

Davis Cup Finals

Wednesday, 1 December 2021

Team Kazakhstan

Mikhail Kukushkin

Press Conference

M. KUKUSHKIN/M. Kecmanovic

7-6, 4-6, 7-6

Kazakhstan - 1

Serbia - 0

THE MODERATOR: Questions in English.

Q. How are you feeling after 3 hours, 18 minutes? Talk about how you feel now and how you turned that match around.

MIKHAIL KUKUSHKIN: I'm feeling really happy, first of all. Was such a dramatic match. You know, it's Davis Cup. Of course it was a roller coaster.

I start the match well and was up a break in second set. After that I don't know what happened. I lost I believe seven games in a row maybe?

Third set was just crazy. I was down 5-2, I saved a lot of match points on his serve. End of the match was, I don't know, I can't even describe the feeling of such a match.

You know, it's Davis Cup, big crowd. Quarterfinals, very important for us to play and save many match points. Also was a lot of my own match points. It was very difficult to, you know, to keep believing in myself. I was just fighting till the end.

Thanks to my team, thanks to the crowd, they give me a lot of energy and helps me to, you know, keep going in the match. For sure these kind of matches I will remember forever. That's why we play tennis, you know, for this kind of match.

Q. We have seen you play for your country, playing Davis Cup. What is it about this competition that takes your tennis to the next level?

MIKHAIL KUKUSHKIN: It's special. For us it's always special. It's very special. I play in Davis Cup already 14



years. You know, have a lot of match results in the past. It's sixth time we play quarterfinals in Davis Cup in the last 10 years.

I believe it's quite big success for the country that has no big history in the tennis. Really hope that our good results in Davis Cup will explain the next generation Kazakhstan. That's what we are working for.

Of course, for us play for our country, representing our country, it's a big honor. That's why we give everything we can. We always fight till the very last point, always have a good crowd supporting us. For us, you know, Davis Cup matches is always No. 1 priority.

Of course, you know, these kind of matches in Davis Cup motivate me to play, you know, to keep playing tennis, you know, like we play not for prize money or ranking points, and playing for these kind of matches, no, to be on the big stage, big crowd, TV. You know, it's such drama on the court. You know, that's what helps me to motivate, to keep playing tennis.

Q. I would like to know what is the difference since you played so many Davis Cup matches between the old one and the new one? I remember you beat Bolelli and Seppi in Astana in 2015. There you were playing at home. So with big crowd, a lot of noise, things like that. What is the difference to play abroad?

MIKHAIL KUKUSHKIN: I remember well these matches. It was very good win for our country, for our team. It was a good match against Italy. Of course it was great.

But of course we played home, and usually we win at home. So of course with this kind of record, we used to have playing home matches in Davis Cup, for us it was always good, you know, in old format to play at-home matches because almost every time we win at home.

So it's tough question. Obviously Davis Cup is all about old format, playing at-home matches with big crowd behind your back or playing away matches with just a few people cheering for you. That was all about Davis Cup.

Now it's a little bit different. It's a bit tough to say or to choose the format. You know, I cannot say it right now. But I believe the new format with just two singles matches



and one doubles match, anything can happen, you know, like one day you can beat any other country, no matter the rankings.

I believe we will have many more surprises in Davis Cup with this kind of format. So I don't know. I just honored to play for my country. Any format, we will always fight and we will hope that we can go to the next stage.

Q. Could you talk a bit about your season generally? I think you came into the Davis Cup having only won three matches on the main tour this season. What's been some of the reasons why it's been a struggle for you? What has changed this week?

MIKHAIL KUKUSHKIN: (Lost audio feed.)

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