

# Davis Cup Finals

Thursday, 2 December 2021

Team Serbia

Nikola Cacic

Novak Djokovic

Viktor Troicki

Press Conference

CACIC-DJOKOVIC/Golubev-Nedovyesov

6-2, 2-6, 6-3

Serbia - 2

Kazakhstan - 1

THE MODERATOR: Questions in English.

**Q. First of all, congratulations to Serbia, to the captain, in particular to Novak, as usual, because, I mean, to participate in a national competition deserves praise. I would like to know, because today the big news is that WTA decided not to play anymore in China for the next tournaments unless something will be said about Shuai Peng. I understand we are talking about Davis Cup, but this is a major issue. I would like the PTPA president say something.**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: I'm not a PTPA president. I'm one of the co-founders. The PTPA's stance is always to support the players. So it is the players' organization.

I support fully WTA's stance because we don't have enough information about Shuai Peng and her well-being, and her health is of the utmost importance for the tennis community regardless of the fact that it's her. It can be anybody, both male and female player that something like this could happen.

I don't see anything wrong in WTA and everyone, actually, ATP, as well, asking for clarity on what is going on. We don't have enough information, and I think it's a very bold, very courageous stance from WTA.

I haven't seen the news. You just told me now. I have to see a little bit more what are the details, but I support it. I think it's important that we support each other, as I said, ATP, WTA, PTPA, male, female players. Regardless of



which organization you belong to or your personal stance, I think collectively we need to have a little more clarity on what is going on.

I don't know if she has stated something or not. I have not seen it officially. Just maybe a week or few weeks ago, some kind of statement went out, she was asking for privacy. You know, it's really sad that we don't have enough clarity on that. I mean, it's life of a tennis player that is in question here, so we, as tennis community, need stand together, and so I support it.

**Q. Novak, I think of the Davis Cup as a competition which ignited your career, winning it in 2010, setting up that 40-match big run in 2011. Now sort of 11 years on, what does the Davis Cup mean to you in this stage of your career? You have obviously spoken about the importance of the majors, but what does the Davis Cup mean and how much does a win like this tonight mean?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: I have spoken about the importance of the majors, and I don't know if you have seen it or heard it, but always when I said what are the biggest priorities for me at this stage of my career, I always said it's Grand Slams and playing for national team. Those are the two most important goals, let's say, that I have throughout the years.

I just feel so much motivation, and I am inspired to be part of the team. As long as I'm healthy, I'll be there for the captain. I'll try to be available always for the team, because the team competitions like Davis Cup, particularly Davis Cup that is the most historic team competition that we have in our sport that is an individual sport, other than Davis Cup you have the ATP Cup, you have the two big competitions for team that just provoke the most beautiful emotions in me. I'm very motivated to play for Serbia.

Of course it means a lot to me personally, but I think to all of us because we, you know, we are also relatively young team. Next to me, the guys are supposed to take the torch in the future and lead this national team. Viktor retired this year as active player, and now he's a captain.

So there is a lot of changes happening. We are trying to find the right team that will be carrying the flag of our country in the years to come. So as long as I'm able to

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contribute in a positive way, I will be here.

**Q. After these three games today, what can you say about the level of Kazakhstan team? Was it difficult for you to play in this quarterfinals?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Of course it is. When the doubles are deciding a winner, you play into night, almost midnight, it's anybody's game, really, in doubles.

Unfortunately for Kecmanovic, he was very close to win it, match points, but credit to Kukushkin for fighting back and showing why, you know, why he's an experienced, quality tennis player that loves to play for Kazakhstan, and he had some big wins, some marathon wins for his country.

A tough debut for Kecmanovic, but a lot of positives to take out for that, for him and for us I think in general. Of course it wasn't easy for me to step out on the court because I was emotionally going through that roller coaster of first win, but managed to find the right stability, mentally and physically, I think from the very beginning, and I did everything that I wanted to do in the match.

Early break against Bublik that I never faced before. Served out pretty well the entire match. Maybe just one or two games in my service games where I was in trouble, faced I think just one breakpoint. All in all, very solid performance.

Then again, as I said, doubles, anybody's game. Niko and I did not play too many times with each other, and this kind of format in Davis Cup, doubles are super important, you know, because if you lose one singles, doubles are deciding.

