

Davis Cup Finals

Sunday, 28 November 2021

Team Kazakhstan

Mikhail Kukushkin

Press Conference

M. KUKUSHKIN/B. Schnur

6-3, 6-7, 7-5

Kazakhstan - 1

Canada - 0

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Extraordinary win today for your team. Put into words how you're feeling right now.

MIKHAIL KUKUSHKIN: Of course, first of all, feel extremely happy that I was able to bring a point today for my team. Obviously was really difficult match today, very long match. Obviously I should win the second set. I had three match points on my serve.

It was not a good idea to lose the second set, but I'm happy I managed to keep fighting, keep concentrating in the third set. I was able to win today.

Of course, it's very important for our team to get the win, to go through to the next round. I hope my win today helps our guys to play better, feel more confident in the next two matches today.

Of course, this match means a lot for me, for the team.

Q. You started the match with a lot of energy, urgency. Was that a conscious decision?

MIKHAIL KUKUSHKIN: Yeah, for sure. That's the way I always play in Davis Cup, with a lot of energy. We always got good support from the team, from our fans that always are behind our back anywhere we play in the world.

Big thanks to the crowd, to our people here in Madrid, and of course back home. With that kind of support, we can play well in Davis Cup.

Of course, I was trying to be energized in the beginning. That always helps me to play better. Of course, with that



kind of support, I believe that everything helps me to win today.

Q. What was going through your mind when you left the court after the second set having had the match points?

MIKHAIL KUKUSHKIN: Of course, I was really disappointed with myself, with the way I played those match points, with the way I played the tiebreak. Of course, I was really, really sad with myself.

After that, I would just try. I professional player, so I just have to forget about the second set. I was trying to motivate, to concentrate for the final set. With the support from the team, from the crowd, I believe this helps me to come back in the match. I miss my serve the first game of the final set. I'm happy with the way I fight today.

Q. At the end of the match we saw you kissing a necklace around your neck. Talk about the significance of that.

MIKHAIL KUKUSHKIN: Of course, that kind of thing probably not help me to win. My forehand will not always go as a winner. If I do that, it's just a thing that many players do, especially in the stress situations. It's just like small thing that I do, that other players do. Of course, it's just the way my body, my mind reacting under the stress situation.

Q. You're in very strong position now to reach the quarterfinals. That would be the sixth quarterfinal for Kazakhstan in the last 10 editions of the Davis Cup. Why is this event so important to your country? How do you always manage to punch above your weight?

MIKHAIL KUKUSHKIN: Small country. All our professional athletes, we always fight for our country when we represent Kazakhstan in international competition, especially Davis Cup, World Championships. It's very important for us to play well, to go through quarterfinal, to be in the last eight in the world. It means so much for us.

We don't have a big tradition in tennis as the other countries, so we're just beginning this tradition. I hope our good results in Davis Cup, personal competition, all of this will help to inspire the next generation that will come after



US.

I hope all of this helps to develop tennis in Kazakhstan.
That's why I always fight.

Q. For you personally, what does this competition mean? You've won 27 singles matches.

MIKHAIL KUKUSHKIN: Yeah, for sure. I believe this kind of situation that happened today, losing the second set after having two match points, I'm not sure if I would come back and play same way on my singles competition on the tour. On the way I played today, of course it means so much for us, for our players, for the team, for the Kazakhstan to play in the World Championship.

For the 14 years, I always play every match in Davis Cup as my last match. I always gave not 100%, but 200%. Maybe today the level of my tennis was not great, but no matter what I was just trying to get the win.

That's the way myself and all other players from our team always trying to do, just trying to win, bring victory for our country. That's it.

Q. We have seen good representation of fans coming from Kazakhstan. What does it mean for you? Does it give you support?

MIKHAIL KUKUSHKIN: That means so much for me personally, and also it means so much for our team with this kind of support. It's always bring you extra energy when you playing. Of course, we always have in Davis Cup very difficult matches. It's like a second player. Our fans always travel around the world no matter where we're playing. They always cheering so well for us. They always bring us extra energy on the court.

Thanks to them. I believe they have very big role in our results, so I just want to say big thank you for all the supporting for our crowd. Without them, I don't believe we would have these kind of results in Davis Cup.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports