

Davis Cup Finals

Friday, 26 November 2021

Team Great Britain

Cameron Norrie

Daniel Evans

Joseph Salisbury

Neal Skupski

Liam Broady

Leon Smith

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Leon, I think this is the first tie since in Coventry in 2013 that you haven't had a Murray brother on the team. You've been captain for a while. Is that slightly strange? How good is it now compared to when you started as captain that you can call in a lot of very good other players to step up when they're not there?

LEON SMITH: Yeah, I didn't realize it was the first time since Coventry, which I guess was like 2013 or something like that.

Yeah, obviously both Andy and Jamie have been a mainstay in the team for a long time because they've been at the top of the game for a very long time. They would have deserved to be in those teams obviously. They played a big part obviously the year we won it, as well.

But I think what's really pleasing is you look at the group of guys we've got here, the rankings, they're all at career-high rankings, all operating at a really high level. They deserve to be here. I'm linking it to your second question.

I have fond memories from 2010, the first title. Yeah, it was very different. If Andy wasn't playing, the rankings were not inside 100, maybe not even inside 200 of who else you're picking. Now you look at the group of players, yeah, it's a privilege to be able to select this group moving forward.

I'm excited to be around them. They've got a lot of years left, as well, which is really important.



Q. For anybody, how difficult is it to go back to playing without crowds again this week? What are the conditions generally? Are there any concerns about this event might not get finished with positive tests in Madrid?

LIAM BROADY: Sorry, can you ask it again?

Q. How difficult is it going back to competition without the crowd?

LIAM BROADY: Yeah, I think we're all pretty gutted finding out before we got here that Austria was going back into lockdown and weren't going to have any fans in the stadium. Obviously the center court here is pretty amazing. There's plenty of seats in the stadium.

Yeah, I mean, like I said, we're all pretty gutted that there's not going to be anyone in here. Obviously it helps a little bit that it's Davis Cup instead of a regular tournament. We've got a good team, a very vocal team on the side. Hopefully we'll be able to fill it with some sort of atmosphere.

As everyone knows, we've got some of the most passionate fans in the world of tennis, so they'll be sorely missed and hopefully we can see them in Madrid.

Q. Cam and Dan, you both have had an extremely busy, long season, played a lot of matches. How much do you feel you have left in the tank at this point?

CAMERON NORRIE: Yeah, obviously it's been a long year for all of us. We played a lot of matches. I think it's great to end the year like this as a team. We're all very tight, we've had a great week so far of practice, a lot of games. We've been really enjoying ourselves.

It's great to come together as a team. I feel refreshed. I feel ready to compete. No better way to finish the year, to play for your country, play as a team. I had a good training week so far. We're really looking forward to playing.

I think the biggest thing is just staying fresh. We've all played a lot of matches, so we're all ready to compete and looking forward to getting out there.

DANIEL EVANS: Pretty much what Cam said.



I think before we come, Leon made it clear to us it wouldn't be a stressful lead-up, it would be a lot of fun. I think that's why the backroom staff are who they are because they've made that pretty clear from the day we got here, that we'd have a lot of fun and still be professional but keep the sessions nice and short and sharp.

I feel fresh. Can't talk for everybody else. It's definitely felt good for me. I just say thanks to those guys for making that happen and giving us the best chance for us to go out tomorrow and hopefully the coming days and doing well.

Q. Leon, you were talking the other day about the future of the competition, how you hope the players and captains would have more of a say. It's come out since it could be the Middle East. Anything to say about that? Seems like it would be going away even further from what a lot of people think Davis Cup should stand for.

LEON SMITH: Yeah, what do I think? What I was saying the other day, when all is said and done, look, I'm biased, this has been a huge part of what I've gone through in the last decade. A lot of players here have either grown up around it, played in it, being part of it. Everyone loves playing. Cam just mentioned playing for the country, being part of a team.

No matter what we think, we just want this competition to be the best it can be. I don't know what that looks like or what may happen in the future, but we love this.

You love it more when it feels like a big event, it feels like a big deal, it's in front of a lot of fans. What happened here, that's no one's fault. It's what we're going through. I think whatever happens in the future, to see an event grow, be something really special, like I said, I think there's a lot of really good people in the ITF, Kosmos, that are trying really, really hard. I've picked up on the rumors. We've seen it covered as well where it goes to Abu Dhabi.

