

# Davis Cup Finals

Monday, 20 November 2023

Team Netherlands

Captain Paul Haarhuis

Tallon Griekspoor

Botic van de Zandschulp

Gijs Brouwer

Wesley Koolhof

Jean-Julien Rojer

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Hello, everyone. Let's start the press conference with Netherlands. We will start with questions for players.

**Q. Botic, tell us what it's like to come here and play in a team environment after 11, I guess a little stressful at times, months, individually on tour, albeit you have a team there.**

BOTIC van de ZANDSCHULP: Yeah, I think it's always nice to be in a group. I think we have a really nice group. Yeah, we're laughing together. I think we are working really well together. Working hard as well.

Yeah, it's been an honor to be here, final eight teams. It's always special to play these kind of events.

Yeah, and compared to last year, I think we want to do better than last year here. Yeah, I think we're all looking forward to it.

**Q. A question for Tallon, obviously as the highest-ranked player of the team, you're going to face a tough match on paper against Sinner in the quarterfinals. I don't know if you have seen him play in the ATP Finals. How do you feel he's playing, and how are you going to prepare for such a huge challenge?**

TALLON GRIEKSPoor: Well, I think he's playing the best tennis he's ever been playing in his life. Playing the Finals of the Masters is something really big.

Yeah, it's going to be a really, really hard and tough match, but I'm looking forward to it. Tough challenge, but I feel



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like I have a chance. I mean, I will get some chances here and there, going to be really hard, have to play my best.

Like you said, hopefully he's a bit tired. He played a lot, the Italian crowd behind him all week. Yeah, tough match. That's all I can say for now. Looking forward to face him on Thursday.

**Q. Paul, wondering if you could assess that tie against Italy and in particular maybe the fact, is it an advantage for you that you're all here already and preparing, whereas Jannik is coming in from Turin?**

CAPTAIN PAUL HAARHUIS: Is there another question for the players? Because I said in the beginning only questions for the players, because they need to have their warmup. Then if that's done, I'll answer any questions.

**Q. Sorry, I missed that.**

CAPTAIN PAUL HAARHUIS: Okay.

**Q. Botic, can you just talk about how your form seems to have really turned around and improved in the last few months? What's changed for you?**

BOTIC van de ZANDSCHULP: Yeah, it's been a tough year, especially during the summer in Europe. Didn't win a lot of matches. Didn't play that well.

Yeah, last couple of tournaments, yeah, starting to play better, better tennis. Yeah, how it changed, I don't know, just keep working. At some point it's falling your way. Yeah, I'm glad I'm here in good form.

**Q. Any of those summer issues, you had that final of course, and it was close, let's say. Was there any kind of hangover after that in any way, or did you manage to put that out of your mind pretty quickly?**

BOTIC van de ZANDSCHULP: Yeah, it's sort of a hangover, yeah. Of course it's a tough way to lose, and yeah, of course you're feeling that I've got an injury after the final.



Yeah, reminded me a little bit, every time I felt the issue, yeah, it reminded me a little bit of the final. Yeah, took me a while to get over it, and at least at this point I'm over it.

**Q. A question for Wesley, as one of the doubles specialists in the team, wondering about this new format of Davis Cup. Is it nice that the doubles can be a decider, or is it a bit frustrating that you don't get a guaranteed doubles match like in the past? How does that balance out in your head?**

WESLEY KOOLHOF: Yeah, a bit of both, I think. Obviously it's nice to be the deciding match if it's 1-All here in the finals. So I think in the group stages, obviously it's a very deciding match. Either you win 3-Love or you lose 2-1 or you win 2-1 by winning the last match like we did a few times in Croatia.

Here it can be, yeah, can be annoying to not be able to play. I mean, if we're winning 2-Love because of these guys, I'm happy not to play (smiling).

Yeah, last year we lost 2-Love after two crazy long matches, and yeah, it's a bit of a, yeah, I'd say shitty situation if you're here preparing and you don't get to play.

But I'm happy if we win the Davis Cup with only 2-0. I'm very happy not to play in case these guys are playing amazing tennis. Let's hope for that, actually (smiling).

**Q. Also for Wesley, you have a doubles partner on the tour who is also going to be here. Is it easy for you to just change partners and then go back? How does that work?**

WESLEY KOOLHOF: I think so. I mean, we've done it -- in the past we have done it. Everyone does it, obviously if you're in Davis Cup. There is not that many teams out there in the ATP level who are playing together with another countryman.

