



Italian Open Rome 2026 Preview: Sinner Hunts Career Golden Masters As Djokovic Returns

Description

The **Italian Open Rome 2026** begins this week at the Foro Italico, and the storyline is impossible to ignore: world No. 1 Jannik Sinner returns home to chase the one Masters 1000 title still missing from his collection, with Novak Djokovic ending a two-month layoff to stand in his way. The Internazionali BNL d'Alitalia runs from 5 to 17 May 2026, with main-draw men's action getting underway on 6 May.

Why the Italian Open Rome 2026 matters more than ever

For Sinner, this is the trophy that completes the puzzle. The 24-year-old already owns Masters 1000 titles in Toronto, Cincinnati, Shanghai, Indian Wells, Miami, Madrid, Paris and Monte-Carlo. A Rome triumph would crown the Career Golden Masters — joining Djokovic as the only men ever to win every Masters 1000 event at least once. Sinner is also riding a streak of five straight Masters titles since the United Cup in January, a record nobody had ever held before he beat Alexander Zverev to lift the Madrid trophy on 3 May.

Italy has not produced a men's champion at the Internazionali since Adriano Panatta in 1976. Half a century is an awfully long time for a tournament that is unmistakably Italy's grandest annual stop. The pressure is enormous, the desire greater still. "Playing in Rome is special, the energy is different here," Sinner told tournament organisers earlier this week.



Source: Jannik Sinner official website (janniksinner.com)

The Italian Open Rome 2026 draw and Sinner's path

As top seed, Sinner has a first-round bye and opens against either Sebastian Ofner or Alex Michelsen on 8 or 9 May. His section is loaded: Felix Auger-Aliassime, Ben Shelton and Daniil Medvedev are all in the same half, and an explosive Italian quarter-final against Matteo Berrettini looms in round three if

both make it that far.

The bottom half is even more intriguing. Second seed Alexander Zverev, beaten by Sinner in the Madrid final, will be desperate to rebound on European clay. He shares a half with Djokovic, who has not played since a fourth-round exit at Indian Wells in March and arrives needing matches before Roland-Garros. The 38-year-old Serb is still chasing what would be his historic 25th major next month, and Rome is the pre-tournament base camp.

Lorenzo Musetti, fresh off a deep Madrid run, is seeded inside the top eight and could face Djokovic in the quarter-finals. Tournament director Paolo Lorenzi has spoken openly about the prize money – €8,235,540 across the men’s draw – and the prestige of the Foro Italico, which has been comprehensively upgraded for this 83rd edition.

The other Italians at the Italian Open Rome 2026

Twelve Italian men have made the singles draw, the deepest home contingent in years. Beyond Sinner, Musetti and Berrettini, watch out for Flavio Cobolli, Lorenzo Sonogo, Luciano Darderi and 17-year-old prodigy Federico Cina, who is making his Masters 1000 debut on a wildcard. The atmosphere in the Foro’s Pietrangeli court – built into pine trees and lined with marble statues – will be febrile from Tuesday onwards as the locals start their campaigns.

The Italian Open Rome 2026 is a Mecca for clay-court tennis, ATP Chairman Andrea Gaudenzi said on a stadium tour with Italian President Sergio Mattarella this week. It’s also the bridge to Roland-Garros. That bridge matters enormously for ranking points and momentum: the next two weeks shape who arrives in Paris with belief.



Source: Jannik Sinner official website (janniksinner.com)

Notable absentees

Carlos Alcaraz, the defending champion, has withdrawn citing a leg issue picked up after his Madrid semi-final exit. The Spaniard's absence reshapes the draw and effectively hands Sinner an even clearer path to a fourth straight Masters 1000 final, but the world No. 2 has stressed his focus is on

being fit for Roland-Garros. Casper Ruud, another expected contender, has opted to skip Rome to manage workload after a long claycourt swing.

WTA action overlaps neatly with the men's draw, and home favourite Jasmine Paolini defends her 2025 title against a stacked field that includes Coco Gauff, Aryna Sabalenka and Iga Swiatek. The double-event format is part of what makes Rome unique – fans can move between courts and watch a full day of top-level tennis from morning to late evening.

How Singapore fans can follow

For Singapore viewers, matches air through subscription tennis channels and tournament streaming, with central court evening sessions starting around 1am SGT on most days. The schedule is friendlier than late-night football, and the draw has been crafted to push the biggest names onto Pietrangeli or Centrale in prime time. If you have followed the build-up to the [KFF Singapore Badminton Open later this month](#), the Italian Open is its tennis counterpart in scale.

Local clubs at the Singapore Tennis Association have organised early-morning watch parties on selected weekends, and Sinner's travelling support group from South Tyrol – including his coaching team led by Darren Cahill and Simone Vagnozzi – is again setting up at the Foro for the duration. After last week's [F1 Miami Grand Prix drama](#), sport's calendar barely takes a breath.

Verdict on the Italian Open Rome 2026

Sinner is the obvious favourite, but Rome has a way of springing surprises and Djokovic is exactly the kind of competitor who shows up sharp on a clay return. Musetti is a serious threat with home support, and Zverev's fitness is finally near where it needs to be. Anything other than a Sinner-Djokovic semi-final would be a minor shock – but tennis seasons turn on minor shocks, and the next two weeks are where the entire clay-court summer takes shape.

Get the full schedule, results and highlights via our [Little Big Red Dot Sports section](#) as the Italian Open Rome 2026 unfolds at the Foro Italico.

Date Created

05/05/2026

Author

jadeyeo