

Davis Cup Finals

Tuesday, 22 November 2022

Team Australia

Captain Lleyton Hewitt

Alex de Minaur

Press Conference

A. de MINAUR/B. van de Zandschulp

5-7, 6-3, 6-4

Team Australia - 2

Team Netherlands - 0

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Alex, can you just go through that match? Another crucial encounter. Very, very tight.

ALEX de MINAUR: Yeah. As you said, I mean, always knew coming in how talented and how much of a fighter and competitor Botic is. What he was able to do in the group stages in Glasgow was very impressive, I mean, getting some very high-quality wins and leading his team to the final stages.

Look, I think it was just incredible what Jordan was able to do today. The fight, the passion, the heart that he showed, just to dig really, really deep and get through that one was a huge inspiration to me.

Q. Lleyton, your thoughts? You must have been having kittens.

CAPTAIN HEWITT: (Smiling.) Yeah, both matches. Both could have gone either way. High-quality tennis, especially that second match. Yeah, to play that level for three full sets, believe it or not, the last few games were probably the highest level of the match.

I'm just really proud of the boys. They left it all out there. They have come, they have done all the training and the preparation that we have asked them to do. They deserve to get that result tonight.

No, it means a lot to the boys, and, you know, they wear their heart on their sleeve and they love wearing the green and gold. They can go to another level, and both those



boys did tonight, which was good.

Q. Alex, congratulations. Would you tell more about the ninth game of the third set? Have you ever played a game like that? How important was it?

ALEX de MINAUR: Well, it felt like every game was important throughout the end of the match. I think we were both giving each other headaches on when we were returning each other's serve.

But, yeah, that game was huge. He threw everything he had at me. I fought it off somehow. Just stayed positive, kept telling myself to dig deep and keep backing myself and staying positive.

Kept on telling myself if I was able to somehow get away with that game that the momentum was going to change dramatically. You know, it ended up going my way, and, you know, I played a very solid game on return and managed to steal the win there.

Q. We know how much playing for your country means to you, Alex. You have now won nine of your last ten matches in this competition. How would you describe the difference between Alex de Minaur the tour player and Alex de Minaur the Davis Cup player?

ALEX de MINAUR: I reckon probably what I need to take it to the next level on the ATP Tour is bring this Alex more often. But there is something special about representing your country and playing for Australia and being part of this team.

This has always been a dream of mine, and I will always do everything in my power to try and deliver for my country, my teammates, and, you know, my captain. It's pride, it's passion, and it's a whole lotta heart.

Q. Lleyton, I know you have been pretty outspoken in the past about the format changes. I was just wondering, today where does that rank among your experiences of this new format? You know, with the good atmosphere today, the occasion, do you see some progress?

CAPTAIN HEWITT: Yeah. It's no secret I love the two biggest things that the competition had compared to



anything else in our sport, which is home-and-away ties, which play on all different surfaces, and five sets. That's the pinnacle of our sport is Grand Slams. This competition had that.

So in terms of that, yeah, my boys, though, and the reason I'm still doing this job is because I love the Davis Cup competition and I love representing Australia. So we could be going out there and rolling balls on a court, but as long as we are doing it for our country and wearing the green and gold, I'm going to get these boys to have that pride and that passion and wear their heart on their sleeve.

That's why I can't be prouder of these guys. I know it's a bloody long year. You know, there has been changes and tweaks to this competition that we have had to adjust to the last three years. We're back to these guys making massive sacrifices to be playing for their country. This is the third time this year.

Normally, you know, when it changed to this format, it was only ever going to be twice a year. So we have added on another week, it's been a bloody long year for everyone, and we are a long way from home, too. Don't forget that. I don't like the chances of this final series ever being played in Australia.

My boys do a lot of hard work, they come together, and they back each other. The training that we did last week, that's the reason that they got the result tonight.

Q. In an earlier answer, you mentioned you asked them to prepare in a certain way. I was just wondering what exactly you did to prepare for this week? In your case specifically, Alex, what did your time between Paris and now look like?

ALEX de MINAUR: So, yeah, all of the boys that weren't playing in Turin, we went to Paris. About a week...

CAPTAIN HEWITT: For about a week before we got here.

ALEX de MINAUR: We had a week and a half to prepare for playing our first round. So, yeah, after Paris I had maybe a week, which was kind of relaxed, catch my breath, and then we came back as a team to prepare for the finals here, for this very first match.

We did a lot of hours out there. The boys pushed each other and, you know, as Lleyton said, it's a big reason why we probably got that win today, because we both knew out there that we could keep on going for a very long time, you know, because we put in the hours, we put in the hard work, and we believe in our fitness and our preparation.

CAPTAIN HEWITT: Also in the training, Alex takes that level, that standard, to a high level, which drags everyone else with him, which is, for me, something pretty proud to see a young guy do that and step up and take the leading role on court. Makes my job a hell of a lot easier.

Q. Lleyton, you could have gone with Thanasi today. What was your thinking putting Jordan in instead of Thanasi? And in Turin, I was asking Nick about if he was going to have a change of mind. He said the two of you had had quite a few conversations, and then he decided that this is a team that could go all the way even without him.

CAPTAIN HEWITT: Who decided that?

Q. Nick was saying that.

CAPTAIN HEWITT: Oh (Laughter.)

Q. He felt that this was a team that could go all the way even if he wasn't in the team. What are your comments on those two aspects?

CAPTAIN HEWITT: Well, obviously we would have loved to have Nick play. You know, he's had an incredible year and not played that many tournaments, to be honest. Yeah, we all know the capability of how he can play high-level tennis when he's motivated.

For us not to have him here, we put that aside and we try and come together, and we've got a good group of guys here that are willing to do the hard yards and put their hand up for their country, and I couldn't be prouder of all of them.

You know, Jason Kubler is another one. He just narrowly missed out on a spot to Thommo, and I would have had as much faith in Kubes going out there and playing tonight as I did Thommo. The reason for Thommo, yeah, it's always hard making these decisions. Sometimes it pays off; sometimes it doesn't. You know, Thommo put in a lot of work last week. I felt like he was going to outlast -- he was going to go all night tonight, and in the end, it went that way.

Yeah, Thanasi, I could have easily played him as well. Tough decisions, but yeah, some you get right, some you don't, and tonight it fell our way.

Q. How do you feel in today's atmosphere, especially playing not just against Botic but also against that many supporters from The Netherlands that gave like amazing atmosphere today?

ALEX de MINAUR: Yeah, look, honestly, it was great to



see. I mean, even though they are obviously not supporting myself, but it's great to see that The Netherlands have such an amazing crowd support coming to support them here in Malaga. It was great to play in front of a lot of people.

A couple years ago we didn't have that. We were in Madrid and we were playing matches that didn't have too many people. Same in Hamburg. I mean, it's tough for us, because, you know, we are a long way away from home, but it's great to see even a lot of Spanish people coming out today and making it a great atmosphere.

You know, I don't think I expected there to be so many people out there for, you know, a match that didn't host the nation, Spain, but it was great to play in, and I think the home team have a great, great support.

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