

# Laver Cup

Saturday, 25 September 2021

Boston, Massachusetts, USA

**John Isner**

**John McEnroe**

Press Conference

A. ZVEREV/J. Isner

7-6, 6-7, 10-5

Team Europe - 7

Team World - 1

(Beginning of press conference was offline.)

**CAPTAIN JOHN McENROE:** John tried absolutely everything. Both guys had chances, obviously, anyone that watched that. John hit an incredible, 5-All, first set in the tiebreak, hit the top of the tape. Could have been his set, our set.

Battled extremely hard in the second to pull that out, which is unbelievable. I mean, I was, you know, felt like I was going to jump out of my pants, also, as well as a lot of the crowd. Obviously comes down to a tiebreaker.

I mean, it's a bit of a coin flip. Unfortunately we came on the wrong end.

**THE MODERATOR:** Questions, please.

**Q. John, how do you manage to remain composed in a situation like that? The crowd is going crazy. There is extraordinary tennis being played by both of you. The mental strength, just address that aspect.**

**JOHN ISNER:** I mean, actually, I think it's easy to stay composed. I mean, it might be a little bit harder if you're playing a normal tournament and you lose a tough first set, it might be hard to stay upbeat and stay positive.

But in that atmosphere, it's not so hard, in my opinion. You know, our team has had the crowd on our side, and it's helped a lot. It certainly helped us keep all these matches very close.

But sometimes having a crowd against you makes you play really well, too. I think that's what Europe is showing right now. I think in particular, the match today, it wasn't my best, I guess, super breaker, but Sascha played a good one. He clamped down, didn't make a lot of mistakes, made a lot of returns. He was the better player



# LAYER CUP.

at the end.

**Q. Both Bjorn and Sascha talked about what a high-quality match it was. Can you talk about what makes him such a tough opponent?**

**JOHN ISNER:** I didn't catch the first part of your question.

**Q. Both Bjorn and Sascha just talked about what a quality match it was, and I just wondered if you might share your thoughts, what makes him such a tough opponent?**

**JOHN ISNER:** Yeah, it was a very quality match. I mean, him and I have locked horns probably, off the top of my head, seven times, three times in Laver Cup, seven or eight times. We have played a bunch of close matches before. We always played a close match at this event.

You know, this is the third time we have played at this event and the third time it's gone to the super breaker, I think. I think this atmosphere, it's easy to bring out the best in everyone, and Sascha, I think it certainly brings out the best in him. He loves to compete and so do I, and I think that's what makes for a good atmosphere and a good tennis match between us, too.

**Q. This question is for Captain McEnroe. Tough loss today but a great effort by John. This summer's been a good one for American men's tennis with, I don't know, Reilly and Sebastian Korda, Brooksby and others. We are really trending forward. Our sport is one of just elites and reaching the very top. A tough question but that's asked often is what in America do we have to do to get to the very top and to have slam finalists and slam winners?**

**CAPTAIN JOHN McENROE:** Well, I think we are trending in the right direction. You're talking about legendary. The three greatest players, I think you know, Bill, that Rod Laver was my idol, so I would never not put him in the top of the list, but those other three guys, Roger, Rafa, Novak, I mean, they have been unbelievable and inspired a bunch of people, whether it's in their own countries or close by.

There is a tradition in tennis that I think we perhaps in America took for granted here, you know, when we had the success we had way back when.

The other part of it, I believe, is trying to bring the game more accessible to more people, you know, and get it in

... when all is said, we're done.®



schools more, I believe. So a lot of the people, young kids growing up or families that couldn't afford to play, have an opportunity. I think they have a better shot. Because of that, some of the best, I think the best athletes are generally playing more American football, basketball, even soccer, it's easier to put a bunch of kids in the size of a tennis court.

It was always my goal to sort of get it way from that elite feel that it had. I still think that in some ways it does. I'd love to be able to say that it could be more available to the masses. I think that would turn it around, bring the way -- if you look at the women that play, I think that the first sport that our best athletes play growing up -- I mean, obviously Serena and Venus are the great examples -- they play tennis, you know, because the playing field is more level. The opportunity is there.

That's what I would say. But, you know, the good news is that it does seem like we are heading in the right direction. Hopefully some big things to come the next five years. Still a lot of work to be done.

**Q. John, you played college tennis in Georgia and also saw you in some matches in Dallas. What excites you more about competing in team and also competing for the common goal? How do you also feel about the relationship that you have developed in this whole group?**

JOHN ISNER: Yeah, no, it's special, because, you know, 95% of the time professional tennis is an individual sport, and I chose to go to college to, I guess, groom myself for the pro tour.

I really enjoyed the college atmosphere, had a lot of fun competing. Definitely I think it brings out the best in everyone.

So I have been fortunate on the professional level to be able to play a lot of team events. In particular, Davis Cup and now Laver Cup, four editions of this, it's extremely special.

You know, as I said, it brings out the best in everyone, and in particular on our team, we get along. We sort of relish that underdog role because there is no question we are the underdogs, given how good our opposition is here, but we do relish that and we compete hard and we leave it all out there and we have a lot of fun doing it.

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