

Davis Cup Finals

Sunday, 26 November 2023

Team Australia

Captain Lleyton Hewitt

Alex de Minaur

Matthew Ebden

Max Purcell

Alexei Popyrin

Jordan Thompson

Press Conference

J. SINNER/A. de Minaur

6-3, 6-0

Team Australia - 0

Team Italy - 2

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Team Australia.

Q. Lleyton, obviously very disappointing again, just like last year. Could you just give us your initial reaction and what you thought about the whole week and today.

CAPTAIN LLEYTON HEWITT: Oh, yeah, obviously disappointing for the boys, yeah, to win like that, come awfully close yet again. Yeah, the first match out there today could have gone either way.

Yeah, Alexei did great. Created plenty of opportunities. Probably a point away quite a few times, to be honest. Yeah, and it's a completely different situation than going into the second match 1-0 up, as well.

Yeah, Jannik, he's played awesome all week. Yeah, the last few weeks, to be honest, last few months. So he showed why he's a top 3 or 4 player in the world at the moment. He backed up what he did yesterday against Novak and played extremely good tennis. I think the conditions and surface suit him perfectly, as well, which makes life pretty tough.

I'm super proud of all the boys and the support staff and



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the team. We did absolutely everything we possibly could have, and we have come agonizingly close yet again.

Q. Lleyton, I saw you take your medal off in a way as soon as you got it in an understandably disappointed way. I just wondered if you thought there was anything that maybe could have been different in either of the two matches today.

CAPTAIN LLEYTON HEWITT: Well, the first match could have gone either way. Alexei fought back really hard, had chances. 5-All maybe in the first set to break, as well. A couple of breakpoints then.

Yeah, just felt like he was doing the right things, creating plenty of opportunities. Played a great second. Then the third set felt like he was the better player for the whole set; yet didn't get the win.

Obviously, yeah, it's tough for Alexei. But then, yeah, it's hard to go out there and play Jannik, as well, afterwards when he's playing as well as he is and he's 1-Love up. He's a tough front runner.

Yeah, as I said, things could have gone slightly different. We were pretty bloody close, and I would have been pretty confident going into the doubles.

Q. Lleyton, I know it's hard just coming straight off the court, but I was wondering if you could just reflect on the week as a whole and in particular the format and whether this week's been better than last year in Malaga and whether it sort of helps win you over in terms of the new format. I know you said at the start of the week you would change it back. Just some thoughts on where we are right now with the Davis Cup.

CAPTAIN LLEYTON HEWITT: It's been a great week in terms of our performance, and we gave ourselves an opportunity. Yeah, Malaga has put on a great event in terms of what they can do with the format that they've got, you know (smiling).

Their hands are tied. There's no home-and-away and



... when all is said, we're done.®

there's no five sets, so it's not ideal. We are playing on a surface that, yeah, I'm really sick of playing on, to be honest. That's not what Davis Cup is about. It's playing on clay, grass, outdoor elements. You know, there's a lot of different things.

Yeah, it's obviously pretty frustrating, I think, that we don't get all the different surfaces and conditions throughout Davis Cup anymore, and especially in the big matches, as well.

Q. Lleyton and Alex, I just wondered, obviously you lose that first match in such an agonizing manner. What was the game plan against Sinner playing tennis from another planet? Just wondered what the thoughts were and what you could do to change that dynamic somehow.

CAPTAIN LLEYTON HEWITT: It was always going to be pretty tough. He's obviously very confident at the moment. As I said, I think the conditions, the surface, everything, you have a look at his run the last six weeks or so, it plays into his hands.

So, yeah, in the end, I'm super proud of Alex and the effort, but it was just an uphill battle. If he could have broken back to get 4-All in the first set, then things could have been slightly different. Yeah, those very best players at the moment are such good front runners. It was very hard to sort of find a way to get back in the match.

Q. Sorry for Max and Matt. Must have been incredibly frustrating for you guys, knowing that you weren't getting an opportunity to play in the deciding doubles. Could you just give us an idea of what you're going through?

MATTHEW EBDEN: Yeah, of course. I think we all wanted to be, after the first one, you know, a loss, of course we wanted to go to a live doubles, give ourselves that chance.

Of course we are very confident. We've been on a great run with the doubles, and the boys have been on a great run with the singles, too. Like Lleyton said, we were probably one point away from being in a live doubles.

Poppo, he played well enough to get plenty of chances, breakpoints in that third set particularly. Yeah, probably one point away from being in the live doubles and probably were pretty confident going into that.

Yeah, no secret. Of course we're all incredibly upset with that, but that's tennis. That's life. We left everything out there the whole year again. That's how it goes sometimes,

you know.

Q. Did you guys believe you could win this?

MATTHEW EBDEN: Yes.

Q. (Off mic.)

MATTHEW EBDEN: I think after last year, me personally, I saw and went through all that. Yeah, learned a lot from Lleyton and Rochey and took heart from that.

We asked Rochey to come back this year, saying, One more year, Rochey, be with us, we can do it.

I think we all really believed we could do it. I think we still do. I don't think anything's changed. Just didn't fall our way on the day.

ALEX de MINAUR: I also think there hasn't been another nation that's gone back to back in the last two years, so we are showing a pretty good effort collectively.

We are very, very close. It's stinks like hell. Again, like I said last year in this same position, we'll be back. We'll get this. I mean, we've got a very, very strong future ahead of us.

Q. When you come up against Sinner the way he was playing, can you talk about the frustration during a match like that? You're trying and giving it everything, 150% as you always do, and, you know, he's always got an answer to everything.

ALEX de MINAUR: Yeah, look, I think probably Novak said maybe a week ago, Jannik is riding this amazing wave of confidence. You know, he's playing in indoor conditions with, you know, some heavy balls where he can hit the absolute crap out of the ball. He's seriously impressive the level he's showing.

Again, I will find ways to get better, to be able to hurt these types of players. Today I just didn't have enough, and, you know, disappointed I wasn't able to give the boys a chance to play the doubles yet another year. That's probably the biggest disappointment.

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