

# Laver Cup

Thursday, 23 September 2021

Boston, Massachusetts, USA

## Team Europe

**Andrey Rublev**

**Matteo Berrettini**

**Casper Ruud**

**Feliciano Lopez**

Press Conference

An interview with:

TEAM EUROPE

**JASON GOODALL:** Good afternoon, everybody. Welcome to the official press conference for Team Europe. I'm Jason Goodall. I will be your host.

I will be asking the captain, the vice-captain, and the rest of the players an individual question before handing it over to Louie who will be taking care of the rest of the press conference which of course will be done virtually.

They have done the order of play as far as Day 1 is concerned. The afternoon session, which gets underway at 1:00 p.m. Eastern Time, features Casper Ruud for Team Europe up against Reilly Opelka for Team World.

The second match of the afternoon is Matteo Berrettini up against Felix Auger-Aliassime. All four of those players making their debut in this competition this year.

The evening session gets underway at 7:00 p.m. Eastern Time features Andrey Rublev for Team Europe up against Diego Schwartzman for Team World. And then a little bit of doubles to round out the action, Alexander Zverev and Matteo Berrettini team up against John Isner and Denis Shapovalov.

Without further ado, let's start with the captain, Bjorn Borg, who of course has won the last three Laver Cups here. What was your thinking behind putting out this particular team on Day 1?

**CAPTAIN BJORN BORG:** First of all, I'm very happy to have my team here. This is the future of tennis. (Indiscernible) Grand Slams, and for us to be together, and with the team spirit, we are ready to play this weekend.

The first day, we have six good players here. Doesn't



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really matter which one is playing. It's going to be a tough competition. Team World has, they have a great team, and I'm sure they are ready to try to beat us this time, but you never know. I think it's going to be a great competition, good matches, good tennis.

Every match is important, because it's always going to come down to Sunday, and then we have three points. But in the beginning it's very important for (indiscernible) and for team spirit and confidence. I'm very happy.

**JASON GOODALL:** Thomas is vice-captain. All three players on Day 1 are making their debuts. What advice have you given them in terms of what to expect as far as the overall experience of playing in the Laver Cup is concerned?

**VICE-CAPTAIN THOMAS ENQVIST:** Like you say, it's unbelievable experience, and we have Sascha and Stefanos who has been here before. They have helped to explain and to share their knowledge about how this event is all about.

The guys has been unbelievable how quick they come together and how hard they have been working to preparing for this event. I'm really looking forward to the matches.

**JASON GOODALL:** As far as Casper Ruud is concerned, making his debut here, spearheading Team Europe, what does it feel like to be making your debut up first?

**CASPER RUUD:** I'm really excited. It will fun to kind of get the show going. I'm sure I will feel some nerves, you know, in the 24 hours when I'm about to step on court. I have great teammates.

Like Thomas said, Sascha and Stefanos have played here before. They have shared their knowledge in our team dinner yesterday about how it was, and we have a good plan, I think. Hopefully I can get Team Europe off to a good start.

Yeah, I'm excited. I'm ready to make my debut.

**JASON GOODALL:** Matteo, a very busy day for you, playing some singles and doubles. What will be the focus be in the singles against Felix?

**MATTEO BERRETTINI:** I know Felix pretty well. We played last time in Cincinnati and at Wimby. We know each other very well. We are good friends.

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But now it's Team Europe against Team World. Looking forward to bring the point for my team, and then hopefully also with doubles.

JASON GOODALL: Andrey, you're another player making your debut this year. What have you enjoyed most about being a part of the team this week?

ANDREY RUBLEV: (Laughter.)

JASON GOODALL: It's obviously been fun.

ANDREY RUBLEV: Yeah, they are making fun of me. (Laughter.)

No, but to be honest, it's amazing atmosphere here. We are all making fun to each other. We spend great time together. We are practicing well, preparing well, and we will see what's gonna happen tomorrow.

