

Davis Cup Finals

Sunday, 18 September 2022

David Haggerty

Enric Rojas

David Ferrer

Mark Woodforde

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Good morning to everyone here in Valencia, and in Hamburg, and all the media virtually. Welcome.

We have here with us in Valencia, Enric Rojas, Kosmos CEO; David Ferrer, tournament director; and Mark Woodforde, ITF representative. In Hamburg, David Haggerty, president of the International Tennis Federation.

David, first time as a tournament director. How has been your experience in this Davis Cup so far?

DAVID FERRER: Great experience. It has been a week with a great tennis. There are two ties that are going to be very exciting. In Hamburg they are fighting to be first seeded with Germany and Australia. In Valencia, today we don't know who is going to qualify. Spain is fighting to qualify on Davis Cup Finals in Malaga.

We had eight top-16 players playing Davis Cup. Novak Djokovic, Rafa, Pablo Carreno cannot be here.

I'm really happy to work for Davis Cup. It was a special competition for me now. I'm trying to improve this competition for the future, yeah.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very much, David, for all your job and experience.

Enric, first edition with a group stage in four different venues. What is your overview from Kosmos?

ENRIC ROJAS: First of all, good afternoon, everyone, the ones here and those connected virtually. Thanks to Dave for being connected, as well, and Mark and David to be here with me.

It's the last day in our view of an amazing week with amazing matches. We are really proud about the outcome



of this week. I think that we have proven that the format works.

You all know we did a bit of an evolution since 2019. Now with the four different cities, with the four groups, then going to the final eight to Malaga, it's a format for staying. We really feel that it is working.

I cannot avoid saying that we have faced a few challenges and issues, as we had in 2019 and 2021. As Kosmos, together with the ITF, we are facing those issues and challenges, and they are under review.

We will discuss the day after, not tomorrow to be honest (smiling), but those issues we are facing. We are going to try to fix after the review we are going to do next week.

I have to say that it's an obvious thing that Germany was probably the arena that was more difficult to fulfill. I have the good news. I just talked to the promoter in Germany, that today we all expect to have 6,000 people in the arena, with 70% capacity, which is a huge improvement compared to the attendance we had at the beginning of the week.

Look, one of the biggest elements to show that this is working is that we have had more than 100,000 people in the four different arenas in this week, counting with the ones attending today. It's a very similar number than the one we had with the whole competition in 2019 and 2021. So that means that we are still expecting another 50,000 to 60,000 people in Malaga. The improvement in terms of attendance, occupancy and fan engagement, it's going to be in our view terrific.

So looking forward to Malaga, as well. I think we are going to have, subject to the ones qualifying today, a very strong lineup of teams. I can say that up to today we have had already 20,000 tickets it is sold in Malaga. We are pretty sure that after today's results, people is going to start buying a lot of tickets. We hope we are going to have a lot of fans traveling from those countries qualified for Malaga.

We are going to work very hard with the different federations during the upcoming two months for helping fans to go to Malaga and fulfill the stadium. I mean, we are really hopeful to fulfill everything in Malaga.

Finally, thanks to everyone, starting for you guys, media,



sponsors. I have to say a big word for all the organization internal in Kosmos, ITF. A big thanks to David, has done an amazing job this week. Thank you very much to everyone being here.

THE MODERATOR: Let's move to Hamburg. I would like to introduce David Haggerty, who is here to say a few words.

DAVID HAGGERTY: Good morning, everyone. Thank you for joining us. I'd like to say hi to my colleagues in Valencia. I hope you're having as exciting a time and seeing great and compelling tennis that we are here.

I would like to reinforce a little bit what Enric has said. When we put things in perspective, we are very, very happy with the format and the development of where we are with this first year of the four venues.

Last year we had 65,000 spectators that attended in the group stage. This year we're over 105,000. That's a nice improvement. But there's still room to grow, room to improve.

How will we do that? We will consult with the nations, but also it's the promoters, the federations, the ITF and Kosmos working together to make sure we continue to improve on what we have.

I had the great opportunity to go to two venues. Thursday and Friday I spent my time in Bologna. I saw a great match between Croatia and Sweden. Good atmosphere in the stadium. The match was very, very compelling with Croatia winning 2-1.

On Friday Italy played Argentina. Completely sold out, amazing atmosphere, really what we expect and what we need with Davis Cup.

I arrived in Hamburg, unfortunately I had to leave very early in the morning from Bologna, but I arrived in good time to be able to see the match yesterday, where we saw France defeat Belgium 2-1. The crowds were good. They were engaged. Maybe not as much as we're going to see today.

I think today it's going to be exciting to see 6,000 fans here as we play to see Germany and Australia, both have qualified, but who becomes top of the group.

I can talk about those two. I had my colleague Kelly Fairweather, our CEO, in Glasgow. I talked to him. Good matches. USA and Netherlands have advanced there. You just heard from our friends about Valencia.

Thank you very much. We'd very happy to take questions.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Enric, with these four cities, you've touched on the attendance of the cities, is it in your mind that we may get the same four cities next year for continuity or go fresh and start with four new cities that will host the Group Finals?

ENRIC ROJAS: We have an agreement with four different venues for a multi-year agreement. So, yes, we will be there. Obviously this is subject to those nations being classified. We think that with this format, the home nation needs to play.

