

July 10, 2023

Padel conquers Foro Italico Centre Court: for Cattaneo and Di Giovanni, a fairytale debut

On Monday, July 10th, history books were updated. After tennis, volleyball, beach volleyball and boxing, padel entered the list of sports that 'conquered' the **Foro Italico's** Centre Court. And it was immediately a debut with a bang. From the red clay for the May final between tennis stars Medvedev and Rune, we moved on to the carpet and the glass at the **BNL Italy Major Premier Padel**: the Italian pair **Lorenzo Di Giovanni** and **Denny Cattaneo** made the most of the wild card granted to them by the organizers and the chance to 'christen' the temple usually dedicated to the Internazionali d'Italia tennis tournament, overcoming with a convincing 6-4 6-4 the French duo **Maxime Moreau** and **Jerome Inzerillo**, who came from the qualifiers.

The two Italian players, despite only pairing up since the beginning of this year, showed great chemistry and ignited the audience with their play. **Cattaneo**, in particular, confirmed himself as the man of firsts: in 2022 (with **Riccardo Sinicropi**) he had won the first match of an Italian pair in a major tournament in Rome. *"It was an unspeakable emotion, playing on a court like this was a dream we both had as children"*, the 33-year-old Cattaneo said, *"We knew we had a great opportunity against one of the best pairs in France, the match was a bit broken by tension but we are happy to have brought it home"*.

"In these conditions - opening the schedule on the Centre Court in a tournament like this, which for us Italians symbolizes home and history - the tension was a lot", admits 36-year-old **Di Giovanni**, for everyone 'Digio', *"But I have to say I'm really happy the way we handled it, we played well in the important moments getting the break when we had to. It means being there mentally, being on the ball"*.

On Wednesday, in the Round of 16, Cattaneo and Di Giovanni will have the honor of facing the pair composed by **Federico Chingotto** and **Paquito Navarro**, the No. 3 seed in the Roman tournament. The Spaniard himself is an idol at Foro Italico, where the fans last year could not stop singing "Paquito is on fire" to the notes of the famous Gala hit. *"Of the top players in the world, Paquito Navarro is the only one I've played against and this will be the third time I'll face him"*, Di Giovanni says, *"I challenged him with the Italian national team, finding him again has a special meaning: both he and Chingotto are two extraordinary players...we have to have fun and then what happens, happens"*.

Cattaneo makes an appeal to the Roma fans. *"The important thing is that the audience instead of 'Paquito is on fire' shouts 'Digio is on fire'", he smiles, "Today he really was".* He will try to be again on Wednesday.

About the International Padel Federation (FIP)

About the International Padel Federation (FIP) The International Padel Federation (FIP) is the world governing body of padel, whose goal is to promote all forms of padel worldwide with: 90 Countries, 64 National Federations, + 25 million active players and 500,000 Federated Players. The sport was created in Acapulco, Mexico, by Enrique Corcuera in 1969. It was 32 years later that the FIP was established in Madrid by the legal representatives of the Argentine Padel Association, the Spanish Padel Association and the Uruguayan Padel Association, by means of Public deeds signed before the Notary Mr. Javier Gaspar Alfaro, with the protocol number 2486. We want to bring the worldwide Padel family together into one community, and make Padel a sport that is recognised and played in all the countries of the World. www.padelfip.com

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