Nedovyesov and Golubev are a team that has played together for much more than me and Nikola, and we lost the first two matches 7-6 in the third set national team earlier this year in ATP Cup and also few days ago against Germany. That was in our minds, of course, but I think we did very well to bounce back after second set, find the right energy and encouragement from our team, from our captain.

Huge relief, but also excited about the next challenge.

**Q. A question for Viktor. How do you cope with the stress of being captain now and not actually being on the court? What do you say to Miomir to make sure he bounces back from what was obviously a very disappointing defeat today?**

VIKTOR TROICKI: It's a completely new role for me. First time, first year as a Davis Cup captain, being on the team

for so many years as a player. I have experienced everything, but this is a whole different level, being in the court and supporting the players.

It was really a tough loss, unfortunately, for Miomir. He played really, as Novak said, roller coaster match. He had many match points. Really fought well in a lot of moments, but unfortunately in the end, I think the experience came on Kazakhstan's side.

It was his debut, and I was definitely and I'm still behind that decision. Miomir played Kukushkin before and he beat him last time he played. Thought it was a good decision, even though it's Miomir's first match for the Davis Cup team.

But I think he gave everything on the court. Unfortunately in those crucial moments, he didn't have the luck and best focus, but I'm so proud of him. As Novak said, we learned, we take some positives from that match.

Then again, our savior and our hero of the team throughout all these years, I'm really grateful to have him also as a fan and also as a player on the team. He did so much in for our tennis, not just in Davis Cup but our whole nation. He's giving everything for the team. Playing all the time, winning all the time, it's a huge pressure.

I was never -- you know, I played so many matches and never felt that what he's feeling, especially stepping many times on 0-1 is really tough. He's doing amazing job, first in singles and today also in doubles with Nikola. They played unbelievable first and third set.

So I'm really proud of the whole team. Not just the players but also the staff. I think it's again great chemistry between all of us and it's going well. I'm really looking forward to the semifinals on Friday. I made a mistake on court. I said Saturday. But it's Friday. We will take a day of rest and get ready for the next match.

**Q. Can I just ask you, Novak and Viktor, about the semifinals against Croatia, maybe some of your memories playing them before in this competition? Also just how much of a rivalry there is with them?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: There is a big rivalry obviously being the neighboring countries, and there is always an extra pressure, an extra motivation, extra expectations I think for both nations to really win against each other.

But I think regardless of what happens on the court, you know, what is really nice in the sense of really positive message out there is the respect and the friendship with these guys that we have on and off the court. I'm sure that



we are both going to, both teams are going to give their very best to win it. It's not just semifinals, but it's playing against Croatia or Croatia against Serbia, which has extra meaning for us.

But as I said, you know, these guys are great guys. I have known Cilic, and we have had some big encounters over the years. I know him very well.

Borna Gojo is one of the biggest surprises of competition, winning two out of two matches, beating Sonigo in Italy, which was a very impressive win. He's someone that is very young and just has a big serve, big game overall.

Of course they have the best doubles in the world, Mekic, Pavic. They are winning most of the matches they are playing. We saw some of the matches in Davis Cup they have played so far, and they are winning comfortably.

Let's see what happens, you know. Hopefully we can start off with a win, but everything is open. Semifinals now, as Viktor said, we have a day to get ready for that challenge. I think it's important because it's almost midnight now. It's a long day. When you're not on the court, you're also emotionally involved in every match. You're cheering, you're supporting. It's very different from any individual tournament, you know.

So it's always great to have a day rest where you can recalibrate, recuperate, all the necessary energy for not just your match but other matches, as well, and giving support, being there for your teammates.

With the good chemistry that we have, I feel like we can win. And of course we are intending to step out on the court and win every single match, no doubt. You know, we are very motivated for that one.

**Q. You have faced Croatia in the past as a player. Can you talk about those ties?**

VIKTOR TROICKI: Yeah. We faced them two times, me being as a player, yeah, and one was actually in 2010 when we won the title. It was, I would say, nice memories against them. First account was in Split, in Croatia, and second one we played in Serbia. Hopefully the streak continues.

But as Novak said, of course we are going to go for a win and everything. We are going to focus for all the matches, but we are very close friends to the Croatian team. Hopefully everything will be good for our team at the end.

**Q. Congratulations. Novak, I see your message about Shuai Peng is very, very important and also with Spain**

**and Latin American fans. I don't know if you mind if I ask you again about it in Spanish and if you don't mind to answer again in Spanish?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Oh, it's difficult, but I'll try.

(Question and answer in Spanish.)

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