I think there's a few Germans and Croatians always playing together, but I have always played last two years with Neal and then played the Davis Cup with Matwe.

So always be like that, I think. It's pretty easy to shift. Always kind of a new experience as well. So it's always good to look forward to and then afterwards, yeah, go back to your regular partner and go back on the ATP Tour. Yeah, I know how it works and how it feels, so I'm okay with it.

**Q. Tallon, you had a really nice indoor swing. You faced Djokovic. You won a set against him. What would you say about your tennis in this surface?**

TALLON GRIEKSPoor: Well, it's probably the surface and the circumstances I enjoy the most lately. I have been playing really well this year on indoor hard.

Yeah, played a good match in Paris against Djokovic, but not good enough. So looking forward to do things better this week, and yeah, hopefully me and the rest of the team can play their best tennis and we give ourselves a shot to win the Davis Cup.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the captain.

**Q. Paul, I think compared to, say, the Billie Jean King Cup where there is a group stage in Seville and you can play a little bit with the team maybe, here of course being straight knockout, you've got to win and got to prioritize particularly that situation, therefore, with the fifth player not playing sometimes, how do you balance that with trying to keep a good spirit in the team if there is one player who is not playing?**

CAPTAIN PAUL HAARHUIS: Well, I think that for us it's less difficult, because our fifth player who doesn't play is maybe expecting not to play. If you have three guys all ranked 25, 30, 32, yeah, and they're all good on hard court, then it's more of an issue.

But in this case, it will be a very surprise for most of people if Brouwer plays the singles. So I don't think our opponent will count on that. So for him, he knows what he wants to do. He needs to prepare as good as possible just in case he has to play. He needs to work on what he needs to be ready just in case he plays.

So I think that's part of the team competition, and yeah, we don't have the luxury to pick out of eight guys and then those three are very close to each other or four. So I don't have that problem like some other countries. I would love to have that problem.

**Q. Obviously Italy has always been considered as one of the favorites to win, I guess, the whole Davis Cup, and they have had some amazing success in the past with the young crop of players. Do you feel that going here in your tie as an underdog might give you a boost? Do you feel like you have something to prove to say to people, Okay, we can do it? It's not only about Italy?**

CAPTAIN PAUL HAARHUIS: Oh, we don't have something to prove. We know we can win. We have that confidence. But we are the underdogs. I wish we were the favorite. I wish we had two top-5 guys in the team and say, yeah, we are the favorites.

But we are not the favorites, but we are here for one goal only, is to win the first match, the second match, and the third match. That's why we're here.

Last year we were here. We played some close matches, and we could have won both singles. We end up losing 2-0, and Australia was in the final a couple days later.

So we know it's possible, but things have to fall for us, because obviously if you play Jannik Sinner, you're not the favorite to win. But we know that it's possible to beat him, but things have to go your way. You have to play very well, you have to be a little lucky.

Well, anyway. It's possible, yeah, and we believe that way.

**Q. When there is a disparity either in form or the rankings, does that mean you then have to think a bit more about the plan? I guess Jannik's plan is just to play his normal game and assume that that will be enough for him to win. But when you're the underdog, does that mean you have to think a little bit more, We've got to do something different, rather than just play the natural game?**

CAPTAIN PAUL HAARHUIS: No, you always have to go from -- the first thing you have to do is go from your own strength. This is my best game. When I play like this, this is my best game. That gives you the highest chance of beating the opponent.

Obviously if you know, okay, let's say my forehand crosscourt is my weapon, but the guy on the other side, his forehand crosscourt is even better, then you take that into account. But you don't start like, okay, I'm just going to hit every forehand up the line now, because you are putting yourself in the position that's not putting your best tennis into it.

So you've got to start with saying, okay, this is who I am, this is my game, I'm coming after you. And then if the guy comes out with good shots, then you do different things.

I mean, Tallon played very well against Djokovic. Created chances to win the match. You know, that gave him also the confidence that he can beat guys like this.

So, you know, and he didn't change his plans to play different against Djokovic, even though, you know, if you play Djokovic, you basically go into a match knowing that you're going to lose.

I mean, he has lost, like, three or four matches this year out of the 50 he played. So yeah, still, you've got to start

by playing your own game first.

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