

Davis Cup Finals

Sunday, 17 November 2024

Team Netherlands

Captain Paul Haarhuis

Tallon Griekspoor

Jesper de Jong

Botic van de Zandschulp

Wesley Koolhof

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Welcome to the Davis Cup Finals. Let's start the press conference with Team Netherlands. We will start with questions in English.

Q. I guess I'll start with Botic and Tallon, if you guys can talk about obviously playing hosts in Davis Cup is always a big deal, but there is an extra layer with the madness around Rafa's retirement. Can you just talk about that element and what's your mindset approaching this tie?

BOTIC van de ZANDSCHULP: Yeah, of course, it's always tough to play the host, like especially here, I think, but Rafa retiring here of course brings something special to the occasion. It's been already a couple of weeks I think it's living in the tennis world.

Yeah, really looking forward to the tie, something special. Also with Alcaraz here, you have some big names in the other team. So really looking forward to the tie, and let's see how the madness is going to be.

TALLON GRIEKSPoor: Well, completely agree with what Botic said. I think it's a special occasion for everyone but also for us to play Alcaraz/Nadal here in Malaga. Like you said, Nadal's last event, so I expect, well, crazy atmosphere. I think it's going to be an amazing day, and hopefully we're able to get a result against them.

Q. The captain, as well, if I can hear your thoughts and your approach to this tie, given everything around it.

CAPTAIN PAUL HAARHUIS: Well, it's the same as these guys. I think everybody is excited to play Spain. It's amazing that it might be the last match that Nadal plays, and we hope to give him a nice adios. (Laughter.)



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Q. For the captain, in these cases when the opponent is in the spotlight, does that release a bit the pressure on your team?

CAPTAIN PAUL HAARHUIS: Doesn't change a bit. We need to focus on ourselves. It's Davis Cup. Anything can happen.

We have been here now for three years in a row. This is the fourth year in five years. Yeah, we want more than being in the quarterfinals. So we're going to have to play well, and that's what we focus on.

We're not focusing on who has the pressure or, you know, we have to think of our own level. If we play well, we feel we can beat anybody. If we don't play well, a lot of teams can beat us. That's what we focus on.

Q. For Wesley, you're also approaching to your farewell. How are your feelings right now that you're a bit closer to that?

WESLEY KOOLHOF: Good. Nothing's changed since the last couple of months, actually. Had a bit of a farewell last week in Turin from the ATP Tour, obviously. No, feeling good and happy to be part of the team once more here in Malaga.

But, no, I'm not that much of an emotional guy, so I just approach it just as any other week. I made the decision last year already, so I knew that hopefully this was going to be my last one here in Malaga.

No, extremely happy to be here and to be part of the team again, and hopefully we can go one further than the quarters.

Q. This is for anyone up there. Could I ask you to tell us a little bit about maybe a memory of seeing Nadal play, playing against him? What might stick out in your minds about his career?

JESPER de JONG: Yeah, in March this year, I had the a privilege to practice for the first time with him. Yeah, as I

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said, it was a huge privilege. I think it's something on your bucket list that, yeah, you practice with one of those guys.

Yeah, my whole youth experience was surrounded by Djokovic, Federer, Nadal obviously. Then obviously Roger already retired couple years ago, and Nadal now, and Djokovic, yeah, could be over soon, as well, with his career.

I think they're, yeah, coming back to Rafa, I think it's one of the greatest athletes ever, and I think tennis will miss him a lot. But, yeah, it's been a huge player to look up to. Everybody at this table here learned a lot from him, I think.

WESLEY KOOLHOF: Personally, I only played him once this year in Olympics with Tal in the second round of Olympics. Yeah, full out, a full crowd in Suzanne Lenglen, which I think was one of my best experiences playing in the stadium, in a full stadium. The atmosphere was unbelievable.

I think that's always one of the matches which I will remember him playing, because I only played him once, even though we lost, but it was, yeah, a great memory, a great experience to play against him and Carlos at that point.

Maybe we can do that again, maybe can do that again this week (smiling).

Q. Botic, I wanted to ask you about your win over Carlos in the US Open, and just how much confidence can you take from that heading into this tie, in general, even if you don't play him?

BOTIC van de ZANDSCHULP: Yeah, of course, confidence is up. If I play well, I can beat a lot of players. It's not a big secret, but hopefully I can give some good words to Tallon, and yeah, let's see how it's going to go and we'll see.

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