In case of one of those four nations not being classified for next year, then potentially we should change one of the cities. But if they are qualified, we will stay there.

Q. David and Enric, Kosmos is paying a good amount of money for the players to compete, and still too many nations are missing their top players. Are you disappointed about that? How can you change that in the future?

DAVID HAGGERTY: Enric, if you don't mind, I'll start and you can certainly add in.

We're very pleased with the top players that are turning out. There are always a few that might not be able to. Let's remember, we're not yet at the Finals. I think that's where we'll see some of the players that perhaps after the US Open needed a little bit of a break and didn't play this week.

I'm very pleased with the top players. There's some injured, as we know, that aren't able to play.

Enric, do you want to add anything to that?

ENRIC ROJAS: Again, to say what David said at the beginning, we had eight players out of the top 16. If you take out from that list the those that couldn't play, as well as personal situation of Djokovic, technically we are missing Rafa and Carreno, which is injured, and Rafa as well. There is another personal situation of Rafa.

Q. If you look at the situation in Group C here in Hamburg, the two qualifiers for Malaga were set on Friday. Why have all ties to be fixed before the event? If the two winners and the two losers of tie one will compete against each other in the second tie, the decision will be made on the weekend.

DAVID HAGGERTY: From a scheduling perspective, we think it's always important to have a schedule that the players and captains know about so they can plan their week. When they go to tournaments, they know how to plan their weeks. We want to make sure the same thing here.

Sometimes ties are decided before the last day. Today we know there are two ties that are going to determine the standings. While they qualified, we don't know yet the draw and who will be playing in the Finals.

We think as something from a player and nation performance, it's important to have a schedule in advance.

Q. Mr. Haggerty, will you stick to the five-day format? There was a discussion about the length of the tournaments. It seemed like in Germany here, it was an issue with the five days and the traveling, maybe going to hotels, an obstacle for many fans. Is that something you will discuss for the future?

DAVID HAGGERTY: I think, as Enric said, and I said as well, we'll do a full review of the competition, what happened, what we can do better.

We've heard pros from the five days, again there's some negatives to that, as well. We'll have to look at it and as a group decide what's best.

Q. David, as tournament director, in the Davis Cup format right now players are nominated that day. Do you think there is any merit in having team captains nominate the players the night before, still have the option of changing players an hour before play, but at least get players nominated the night before which could help with additional promotion?

DAVID FERRER: Can you repeat the question, please? I don't listen to you too good.

Q. Do you think there is the possibility to have captains nominate their players the night before? That could provide extra promotion and publicity, but they still have the option of changing one hour before a match starts.

DAVID FERRER: Yeah, I think that's fair. Never knows what is going to happen next day. But, yeah, for me it's fair one hour before say who is going to play the matches, before an hour.

At the end, as you know, the tennis players, they are playing all the week, the calendar is really close. Well, you can have an issue before play the tie.

Yeah, for me that's not a problem. It's fair, yeah.

MARK WOODFORDE: I might jump in there and add to that one for you.

That's certainly a consideration that maybe we can review. You also have to take into account that players, the night before, something may happen to them overnight, whether they're not feeling great, some illness or injury.

I think at this stage for the captains, the formula format that we have is probably appropriate, that they take into consideration how the player feels on the day of their match and maybe can make some changes as opposed to announcing the night before.

But that's something we can review moving forward.

Q. Mr. Haggerty, another Hamburg question. The stadium here was almost empty a couple of days. What is your conclusion? Do you have to reconsider the price structure, for example, completely? What do you think?

DAVID HAGGERTY: Well, I think we have to look at things and review it.

Today will be very good. Yesterday was a good crowd I think for France and Belgium. There were times where we wanted more fans. We want a full stadium, absolutely.

I think part of it is to look at everything from ticket pricing, travel, accommodations, talk to the players, talk to the nations about what do we need to do to help Belgium and France bring more fans, how do we attract more fans here in Germany.

Absolutely we will take a look at this together, work with promotions, how do we make sure this has the absolute best environment that we can.

Q. Mark, you've been a player, play a lot of Davis Cup ties, and now here in Valencia it's been like a roller coaster from the beginning till today. How has been your experience here? What do you think we can improve? What is working really well?

MARK WOODFORDE: I've been extremely impressed with the setup here in Valencia the whole week. The excitement for the Koreans, new to playing Davis Cup Finals, that's significant. That's what Davis Cup competition, World Cup of Tennis is about, welcoming emerging nations like Korea. They've been well-received here by the crowd.

I've been really impressed with the setup, along with the team. The crowd support every day has been fantastic. I think this is something that we can build upon moving forward, as well.

I've had the opportunity to look around a little bit with my daughter. Just a beautiful city, a great stadium. The crowds, it does help. That's one element, it does help the standard of tennis.

We've also welcomed the No. 1 ranked player in the world, newly crowned, Carlos Alcaraz. Magnificent for him after winning the US Open to still have that commitment to playing. You've seen the exciting level of Felix Auger-Aliassime. He's played a fantastic level of tennis as well.

I've been impressed. I'm not surprised, though. I'm really happy for the competition with Kosmos and ITF. Certainly look forward to Malaga in 10 weeks' time.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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