

United Cup

Monday, 1 January 2024

Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

Team Norway

Captain Christian Ruud

Casper Ruud

Ulrikke Elkeri

Malene Helgo

Press Conference

ELKERI-RUUD/Vekic-Dodig

6-2, 3-6, 10-7

Team Norway - 2

Team Croatia - 1

THE MODERATOR: Congrats, Team Norway. Can you sum up in your own words your thoughts.

CAPTAIN CHRISTIAN RUUD: Yeah, was a very good day. Malene played a really good match. She could have won it. It's good for her to know that she can play against the best players in the world. Then Casper stepped up and played a really good match I think, winning against Coric. And we had Ulrikke, our doubles specialist. Good doubles work.

We're really happy to still be alive in the tie. We can still move forward to the quarterfinals, so we're really happy with the day.

THE MODERATOR: Malene, close match against a top player. Must give you a lot of confidence.

MALENE HELGO: Yeah, of course. Of course, I'm disappointed losing the match being up in the first set, having some set points, losing the set, stepping up in the second, not playing as good in the third.

Luckily Casper did the job and won his match and played really good. They won the mixed doubles, deciding super tiebreak. That made my day. Now I'm happy even though I lost my match.

THE MODERATOR: Casper, your experience in singles, two wins, then mixed doubles. You played better than the first day?

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, was a good singles match from



the first to the last point really. Happy with the level. Happy with how I'm feeling out there on court tennis-wise, physically.

Like my father said, Ulrikke came in, she has some good doubles moves. I think she has one of the best volleys on the female side. Great to have her at the net. Quick reactions. She can handle the guys. That's not easy.

We played well today. I think we did well as a team, stayed in there, fought. Looked quite bad for some periods of the day, but we were able to turn it around. We still have a chance. We're hopeful that we can sneak through to the quarterfinals somehow.

THE MODERATOR: Ulrikke.

ULRIKKE EIKERI: Yeah, I'm really happy with our match today. It was super close. I thought we played really well, yeah, most of the match. It's such a nice experience playing with Casper, as well. Yeah, such a great player. I had a lot of fun being on the same team.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Casper, 7-All in the match tiebreak, you decided to take it down the line. How confident were you that Dodig was poaching at that point?

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, I just went for it really. These doubles guys, they're so good at the net. Anything they get their hands on, typically they put it away. I kind of sensed that he was going to try to make a move. 7-All, that's typically what they do. They show up, clutch up. Went for it. The best return of the match luckily. Nice to see that pass him.

Serving it out at 8-7, 9-7, when Donna hit the return, immediately I thought this is going to be a good return. Deep. It was this much out. I was happy to see it land out. If it was in, I was struggling big-time.

Happy to serve well and win the tie. Yeah, was a bit of luck and also somewhat of sensing.

Q. Ulrikke, what does that do for your confidence? Dodig, top five doubles players.

ULRIKKE EIKERI: Yeah, I mean, they're both such great players. Dodig in doubles, Vekic in singles. It definitely builds confidence that I can beat good players, yeah.



Q. Ulrikke, how nice is it to see the importance of the mixed doubles in all of the ties here going to deciding mixed?

ULRIKKE EIKERI: Definitely this format is really good for our country, I would say. I think, yeah, with this format, we have a chance against everyone because we have Casper on our team who can beat anyone. We see Malene, she also showed she's playing well.

Yeah, I think it's interesting. I love to play the deciding match, as well. I love to try and win it.

Q. Casper, is there anything in particular that you've been happy with to start the season?

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, Borna I beat for the first time today. I lost to him previously. I thought the quality of the match was really good until maybe the last maybe game or two where his intensity dropped a bit.

It was a high-quality match. He had some break points in the first set, second set. I was able to kind of hold him away luckily. Like Ulrikke said, I think this format is more interesting. Last year some of the matches were already done after the singles pretty much. The mixed doubles didn't matter that much. You could be 4-0 after singles. Here it helps because now we lost one match, won, so we're very even on the match statistic.

Like I said, we're hoping to sneak through. It's more fun and enjoyable setup this year, the tournament in general. I wish maybe there were four teams in a group compared to only three. It's been three for the last two years. If there was a change, I would maybe change it to four per group.

Q. Did you see the funny video of your family members in the hallway?

CASPER RUUD: I just did now. I was eating, yeah.

Q. What are your thoughts?

CASPER RUUD: C'mon. They're not typically too shy in front of the camera. They like to be around the tournaments and show up, like to sit in the box. That's their favorite thing to do. They were courtside with us.

This is not typical for them to do these things. I think they were a bit embarrassed. I saw them. They were blushing and all red in their faces.

It was good kind of learning experience for them to say that they can't do anything they want at all times.

Q. It was your sister and your cousin?

CASPER RUUD: Yes, my sister and cousin. They're

here not playing the tournament, but practicing hard. They're going to both go to college after next summer. It was sort of the last chance for them to go to Australia. They're here and will come to Melbourne, as well.

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