that when the level is going to be higher I'm going to be ready.

**Q. A lot of people are mentioning the court is almost playing more like playing on clay. What's your assessment of that? Is it feeling more like a clay-rhythm match?**

MATTEO BERRETTINI: I mean, I think clay is really different, but I get what they are saying. It's pretty rough. I think also the balls are, they get really used to -- like after a couple of games, they get really big. I think if you put like the Wilson balls that were in the US Open it would be a different game, but I think overall the past years, Indian Wells and Miami were a little bit slower than, for example, Cincinnati and Toronto or Montreal.

So I think these are the normal conditions that I always found here, and, yeah, it's just warmer.

**Q. You have obviously been to the ATP Finals before, but I'm curious with it being on home soil for you, how big of a drive and a motivation is it for you at the moment to qualify for Turin and make it?**

MATTEO BERRETTINI: Yeah, I mean, it's probably one of the biggest achievement that I can think about in the last part of the season. It's going to be this, obviously the tournament I'm playing in now. There are a couple of big tournaments I'm going to play, and then the season is going to be done.

So it would be like a really nice thing to end the year. I didn't expect when I started the year, I wanted to get there, but I didn't expect that I would fight for that. I wanted to fight for that, but now I'm in a good position. I know it's not done yet. I know there is still some matches to win, still like some time to wait a little bit.

But for me it would be great. It would be great because I have been in London and I know how great it is, it was, and I think having it in Italy would be great for me, for the crowd, for the fans, for the tennis in general. It would be just a great achievement. Really looking forward to play there hopefully.

**Q. With Jannik making a push, as well, I wonder what it would mean to have two Italians there.**

MATTEO BERRETTINI: I think it would mean a lot for everybody, for Jannik, as well. He's so young and already fighting for that. It's crazy. We know we are playing for that.

I think for the fans in general, it's also nice, because we are two different kind of players, you know. So it's also that. I think overall it's just showing the Italian tennis, it's really healthy and a lot of players are coming up. A lot of players are still playing good, so we deserve to have the Finals, I think. We deserve to have like a 1000 and all of the tournaments that we have, and hopefully we are going to have even more.

**Q. I think it was yesterday I was speaking to Ajla, and what she was saying is she tends to get very hard on herself when she's playing matches, and that adds to the pressure, and that she's also working with a psychologist to try and get her over that. She said it's been proving successful. Do you tend to get very hard on yourself when you're playing and the expectations that you have of yourself?**

MATTEO BERRETTINI: I know her, and I think I know how much she's tough on herself. I told her -- I mean, I'm always telling her that she has to kind of tell herself that she achieved a lot during her career, and she has to enjoy what she's doing, because it's nothing -- I mean, the fact that she did quarterfinals in Wimby, third round in US Open, it's not something that it's normal because she never did it, and I think it's important for a player to recognize that, to feel good about it. Because there is a lot of work behind the scenes, a lot of moments where she was struggling. I was struggling, too. Like it's normal. It's part of the game.

So I think it's good to feel bad in the bad moments, but I think it's worth it to feel good when the things are going well. So that's what I'm telling her.

The expectations were different, because her, at 17, 18, 19, she was really, really good, and 19 I think she was already in 100. At 19 I didn't have any ATP points. So different career, different perspectives.

So I grew up with more calm, and I didn't see like in my career such a big jump like I did, and I was working for it but I didn't know it would happen. Sometimes when you put too much pressure it can happen, and you're, I don't know, you're thinking too much, you know. This sport sometimes you don't have to think too much.

But I think what she's doing is great. She's close to her best ranking. She's working hard. She is a competitor. She's competitive. She really likes to play. I really think that she's gonna get even better.

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