JASON GOODALL: Alexander, you have played in all three of the previous Laver Cups. You've got a stellar record. What is it about this format that seems to bring out the very best in you?

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: I think it's not only the format but the team atmosphere that we're having. The three previous years it was always very close, very tight. I won the last two matches of the last two years, so it's always very close.

Obviously, as Thomas said, I shared my experiences with the guys who is the first time for them here. I think the stadium is going to be maybe against us a little bit. The crowd is going to be against us maybe a little bit. But we are who we are. We are six top-10 players sitting here. A lot of us are in incredible form right now. We do know that we are the favorites.

I think everybody is looking forward to it. Everybody is looking forward to the challenge, and we'll see how it goes. In the end of the day, we are here to hopefully win it again.

JASON GOODALL: Stefanos, I understand you're a basketball fan, friendly with Giannis, the Bucks legend. What's it like for you playing in an iconic basketball stadium like this one?

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: What was the question again, I'm sorry?

JASON GOODALL: You're obviously friendly with Giannis. What's it like playing in an iconic basketball stadium like this one, given that friendship?

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: Well, look, I mean, Milwaukee isn't far from here, I think. But I think it's great that we get the opportunity to play in stadiums like this and bring

tennis to these kind of stadiums and to these kind of crowds that haven't experienced tennis at such a high level, I think.

Boston is not really known to host big events and have ATP tournaments before. For us, we're gonna expose our best tennis this week. That's our ultimate goal and plan.

Of course, the crowd is not in our favor. This is something that we are expecting. We're gonna fight against it and try and prove ourselves with our game. At the end of the day, our tennis is what counts the most.

JASON GOODALL: Daniil, congratulations on the famous victory at the US Open just over a week ago. What's the best advice you have been given by all the other teammates who have played in this before as to what to expect throughout the course of the weekend?

DANIIL MEDVEDEV: Yeah, I was actually interested, I asked Sascha yesterday when we practiced, how was it in Chicago, because that's when we were kind of the guests. He told me, yeah, everybody is gonna be against us, that even when Roger is playing it's really rare, or Novak, they were kind of against them also.

So that's nice to know, nice to be ready, because I think the toughest is when you're not ready and everybody is against you, that's when you're gonna have problems. So we are all ready for it. As everybody said, I think we are just gonna try to win no matter what. That's, yeah, the most important advice and really looking forward to it.

JASON GOODALL: Finally, the alternate, Feliciano, how fit are you if called upon, and how excited are you if you get the opportunity to play this weekend?

FELICIANO LOPEZ: Well, I'm so happy to be here and to be part of this team. I want to thank Bjorn for giving me this opportunity. This is something very special, a unique competition, and I'm really looking forward to experience during the weekend.

Yeah, it's been said already by my teammates. I think it's a great chemistry in the locker room, and this is also very important when you play teams competition. Yeah, I think we have a great team.

Sascha said before, it's six Top 10 players in the team. We know the pressure is on our side. Yeah, it's gonna be very exciting, but really, I want to say I'm very happy to be here. Looking forward to the weekend.

JASON GOODALL: Best of luck, gentlemen. I will hand you over to Louie.

**Q. Bjorn, a question to you. Even though Team Europe has won the last three editions of Laver Cup,**

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**they haven't been one-sided victories. How do you consider or look ahead to this one? Do the past records mean anything coming into this Laver Cup?**

CAPTAIN BJORN BORG: Every win is very important. That's why we are here. We are going to try to defend our title. The matches has been fantastic, good tennis, and like I said, Team World, they have a great team.

Every match has been very close since Prague. I think we have been not lucky but we have been handling the situation very well, and that's what we're gonna do this time too.

But for sure it's gonna be very, very difficult, but in a team like this, I'm happy to have this team, and we're going to do everything to try to defend our title.

