

Davis Cup Finals

Thursday, 23 November 2023

Team Netherlands

Botic van de Zandschulp

Press Conference

B. Van de ZANDSCHULP/M. Arnaldi

6-7, 6-3, 7-6

Team Italy - 0

Team Netherlands - 1

THE MODERATOR: We will start with English questions.

Q. Botic, how difficult mentally was that third set? You were up a break, and then he broke back. He was playing very well. You were hanging in there. I'd like to know about the mental challenges. You faced three match points, as well.

BOTIC van de ZANDSCHULP: Yeah, it was not only the third set, but I think the whole match, it's a mental game because you know they have Sinner as the first player.

Yeah, before the tie, you know, this is the singles you want to win. So, yeah, that's also bringing a different kind of fight and pressure.

Yeah, I think we both felt it during the first set. Yeah, I start to play better from the second set on to the third. Yeah, was a break up. He started to play better tennis when I was leading. Yeah, was lucky. Lucky I got the win in the end, I think.

Q. You mentioned it was kind of a different challenge, you know, with Sinner in the second match of the tie. This victory is going to do wonders, I guess, for your confidence. You also mentioned it was kind of a rough year. How important is it for you to win in such fashion, saving three match points, for you personally?

BOTIC van de ZANDSCHULP: Yeah, for me personally I think it's pretty important. I lost some matches where I had some match points. So, yeah, it's good it happens the other way around.

Yeah, and trying to keep on working on this, and hopefully



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there is coming a next match this week. Maybe I start playing better there.

But yeah, at the end, I'm most happy for the team. We got the win, and hopefully a little bit of pressure is away from Tallon and he can play freely. He lost the first 7-6, so let's hope he can turn around in the second.

Q. Forgive me for jumping ahead, but if you guys win and if Britain win it will be Britain versus Netherlands in the semifinals. Jack Draper is the No. 2 who you, in theory, would be playing. Wonder how much you have seen of him play. I don't think you have played him before on tour. What do you make of his game?

BOTIC van de ZANDSCHULP: Yeah, I have practiced with him a couple of times. Yeah, I think he's an amazing player. He's still young and he's progressing really fast. He had some injuries as well this year.

I think he bounced back really well at the end of the year. Yeah, I think he's playing really tough, serving well, playing really decent in the rallies. So, yeah, it will be a tough opponent to play.

But I think it's still far away to predict a match between The Netherlands and Great Britain.

Q. Botic, last year you were the No. 1 for The Netherlands. Wondering, do you have a preference of sort of the pressure of going out first or playing second? Is that important to you at all or not?

BOTIC van de ZANDSCHULP: Yeah, I think it's bringing different kind of, yeah, pressure, what you said.

But yeah, last year I played at 1-0 down, so sometimes it's working in your favor; sometimes it's working against you.

I think when you are 1-0 down, you have even more pressure to win the match; otherwise you lose the tie. Yeah, depends a little bit on the day, but I think, yeah, you get used to both, I think.

Q. You lost the first set that maybe you should have

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won. You made a double fault in important moment. But then you were able to, you know, to come back. What were you thinking when you were up 3-1 in the third and he made it even and you went 3-All?

BOTIC van de ZANDSCHULP: Yeah, maybe I should have won the first. I have to say I think we both didn't play very well during the first set.

Yeah, in the third when I was 3-1 up, Love-30, I think I missed a return, and from that point on he started playing a little bit better, a little bit looser. Yeah, he broke me back with some good winners, I think.

Yeah, he start playing better till the end of the match, so of course it's tough when you're a break up in the third and you still go to a tiebreak. But, yeah, I think it worked out in the end.

Q. Do you remember the match points? You were playing pretty slow, both of you, like if you were very careful to not miss. In the match there were 52 unforced errors by you and 51 by him. Do you think there are many caused by the surface, caused by the mental game which is that normally in Davis Cup or for other reasons?

BOTIC van de ZANDSCHULP: Yeah, I think what I said in the first, I think we made a lot of mistakes, both of us. I don't know how many I made in the second and third, but yeah, I think in the first set I made the most forced errors, I think.

What was your second question? I got distracted a little bit.

Q. Match point.

BOTIC van de ZANDSCHULP: Oh, match point. Yeah, first rally, the first point I think I hit a volley winner, so wasn't careful on the first match point. Maybe on the second, 6-5, we played a long rally, and yeah, he went for a dropshot.

And the third match point he missed a return, so yeah, was just one match point I think where we played a little bit more careful.

Q. Botic, you mentioned how neither of you sort of played that well in the first set perhaps. You also said how, you know, Jannik is playing the best tennis of his life but you've got a chance definitely in the doubles. Did you think that you and also maybe your opponent felt that extra pressure in that first set as a result?

BOTIC van de ZANDSCHULP: Yeah, I think so. I think for him it's maybe a little bit easier, because you have Sinner behind you. I have Griekspoor behind me, as well. Griekspoor is playing really well, but Sinner, I think, yeah, he's maybe a different level.

But yeah, of course I think we felt it during the first. Yeah, we played some sloppy games. I missed a lot of returns. I felt if I could make a couple more returns I should have won the first set. But yeah, in the end, I think we both felt it.

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