We don't have all the information of what happens in the lead-up, how it's going to look, what the format of the competition is. Until we get all of the information around what that might look like, then definitely offer up more of an opinion. Until we get all that, we can't really tell.

We just want it to be as good of an event as it possibly can be.

Q. Dan, Davis Cup has been part of your life for a really long time. How important is it for the future that crowds are central to it?

DANIEL EVANS: Yeah, like Leon said, we can't help this week. Crowds are obviously essential for Davis Cup, but doesn't make much of a difference for us. We're still representing our country. We're playing with passion. Obviously we want the biggest crowds possible, but two years ago we didn't have the biggest crowd for us that we've had, but it was an amazing event. We did well. We had a very partisan crowd in the semifinal.

If I'm totally honest, it's probably the best atmosphere I've been involved on a tennis court, that last doubles in Madrid. Obviously we want it, like Leon said, to be the best version it can be. However that looks, we don't know. It needs to be ran by everybody, and everybody needs a bit of an input, the players especially.

We're not sure how it looks, so that's all we can say really.

Q. Dan, you've obviously been in the team for a long time. How different does it feel to be in a team that's very well-rounded with top players across singles and doubles compared to obviously with Andy in the past, he was the highest-ranked player?

DANIEL EVANS: I think I've never come to Davis Cup and thought about the rankings. I think it's a team. Obviously it's a better team with Andy in it, but we've got a strong hand, as we have done for the last few years.

This week is all about team, teamwork, having great fun, everybody pitching in, picking up balls for each other. What it is. Broads made lots of drinks, peeled lots of oranges (smiling).

No, I mean, that's what it's about. I wouldn't spend a week normally with Broads, but I have to this week. (Laughter.)

No, it's been great. I love this week. That's what it's about. It's not about the rankings. It's we all pitch in. Leon has done a great job since 2000-and-whatever year it was till now to have us all come together. There's no egos. Yeah, it's one of my favorite weeks. I'm looking forward to it.

Q. Liam, normally would you spend time with Dan, willingly? Also, what is it like to be back in Davis Cup?

LIAM BROADY: Yeah, I mean, are Dan and I friends? Yeah, I guess we are (smiling).

It feels good to be back definitely. I think the last time I was in the team was 2018 I think in Marbella, my first experience playing for the team. Cam did incredibly well there. It was pretty inspirational to be around.

I was also in Glasgow when we played Argentina and the

U.S. I only have brilliant memories of Davis Cup. For someone like me, it's fantastic to come in here and train with all of these guys. Obviously brilliant doubles and singles players, as you pointed out.

Everyone is highly motivated, coming in on a wave of confidence. We have not just excellent tennis players but an excellent staff behind us, as well, an excellent team. I just think everyone wants to be the best he can.

Q. You've done well against Serbian players in team competition and singles matches. If it were to come down to a match in the quarters against Team Serbia, how do you fancy your chances going into that match?

JOE SALISBURY: To be honest, tough to answer that question. I don't really know about the record of the Brits against the Serbians in the past.

Yeah, I think we're not really thinking about that. To be honest, I didn't even know it could potentially be Serbia in the quarterfinals. We have to get through the group stage first.

I think we all feel good, we're all playing well and confident. Whatever team we come up against, we are going to feel we have a good chance to win it.

Q. Joe, it's long overdue now, but what is it like to be the new boy and be involved in Davis Cup for the first time?

JOE SALISBURY: It's been a lot of fun. Yeah, obviously a new experience for me. But, yeah, everybody has been very welcoming on the team. It's something I've been really looking forward to, wanting to do for a long time. I've always loved playing team events, whether it's playing college or events like Battle of the Brits in the past, ATP Cup a couple years ago.

Obviously this is the ultimate, the biggest one, one I've always wanted to play in. Yeah, just really enjoying it and looking forward to playing.

Q. What is your feeling about the French team you will face tomorrow? The struggle yesterday against the Czech Republic. What do you think of the next match?

NEAL SKUPSKI: Yeah, I mean, the French team are very solid. They've obviously got a good doubles team, and Herbert, Mahut have just come off a good win.

But, yeah, they've got three good singles guys they can mix around that could play in different spots. But, yeah, I mean, whoever they put out, I think we've got a good group

of guys to match them. Hopefully we can bring our A games and go into the next match against the Czech Republic the next day and put on a good, solid performance as well.

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