

Davis Cup Finals

Friday, 3 December 2021

Team Serbia

Viktor Troicki

Novak Djokovic

Filip Krajinovic

Press Conference

MEKTIC-PAVIC/Djokovic-Krajinovic

7-5, 6-1

Croatia - 2

Serbia - 1

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. At the last moment there was a change in the strategy moving from Cacic to Filip. How did you explain this? Tactic, something else?

VIKTOR TROICKI: Well, we knew that match was the toughest for sure. The idea is to have good returners, singles players, coming out aggressive with the return. Unfortunately the No. 1 team was ready and they played really top-level tennis doubles. That's why they're No. 1 in the world in doubles.

Yeah, unfortunately our chance was in singles. Novak of course, again, managed his work, but unfortunately in the first singles I think we were favorites and we should have taken the chances what we had in that first match.

Unfortunately Filip also, since match in Austria against Germany, he was unfit, had a muscle strain. That's why he couldn't play his singles matches. I was hoping that it would work in doubles with two singles players playing aggressive returns and from the baseline, but it didn't work because, yeah, sometimes it makes it tough for the doubles guys when they got a lot of returns back. That's why it was a change.

These guys played probably the most firm in my team. They played most together, so that was the idea.

Q. The first match was really the crucial one. What do you think made the difference? He had the comeback,



Dusan, in the first set, then there was an opportunity in the second set when he rallied a bit as well.

VIKTOR TROICKI: It's tough to explain at this moment. I don't know what went wrong. Borna after let's say giving him first set, being 4-1 up, Gojo was playing really good, aggressive. Dudsie came up with a good game, returned pretty good, got the set.

I don't know, Borna went back, went in the defensive mode. Dussie, I don't know. I really have to watch that match again to see what really went on. He was just missing a lot of balls, didn't play tactically well. Unfortunately, yeah, it didn't happen for us.

That was probably the crucial match because, as I said before, the doubles was really tough one to win and to go for.

Q. I understand it's not a happy moment for you, for us to ask questions, but still we have to do it. From Novak, would you have liked to end this year in August? Before then you won three slams out of four, and everybody was I don't say jealous but dreaming to have the same kind of results. Still a great year, but the end of this year, all these major goals, the US Open, the Grand Slam, Davis Cup. I don't need to repeat them all. ATP Finals, Davis Cup. Paradoxical they became a bad memory. This is sport, it happens. How do you react and feel about it even if this is not the best moment to talk about it?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Season finished today, so I don't regret any tournament that I played after the date that you mentioned. I give my best, as I always do, for national team. There is extra meaning and importance for me, for everybody involved. Unfortunately wasn't to be this time. One singles win is not enough. This kind of competition is cruel in a way because it just requires you to win every single match that you play or every single set because it counts.

We got another opportunity as the best second team to qualify, play quarters. Unfortunate today. It's sport. What can you do?

I don't regret anything in life. I try to draw lessons from especially the tough moments like this. As much as it hurts



me personally and us as a team, these are usually the biggest opportunities to get stronger, to grow, and develop to be even a better person and a player.

Hopefully we will learn what has happened this year during Davis Cup. There are lot of things we can improve individually and as a team. But the goal is always to go far in the Davis Cup competition because we all care about playing for our team and for our nation.

Q. Novak, could you talk about the challenge and the psychology of that doubles match between yourself, the No. 1 singles player in the world, taking on the No. 1 team. How do you try to impose your aura, presence on that court? Do you really feel like an underdog in that matchup?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, we went out on the court believing that we can make it, otherwise why step on the court if you go out with the white flag. We always knew, as Viktor mentioned, it's going to be the toughest match of the tie for us, this rubber.

If it came down to doubles deciding, we knew we are not the favorites because we're playing the best team in the world, two guys that play all the time together, know each other very well. They're doubles specialist. This is what they do. This is the only thing that they focus on. We don't play doubles much. Maybe we should play more. I mean, in order to win Davis Cup, we need to have more doubles players, we need to have a doubles team, otherwise it's going to be very difficult. It's like a lottery out on the court because they know each other so well. The guy crosses, the other guy's behind covering him. They know exactly where the ball is going to go.

For us singles guys, that's not the case. We return through the middle, that's enough in singles. But in doubles, they are covering it, winning the easy points off the return. They always make you hit the perfect shot from the return. If you don't, you're in trouble. They put constant pressure.

It is what it is. We tried. It didn't work. But we definitely need to improve our doubles part of the team. We need to have a doubles team that is constantly playing together, otherwise it's going to be a Mt. Everest to climb for us every time we play like this.

Q. Filip, to have Novak Djokovic in the team or Roger Federer in the Swiss team or Rafa, it's a lot. Do you think there's a future for Serbian tennis? You are working very seriously in Belgrade. What is your opinion for next two years? Some other Novak Djokovic coming out?

FILIP KRAJINOVIC: I mean, it's an honor to have Novak in the team. We learn a lot. He's our idol. He give everything in Davis Cup. He loves to play. We want to help him as much as we can.

Unfortunately very sad today. I hope we can improve to help him little bit in the singles also. I feel like last couple matches the singles didn't go our way, we didn't play our best. It's very hard for him also to play singles and doubles every time. It's a lot of pressure on him. He's handling really, really well.

I hope in the next couple of years we going to try to help him as much as we can and try to build, like he said, doubles also so singles guys can little bit relax and focus on singles, not singles and doubles. We are missing that.

I'm sure that Serbia will find a way for that, that we going to be stronger and stronger every year.

Q. Novak, obviously a difficult moment, but it will be the last time we'll see you before the end of the year. As you look ahead to 2022, what are your thoughts, feelings? How are you planning on approaching things?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Honestly, I'm going to try to use the next days to just rejuvenate, recover, and forget about tennis. So right now I understand you want some answers on where I start the season, how I start it.

I'm really, really tired from this season and this whole year, so I just prefer sticking to the family quality time, rehab mode, then let's see what the future brings.

Q. My question is a bit of a follow-up because it's the last time we see you this year. We would like to know when we will see you again. We would like to see you soon. We understand that you're not going to answer tonight, but maybe you can tell us at least when you think would be the right moment for a deadline? Sooner or later there must be a decision taken. Maybe not tonight or tomorrow. You're a professional.

Ubaldo, you will be informed. I know what you want. I'm not going to give you an answer tonight. I know what you want to ask me. But you will be informed. That's all I can tell you. I cannot give you any date.

Obviously Australia is around the corner, so you will know very soon.

Q. So before Christmas?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Merry Christmas.



