

# Davis Cup Finals

Wednesday, 22 November 2023

**Team Australia**

**Captain Lleyton Hewitt**

**Matthew Ebdon**

**Max Purcell**

Press Conference

EBDEN-PURCELL/Lehecka-Pavlascek

6-4, 7-5

Team Australia - 2

Team Czechia - 1

THE MODERATOR: Welcome, Team Australia.  
Questions.

**Q. Lleyton, that was an incredible performance from Alex earlier on. What were you going through sitting courtside, and what were you saying to him?**

CAPTAIN LLEYTON HEWITT: Well, yeah, it was a hell of a match, really. Yeah, it was hard to find answers out there for most of the match. Alex gave himself some opportunities to break at times and wasn't quite able to.

Lehecka played fantastic. Conditions, court all suited him. It was perfect for his game style. To his credit, he went out there and executed. Yeah, was very close to pulling off a win against Alex, but Alex just found a way (smiling).

Yeah, it was more just trying to, to keep believing. He was going to get a chance at some stage. He was too good a returner not to break serve. In the end, he was able to do that. But then the third set could have gone either way, as well.

He had to dig really deep, and yet again, he came out and saved us and gave us an opportunity for the doubles boys to finish it off. That was impressive in itself, you know, to come out after riding the ups and downs of both singles matches, and then to be able to just switch it on like they did and, yeah, put in that kind of impressive performance was awesome.

**Q. This group, to see Alexei, Thanasi, so many guys**



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on the side without playing, there all day, what is it with the camaraderie and how much energy does that bring you guys on the court?

MATTHEW EBDEN: That's a testament to the captain. Obviously there's five guys playing on the team, but he's asked, like you see on the bench, we have another five guys backing up.

Like you said, everyone has each other's backs. Those guys have played last year, this year, I'm sure they will play again in future. We all know that we're all part of a big team and a really strong team with a lot of depth.

That gives us confidence, and yeah, like you said, it's just a group where everyone kind of gels. It's pretty rare. I have been part of Davis Cup since Lleyton was playing, and there was always a few strange dynamics here and there with certain people here and there, but we've got, like, 10 guys and incredible support staff that gels amazing.

I think that's pretty rare and pretty special. I think we're all sort of feasting off that energy.

**Q. Well done to Australia. As usual in Davis Cup, you always perform really well, for some reason. I'd like to know from Lleyton, what motivates you to be captain year after year, year after year? Because there are not many former No. 1 in the world who still do the job you do with the same enthusiasm. I mean, Yannick Noah won three Davis Cup as captain but probably was the last one as far as I remember. Is it because in Australia that this Cup is so important and more maybe than many other countries, so that pushes you up to keep this role or other reasons?**

CAPTAIN LLEYTON HEWITT: Well, there is probably a number of reasons. Yeah, it is bloody important to Australia, this competition, and we all understand the rich history. And we are fortunate we come from a country that's had plenty of success in this competition over so many years and we've had so many great players play before us. I think that's really important for these younger guys to know.

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You know, a lot of people went out of their way to help me play Davis Cup and represent Australia, and I think I owe Australian tennis for me to go out there and give my all to try and help these boys hold up the Cup one day. That's what drives me. I'm a competitor.

But there is no better feeling in tennis, you know, the feeling that I got as a player representing Australia, and getting the wins that I did in the big Davis Cup matches. Yeah, I want these boys to get that same feeling (smiling).

Yeah, that's what drives me. Yeah, I love it. I love seeing the boys going out there and competing and fighting their ass off for their country. Gives me goosebumps, it honestly does.

Yeah, as you said, playing, captain, whatever it is, and as Matty said, we've got a lot of players on the support staff. I turn around with a lot of pride when I see those players that aren't playing and they're supporting their heart out there for these boys. It means a lot and it means we've got the right team culture.

**Q. Max, going out there tonight, how much more inspired were you following Alex and the performance that he gave that you wanted to lift yourself even higher than you normally would?**

MAX PURCELL: Yeah, I didn't want him to go and come back for nothing (smiling). That would have been pretty disappointing. Would have been hard to walk back into the room, just walk back to the hotel. (Laughter.)

Doesn't kind of matter how the matches have unfolded before me. I want to give the same effort and hopefully the same performance every single time I go out there. I hope, yeah, the boys keep backing me to go and do it every time.

**Q. Congratulations for the win. I've got a question for Lleyton. Considering that ATP and ITF are working closely together now, do you think there are some way in which you, as a player and captain, and so on, you can go through ATP and say what are your preferences in terms of formula? Because, for example, Novak last days told us he's not happy at all. Last question, with the new format, of course, it's a long time we are not going to Australia for big matches, semifinal, final, so on. Do you think that's something that's important the way the general public is following the competition?**

CAPTAIN LLEYTON HEWITT: Yeah, I'm not going to go into everything tonight. It's too late and I'm too drained, to be honest.

But to answer your question, we would love to play bigger matches in Australia, no doubt about it. Yeah, I have said it a lot, but yeah, I'm not going to go into it more tonight.

You know, Australia does miss out throughout the year. We're a long way from world-class tennis, apart from the month of January. And so I feel like our fans and the great sport of tennis in a sporting country like Australia deserves to see it.

It won't be every year. You know, we could lose first round in an away tie sometimes in Davis Cup and you don't see it. But every three years, to get some big ties where you get some of the best players, you play on grass, you play on clay, you play on different surfaces I think is really important to the sport.

**Q. Lleyton, just another one on Alex. I know obviously he's his own man and his own player out there, but couldn't help but notice in the final stages there was a defensive lobby put out, some real scrambling, some plays out of your own play book. Can you just talk about your connection with him and how much of yourself you see in him on the court?**

CAPTAIN LLEYTON HEWITT: Well, he's a great counterpuncher. That doesn't have a lot to do with me. We're both not the biggest guys out there, and we have to find ways to win points.

You know, I prided myself on never-say-die attitude, and he's certainly in the same vein with that. Yeah, we're just awfully proud of him as a team, for him to go out there and put the boys on his back again and give us an opportunity to go through. Yeah, it gives us a chance in a couple of days' time.

**Q. Looking ahead on Finland in the semis, I mean, this was the tenth meeting against Czech Republic, but Finland is a completely new kettle of fish. What are your thoughts going into that one?**

CAPTAIN LLEYTON HEWITT: Yeah, I haven't thought about it at all yet. I will wake up tomorrow, just want to enjoy tonight, relax, and then tomorrow I'll start focusing on those guys.

Obviously Ruusuvuori is a quality player and didn't play yesterday. Yeah, Otto put his hand up yesterday and played two very big matches for them.

So they're going to be coming in very confident. We will be doing our homework, will be doing absolutely everything in our power to go out there and take care of business, but we certainly won't be taking them lightly at all.

