

Davis Cup Finals

Monday, 18 November 2024

Team Canada

Captain Frank Dancevic

Denis Shapovalov

Gabriel Diallo

Milos Raonic

Alexis Galarneau

Vasek Pospisil

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Welcome to the press conference for Team Canada. Questions, please.

Q. Denis, coming off a title in Belgrade, where would you say your game is at right now?

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: Yeah, it's definitely at a good point. It's my first title in around five years, so definitely gives you a lot of confidence.

Yeah, I have been feeling good on these courts, as well. Obviously completely different conditions than Belgrade, but for sure playing very well and very happy to be back, part of the team. Yeah, I just hope I can help the team as much as possible.

Q. Gabriel, you've part of the setup now for a while but obviously with no feelings here. Do you feel like now is your time to really step up?

GABRIEL DIALLO: I mean, I think, like Frank said multiple times, we have a very deep team, and everyone needed can step up to the plate, whatever role it is, and whatever role I'll have on Wednesday, I'll be fulfilling it to the best of my abilities.

Q. Vasek, would you say winning the title here back in 2022 was one of the proudest moments of your career? How do you reflect on receiving the Commitment Award last night, as well?

VASEK POSPISIL: No, it definitely is one of the proudest moments, winning 2022. I have had a handful in my career, and I would put that up there, for sure, I mean, top



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3, if not No. 1, no question about it.

From a young age, I don't know, it was kind of always a dream to represent your country and play Davis Cup, and then once we had some results, you know, especially when we made semifinals in 2013, the dream was to win it one year. Obviously I'm reaching the last few years of my career, so to win it near the end was very special. So it has to be up there, absolutely.

Q. A question for pretty much anyone, actually. You're going to play Germany first without Alexander Zverev, so I guess it's quite a good tie to start the tournament. Do some of you already think about the next round and maybe meeting Spain here with all the special context?

ALEXIS GALARNEAU: Yeah, we're just focused on the first one. Obviously Germany is still a great team with or without Zverev, so we're going to get prepared for this one, and obviously it will be great to get into the semis, but we're all focused on the quarters.

Q. A question for Denis. Obviously there is a lot of Rafa all around the city and "Gracias, Rafa" signs. Just wondering, what's the vibe like, given that kind of impending retirement? Are you going to watch tomorrow night?

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: Yeah, for sure, it is a very special tournament this year with Rafa retiring here. Yeah, it's going to be very emotional and I think very dramatic in the sense of it's going to mean a lot to everyone.

In terms of watching, I'll probably watch it on TV. I need to get ready, and we all need to focus on playing Germany. At the end of the day, we know what's going on, but we still need to focus on our team and focus against playing against Germany.

Yeah, it's really cool, as well, Vasek shared the stage yesterday with Rafa and David. I think it was pretty special for him and was really cool to see him here one last time.

I think he's left a big imprint on all tennis players and

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people around the world in general, so definitely hoping the best, wish him the best, and I hope he can have good stuff going forward after tennis.

Yeah, like I said, we need to continue to focus on our task.

Q. Before you continue focusing, I have one more Rafa question. Do you have a favorite Rafa memory personally?

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: Beating him (smiling)?

There has been a lot of good moments, good matches between me and Rafa. Obviously some I have won; most I have lost. Yeah, it's been fun to go up against him and battle.

I think one of the best matches or most entertaining matches we played was in Australian Open, the five sets in the quarterfinals. You know, it was definitely a special match for the both of us.

Yeah, playing him, you know, beating him on clay was also a great memory, a special memory for me, as well, also given that the year before I had two or three match points against him and I lost that match.

Yeah, I think he's left a crazy imprint on the game of tennis. I remember watching him when I was just a kid, you know, cleaning up all the tournaments, winning so much. It's definitely crazy what he's been able to achieve. I think not just for a tennis player but for any athlete it's insane. Yeah, it's definitely very special.

Q. Denis, I wanted to ask you, with the offseason coming up soon, how do you spend your time and sort of decide how to divide it between resting, vacationing, taking a break, and ramping up to get ready for the following year? And when do you plan that?

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: It's tough. I wouldn't say there is even an offseason anymore, so I don't know, I'm not even really planning one this year. I'm just doing some training in Stockholm. Obviously you train a bit more, try to build up for the new year, but it's not much break at all.

Yeah, from here, I mean, I decided to go to Stockholm. I have the UTS event that I'm playing, to keep some matches, to keep in form. I'll go to Dubai to go home for a couple of weeks and then off to Hong Kong or Australia.

I think before it was easier a bit to plan like where you want to do the preseason and plan it all. I feel like now it's just a couple weeks, so it's not like really something you need to plan out anymore in general, you know.

So, yeah, initially I was planning to go to Dubai after here and do the preseason and have, like, three weeks, but then I got an offer to play at the UTS, and I thought it's a good idea for me, so it made more sense to stay in Europe. I guess I made that decision a little bit last-minute if you're asking when you decide.

Yeah, like I said, the season is never-ending, so there's not really any preseason.

Q. Denis, we have seen Kevin Krawietz and Tim Puetz just came off winning the ATP Finals. Do you think that gives extra importance or extra motivation to get a tie done in two matches to avoid that doubles match?

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: We're not playing Australia.

Q. Germany.

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: Oh, Germany.

Q. The German players just won the ATP Finals.

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: Yeah, we know they have a good doubles team. Obviously winning two singles is the priority, but with the format, it's always extremely difficult. A lot of these ties come down to the doubles.

I think me and Vasek beat them the last time we went up against them. I think we believe in ourselves if it comes down to that. Yeah, the best-case scenario is that we win 2-0, but yeah, it's tough to always hope for that.

Q. Denis, you said the season is never-ending. Do you think the actual current format of the Davis Cup is appropriate, or would it be a better thing if it was a bit shorter without these three distinct phases in February, September, and November?

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: I don't think the problem is the Davis Cup. I think the problem is that the season of the ATP is just too long, and there is no weeks to fit in events like Davis Cup.

Now also with the Masters, almost every single Masters being two weeks, there is no rest for players. It's not good for lower-ranked players, it's not good for higher-ranked players. So yeah, we're just playing the whole time. You see a whole lot of injuries now.

Yeah, there's just no time, and, you know, events like this, they are so much fun to play. Like it was an extremely tough decision for Felix, for example, to miss this tie. We talked about in Manchester how much he loves it and how

much these team events are needed for our sport, you know.

So to me, it's not that Davis Cup is in the wrong weeks. It's just that there are no other times to fit it in, you know.

Q. One question to the captain. What makes it difficult to play against Germany?

CAPTAIN FRANK DANCEVIC: Well, look, their games suit this surface. They have big serves. They are experienced players. They have a good doubles team.

Any team that's here in the quarterfinals is going to be a very tough team to beat. You know, we just have to be on. We have to be playing well. All the guys have to be playing well to give ourselves a chance to win. That's just how it is at this stage of the game.

You know, our job is to focus on ourselves, and whoever we play, whether we play Germany or Spain or Australia, it doesn't matter. We focus on what we have to do and try to get our team to be playing as well as possible going into the first match.

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