

Davis Cup Finals

Saturday, 23 November 2024

Team Netherlands

Captain Paul Haarhuis

Botic van de Zandschulp

Tallon Griekspoor

Wesley Koolhof

Press Conference

T. GRIEKSPoor/J.L. Struff

6-7, 7-5, 6-4

Team Germany - 0

Team Netherlands - 2

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations, Team Netherlands. Let's start the press conference with questions in English.

Q. Good evening. Congratulations on reaching the final, your first-ever final for the Netherlands. What do you think has been the key to success to getting this far in the competition?

CAPTAIN PAUL HAARHUIS: The key is the team effort and the belief in ourselves. It was our goal to not lose in the quarterfinals for the third straight year, and we believed we could do it, even though we had a very tough draw with Spain. It was very nice to get to the semifinals. And then with Germany we believed also we could win this.

I mean, it was a good draw in the semifinals for us but also for them. It was about form of the day, and these boys just came through, played unbelievable good tennis, played with their heart, and showed what they're made of. But it basically starts with believing that you can do it, and that's what we did.

Q. Paul, is that really the basis of it? When you consider all the players that have gone before this year's team, Okker, Schapers, you, Jacco, Menno, Nijssen, all of these guys were never able to achieve what your team has done this year.

CAPTAIN PAUL HAARHUIS: Yeah, it's just that they are, I guess, better players.



THE WORLD CUP OF TENNIS®

TALLON GRIEKSPoor: Thank you. (Laughter.)

CAPTAIN PAUL HAARHUIS: Yes. And a better coach now. (Laughter.)

No, no, I mean what's the difference? They created chances and they believe in themselves. You know, sometimes it happens.

When we got to the semifinals 23 years ago we were very unlucky with Sluiter getting injured in the first match, and that really kind of ruined that whole tie. These guys were amazing today. They were amazing on Tuesday. You know, like I said, it's about believing in yourself.

I think it was coming. We had it coming the last couple years, you know. If you, for the first time in the quarterfinals, you might think, wow, oh, great that we are here. Yes, we were great that we were here. But not we really said this year we want more than the quarterfinals. We can do that.

So it's experience. It's believing in yourself. That's the key.

Q. Congratulations. Tallon, a question for you. When you kind of clinched the match, can you talk about what was going through your mind in that moment and in the closing stages of that match, as well, which was a great comeback?

TALLON GRIEKSPoor: Yeah, yell, it's nice to clinch a tie. I think it's been one of the first time I'm actually to do it. I let all the other times to the doubles guys (smiling).

No, I mean, it's nice, got an early break in the third, which helped me. Served really well throughout the whole match. I know what I can do. I believe in myself in these kind of situations.

I know my serve is reliable, and I am actually very happy how I closed it out today. Wasn't easy, as Struff was playing some very good tennis, as well.



So yeah, just very happy, very proud of myself, very proud of the team. Botic made it very difficult for himself, but even a better way to win it in the end. Wasn't easy, and just to get through like that, it's a big effort. So, yeah, just very happy to be in the final Sunday and to give ourselves a beautiful chance to play for the trophy.

Q. Congrats, everyone. A question for Wesley. Just wondering, when you announced that you were going to retire in the beginning of the year, did you imagine that this is potentially how you would be finishing your career? Just what does it mean for you to be in the final?

WESLEY KOOLHOF: Well, I'm not sure if I would have ever imagined it, but yeah, I mean, it was one of the reasons why I wanted to play at least one more year, especially because of the Olympics and because of Davis Cup, because I knew we had an unbelievable team. Reached the quarters twice in the last two years with basically the same team, I would say.

So, yeah, it's unbelievable feeling, of course, to play your last match, or maybe I already have played it, I don't know, but to be here in the final is of course a dream come true. Yeah, to be part of a team which, yeah, makes history for Holland is an amazing feeling.

Q. Just a question for you, Paul. You mentioned the fact that the Netherlands had done brilliantly these past years in the Davis Cup, two quarterfinals in a row and now a final. Does this have anything to do with the new format of the competition or it's what you said earlier, all about believing in ourselves, all about the players who play for The Netherlands?

CAPTAIN PAUL HAARHUIS: Obviously the format seems to suit us, you know, but the first two matches, but it's more I think the experience, you know, two, three years ago when we started doing well, these guys, Tallon and Botic, were also not that long on the ATP Tour, you know, so they are more experienced players now. It was a bigger occasion then.

So maybe a little bit more tension. Now they feel much more secure. They feel more confident. Like I said, again, it's belief in yourself that you can do it. And the whole team has been playing mostly together, maybe one new guy every now and then, but three out of five, four here, have been playing the last five years together, and that helps.

So that's part of the ingredient that we are being very successful, for such a small country, and what we are doing is more unique than, let's say, Italy with the No. 1 player in the team. If they win it, they say, nice, well done,

easy, yeah, it's easy. For us to be in the final it's such a much bigger feat than for them to win it.

Q. Last one is for Wesley. It's super clear, you said it this week, that you're not an emotional person, but let me insist a little bit. Do you think if Netherlands wins the Davis Cup there is a little chance that you can maybe release an emotion?

TALLON GRIEKSPoor: No.

WESLEY KOOLHOF: I don't know. I'll let you know on Sunday. But -- no, I don't think so. I don't know. You never know. Maybe -- crying?

CAPTAIN PAUL HAARHUIS: What do you mean with emotion? Emotion, maybe for you, crying, but they won the doubles point and he got right on his knees after winning against Spain. That's also emotion.

WESLEY KOOLHOF: Emotions I show, but emotional, something else, like crying-wise or whatever, that probably won't happen, I think (smiling).

But, yeah, you never know. No, I'm not a very emotional guy like in that way. But, yeah, I will give it a try on Sunday if we win.

Q. Botic, you won the match after I think tenth match point. Do you remember in the past some matches that you won after that many match points?

BOTIC van de ZANDSCHULP: I can remember matches I lost, but not that I had so many match points and won it in the end.

Yeah, what Tallon said, I could have maybe made it a little bit easier for myself, but yeah, he found some good tennis in the important points. Yeah, at some point, at 8-7, ninth match point, I had no idea what to do anymore, because I couldn't finish the point. Yeah, happy I got it done in the end.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports