

Davis Cup Finals

Thursday, 21 November 2024

Team USA

Captain Bob Bryan

Tommy Paul

Ben Shelton

Press Conference

EBDEN-THOMPSON/Paul-Shelton

6-4, 6-4

Team USA - 1

Team Australia - 2

THE MODERATOR: Press conference for the U.S. team. Questions, please.

Q. A question to you, Bob. What's your assessment of the day and the biggest challenges of the day for you?

CAPTAIN BOB BRYAN: Yeah, look, we knew we were coming up against a tough team. Australia played phenomenal. You know, hats off to them on what they brought out there. I'm proud of our guys for really leaving everything they had on the court.

It was just a hard-fought tie all the way around, six hours of great tennis. You know, great stuff for the crowd. Obviously lots of energy in the building.

Proud of Ben, you know, in his first Davis Cup match, to really feel that's what Davis Cup is really all about, what he showed out there. You know, Kokkinakis played some of the best tennis I have seen him play, and Ben was able to turn that match around, claw his way back into it and put himself in a position to win. That's all you can do. We lost that one by a hair.

Taylor Fritz played like he's been playing in the last couple of months (smiling). It was a pretty clinical performance from him. Big serving, big groundstrokes all the way around, a lot of power.

The doubles, we have great options on this team. We have an experienced doubles team in Rajeev and Austin,



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and we've got a lot of firepower from the singles lineup. It was a matchup decision in this case, and I wouldn't change a thing. We were hoping to catch the Aussies a little bit by surprise, but those guys rose to the occasion and served a high percentage, took care of their, you know, their shots and stepped up.

You know, I'm proud of the way we competed. You know, we could have won it this year with this team. This team has the talent and the ability. It came within an inch of getting another chance in the semis.

Q. Just to kind of follow up on what you refer to as a matchup decision, could you explain a little more about why you preferred this doubles team? And when did you decide that and when did you let these two know that they'd be playing?

CAPTAIN BOB BRYAN: Yeah, you get 15 minutes to kind of talk about it amongst the team in between the singles and the doubles match. That's when we made the decision.

Thompson, obviously US Open champion, finals of Wimbledon, a very accomplished doubles player. Matt Ebden won the Olympics. Matt Ebden has seen Rajeev and Austin play a bunch in the last couple of years, and he hasn't seen too much of Ben and Tommy.

It was a tactical thing trying to take them by surprise. Ben was obviously on the court for three hours earlier in the day, so, you know, you find rhythm out there. Tommy, you saw what he did at the Olympics. We all respect his doubles. We took a shot at it.

Those guys played tough. You know, they are one of the best doubles teams in the world right now, and they showed it today. So hats off to those guys. They performed well.

Q. Ben, I know it's still fresh now, and I'm sure you guys wanted to get the win, but can you talk about your Davis Cup debut? That was quite an epic match. How did it feel to be part of it?



BEN SHELTON: Yeah, heartbreaking, for sure. It was really cool to be out there with the support of the guys and the team on the sidelines. This is my favorite type of format in tennis. I love team events. College tennis, Laver Cup, Davis Cup, whatever it is, this is my favorite format, usually where I think that I play my best tennis, just because I have the support of the guys on the sidelines and I'm playing for something bigger than myself.

So that also makes me more gutted that, you know, Bob trusted me. I went out there twice today, obviously I fought my ass off, and I didn't leave anything out there on the court, but to not get a win in one of those two matches hurts pretty bad.

But I'm just thankful for the opportunity to be here, thankful that Bob chose me on the team, put me out there on the court, and gave me a chance to play for my country.

So 100% I'm gonna, if he picks me again after this, you know...

CAPTAIN BOB BRYAN: I think the fans and the teams were lucky to witness that match today. You know, two-out-of-three-set match, that's gotta be the best match in Davis Cup history. And just to feel that passion of the crowd and the passion from the players, everyone just really spilling their blood on the court, that's what it's all about. Could have gone either way, but we were all lucky we were there to witness it.

Q. Bob, you obviously have so much experience playing this as a player and now experience as the captain. Having a deep squad like that is probably a great problem to have, but can you talk about your perspective of the challenge of making choices and lineups and all that? Do you see it differently now compared to how you saw it as a player?

CAPTAIN BOB BRYAN: Yeah, I think, you know, we're very fortunate in the U.S. to have so many great players. That makes my decisions a little bit tougher, because we are leaving some great guys at home. Frances Tiafoe made the semis of the Open, finals in Cincinnati. He's at home.

Unfortunately there's not a lot of roster spots. There is only five. But, you know, I wouldn't have changed a thing. You know, I brought the five guys that I thought would have the best chance to win this Davis Cup, and even after today's result, I wouldn't go back and change anything.

Q. For the captain, I know both situations are not necessarily comparable, but unfortunately both women and men's team, USA teams, have lost in their

first ties. I don't know if you can reflect on that.

CAPTAIN BOB BRYAN: Yeah. You know, we were hoping that Lindsay and her squad would have a good showing. Unfortunately they got tripped up, and we lost too. But that's really what sports is all about.

It's hard to predict. You just go out there and you, you know, you compete, and you leave it up to sometimes Mother Tennis. I think if we go out there and compete like that, we're going to have many times where we're successful, but like I said, congrats to the Aussies.

Q. Last one for Bob, if I may. I think maybe some people will look at this and see you as the captain and maybe expected that you would have favored a kind of traditional doubles lineup rather than going with singles guys. Wondering if you could talk about that and maybe if you were still playing, like how you would have felt as a doubles specialist and not been picked over some singles players?

CAPTAIN BOB BRYAN: Yeah, listen, as a captain, you have to make tough decisions. You know, I had a lot of information behind the decision. You know, we have been here for six days practicing. You know, we know how everyone is feeling, and we know a lot about the opponents that we're playing. It's a world of analytics.

You talk amongst the other coaches. You talk with the players. Luckily my brother is here, we have Dean Goldfine, Kent Kinnear, a lot of great coaches. We get together and we make a tough decision.

This wasn't a black-and-white decision. It was razor-thin edge, you know, and we went with it. We knew it could have turned out like it did, because we're playing a tough team. But like I said, I don't regret anything about this.

Q. Bob, you mentioned about the consultation there with coaches, et cetera. How much, as well, of the decision do you talk to the players or is it just you and kind of the coaches' decision?

CAPTAIN BOB BRYAN: Well, in doubles you talk to the players, because some guys are comfortable playing with some guys, and there is a lot that goes in, a lot of dynamics in doubles. We all talk about it as a team.

Look, Austin and Raj, they were very supportive. They were the guys on the sidelines yelling out tactics and helping with serving spots and coverages. You know, they're in it as great teammates.

And had we gotten through, we had a day off and we could

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

have, you know, maybe thrown a different lineup on the next days, but this is the one we had today, and we're not looking back.

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