**Q. This is for Daniil. Congratulations on your New York win. I wanted to refer to Pat Rafter. After he won his first US Open, he said that he actually hasn't changed at all, he's the same old sack of shit. I wanted to say, have things changed for you? In what way? What's been the biggest surprise since you won the US Open?**

DANIIL MEDVEDEV: To be honest, not much. Yeah, I just took some days off. Now back to the tournament, so Laver Cup coming, just want to win every match I play.

Of course, I mean, a few things changed like there were some people who I am fond of or was fond of when I was young texted me or congratulated me, like some of them I was even surprised they were watching tennis or following me, of course most of them from Russia. That's some nice parts. Yeah, that's some nice parts of the victory.

But again, if not, I know what I'm doing in my life. I know what I'm doing in my tennis. Just want to continue, try to play good, and that's most important.

**Q. This is for Andrey. I don't know if you have seen, Andrey, in the past at this event, guys like Roger, Rafa, Sascha, have gone up to the bench to help coach their teammates. I'm curious who you think is the most likely guy to be the big player/coach this year, and which of the guys you would want coming to give you advice and why?**

ANDREY RUBLEV: Oh. Let me see my teammates. Who I would trust? (Laughter.)

Feli, I don't know, because there is only one minute between changeover, so he might be a bit slow. He's not gonna finish his advice. (Laughter.)

Casper can be, but he's too smart for me. Maybe I'm not gonna make it.

But, yeah, to be honest, in general, I think, as always, many guys said that here is best players. All of them know how to play tennis, what is inside, how we feel, how each player is going to feel. All of us can give advices, if someone sees something from outside the court.

Plus we have Bjorn and Thomas, such legends, and they know better than us everything, and so I think in this case everyone is amazing. I don't know.

**Q. A question for Bjorn. Before this season, I don't think many would have expected Casper Ruud to be a part of your team. What can you say about his performance this year? How do you feel about him being the first Nordic player in the Laver Cup and not a Swedish player?**

CAPTAIN BJORN BORG: No, I'm very happy for Casper. He had a great summer. Even if he played really well last year, this year he has been playing extremely well. I'm happy to have him on the team.

For Scandinavians, Swedish, always Norway and Sweden, we are like this. We don't like each other so much. I'm joking (smiling).

But for him, to do what he's been doing for many years and trying so hard, you know, right now he's ranked 10 in the world. He has a great future.

**Q. A question for Bjorn. I would like to know with all your tennis experience, all the titles you have won, which do you think are the best advices that you can give the players during a match? For example, during a match that is being a little bit complicated, what advice can you give to your team during the match?**

CAPTAIN BJORN BORG: I think these six players, I hope that they know what they're gonna do on the court. And I know -- okay (smiling).

No, but I have confidence in all of these six players, but I think you have to give energy, if they are not playing really well, you have to maybe change few things. But they know what to do. They know what to expect. They play these guys in Team World, they have been playing against them many, many times. So they know exactly what everybody is doing.

But I think energy. I think we all are gonna be nervous in this weekend. Not only Team Europe but rest of the world, they are going to be nervous too. It's a lot of pressure. We are a team. But like everybody is saying here, we have a good team atmosphere, and so we are still going to be a team. We not only hope for the best, but we are -- the Cup is going to stay in Europe.

**Q. Wishing everyone a wonderful weekend of tennis from the Novak Djokovic Tennis Center. A question for Daniil. Some great experiences for you this summer, winning a Grand Slam. (Broken audio.) Are you up for this experience? How would you rate this experience career-wise?**

DANIIL MEDVEDEV: Yeah, I think Novak has to work on the Wi-Fi maybe a little bit in his center, because we couldn't hear all the question, but I think I heard the end.

Really excited to representing Europe, my first experience, so I don't know what to expect. Again, I know the format, just want to bring the most points possible for my team in singles, because I don't think I'm playing doubles, I'm not really good (smiling).

Yeah, I want to see how it is, because, you know, it's not the same on TV or when you are playing, so I want to see, I mean, 20,000 people in this iconic arena, so just looking forward for my first match, and for the first match of Casper, also, to see how it is on the bench, what's the energy, just exciting.

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