

Davis Cup Finals

Sunday, 28 November 2021

Team Croatia

Marin Cilic

Press Conference

Z. PIROS/M. Cilic

6-4, 5-7, 6-4

Hungary - 1

Croatia - 1

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Where do you think it was won and lost today?

MARIN CILIC: Yeah, absolutely tight, very tight match, very close. I had some chances to close it out in the third set, 4-2 up. Just had a poor game on my serve over there.

But a big credit to Piros. He was fighting well, getting a lot of balls back. Served really well at the end of the second set. Overall in the third set had some aces, had some good percentage of winning on a first serve. Just put extra pressure on me with that.

In general, obviously a little bit disappointed with the loss. Obviously also super happy with the win of Nino and our team going through to the quarters, which is bottom line the most important.

Q. Very rare occasion in tennis where you almost have a match that can get away with losing. Is it difficult to deal with that? How do you feel you'll be able to regroup ahead of tomorrow?

MARIN CILIC: Yeah, it's just a bit different in terms of approaching the match. Even before the match I was asking the captain is it a possibility that we shift our team so that I don't play today, getting a little bit easier day, we are playing tomorrow afternoon.

As the rules are, we can't shift our team as it's stated. So just went into the match thinking, okay, just going to use it as a good match, good sort of training match in a way.

Obviously I could have done much better, but still I'm not too hard on myself. I gave my best on the court. The



result at the end wasn't in our favor. That's it. Going positive into next matches.

Q. Does it just show how small the margins can be between yourself in the top 30 and the guys in the top 300?

MARIN CILIC: Yeah, I mean, you see this very often in the Davis Cup matches, when the guys are having a team behind them, also pushing them. It's little bit different atmosphere in the whole wide. Even in the first day he's beaten Millman, obviously quite a good player. That's not a surprise that he plays quite well.

On my own side I know I could have done much, much better in some situations. But still it shows that tennis is very wide around. Those guys that are even around 250 ranking, they're also playing good tennis. There are small margins that can make a big difference. It can be mentally obviously sometimes in the game.

Q. Regarding Piros, he obviously didn't have anything to lose, an easier way to play. Have you been impressed the way he played? Can we say he played a top hundred level of tennis against you today? How do you see his future?

MARIN CILIC: Yeah, during the whole match he was fighting really well. That was great from him, really good spirit. Even I was serving for the first set, he came back. Okay, I broke him to win the first set. He stayed in the match and was playing I would say better and better towards the end of the match.

Difficult to say what kind of level this is. Also conditions here are a bit slower, suit a bit more guys that are running like him, a little more rallies off the back. He's playing definitely good. I wouldn't say that I was playing bad. I played quite solid. Just didn't take my chances when I had them.

Q. I'm not asking you to make excuses or anything, but the conditions, you touched on. How much of a bearing did the court and the balls have? Hewitt was saying it's painfully slow. Medvedev said the same thing. Do you think it had a bearing?

MARIN CILIC: Yeah, yeah, I would say definitely. It's not



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easy just to hit a clean winner off the back of the court. Today I didn't hit too many aces, so that was the case that we had long and long rallies. It was just a little bit grueling.

I would say also here is a bit cooler in the stadium, so that also has an impact. Comparing to other two venues, there is no altitude here. In Madrid and Innsbruck they have some altitude, so definitely a bit quicker.

It is what it is. We are going forward. I feel that I didn't play poor. I can do just some better things. I'll try to do them tomorrow.

Q. John Isner said Jannik Sinner will be a top three player in the world. You know what it takes to be top three. What do you think about it and tomorrow's match?

MARIN CILIC: Jannik with the age he is already top 10. He's playing really solid, having great season. He's going to just improve and improve. How far he can go, nobody knows. But he already has amazing level.

In the moment, in the era now, you got to play really good on the Grand Slams, big tournaments, and consistent to be No. 3. For me, when I was there, I had amazing 12 months.

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