

Laver Cup

Thursday, 22 September 2022

London, England, UK

Captain Bjorn Borg

Vice Captain Thomas Enqvist

Rafael Nadal

Stefanos Tsitsipas

Roger Federer

Casper Ruud

Matteo Berrettini

Andy Murray

Cameron Norrie

Novak Djokovic

Press Conference



LAVEL CUP

against Reilly in Boston. So at least I will remember a little bit how it feels. I'm looking forward to it. I'm ready to give it all.

I've never played Jack, so it's going to be fun to play him here for the first time. He's a dangerous player for Team World. He's won a lot of matches, and he will be ready. Yeah, I will do my best and see how it goes. Hopefully we get off to a good start.

TODD WOODBRIDGE: Stefanos, you are up tomorrow, as well. We have a team with large results. How's it been dealing with everything else with the team? Are you coping with all the distractions?

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: Yeah, for sure a lot of distractions around here. But also, what a privilege to be part of such a team.

We didn't have the opportunity to play around these guys this much as a unit, as a team. For me, having that honor means a lot. I'm extremely proud that I'm here. I'm able to play by their side and contribute with my own tennis. That's what it's all about.

TODD WOODBRIDGE: Andy, the big four all together. You are on the court for Laver Cup for the first time. Expectations here, what that atmosphere is going to be tomorrow, any idea what that feeling is going to be like playing for Team Europe?

ANDY MURRAY: Yeah, I think tomorrow is going to be an incredible atmosphere. Obviously playing in the night session before Roger and Rafa, I think, yeah, it's going to be really special.

I'm looking forward to it, playing de Minaur. Obviously not an easy match. He's had a really good year, you know, tough matchup for me.

But, yeah, my first time playing in Laver Cup. I've watched it on the TV, you know, wanted to be part of it. So to get the opportunity to do it here in London is going to be great.

TODD WOODBRIDGE: Matteo, you potentially have some big shoes to fill. Are you ready to step into those?

MATTEO BERRETTINI: Well, biggest shoes I ever saw in my life (smiling).

No, first of all, I'm happy to be here regardless, me playing or not playing. Look at this lineup. My idol since I was a kid, so I'm really happy to be here, honored.

TEAM EUROPE

TODD WOODBRIDGE: Good afternoon, and welcome to the Team Europe press conference for the Laver Cup London 2022.

I'd like to open up by addressing a question to each one of our team members. I will start with Bjorn.

BJORN BORG: Good to see you.

TODD WOODBRIDGE: How is it going?

BJORN BORG: Everybody is healthy. They are ready to play.

ROGER FEDERER: Medium healthy.

BJORN BORG: I'm very happy to have this team. I'm very proud of it. To be part of this Team Europe, it's going to be great. We're going to see good tennis, good matches.

Unfortunately Roger is stepping away. But we are happy. It's going to be very nice.

TODD WOODBRIDGE: We now have the lineup now for tomorrow. Casper, I think you are out on court first, taking on Jack Sock. Important to get off to a good start for Team Europe?

CASPER RUUD: Yes, and I did the same last year



... when all is said, we're done.®

Yeah, I'm going to give my best like I did last year. Like Andy said, I think the atmosphere is going to be great, tomorrow especially.

But we are a strong team, united. We are having already a lot of fun. Really looking forward to step in the court.

TODD WOODBRIDGE: Cam, you come in as a second alternate. This is a pretty heady lineup to be a part of. Obviously you deserve it, but what if you got that chance to get out there?

CAMERON NORRIE: Yeah, just same as Matteo, just to be amongst these boys and to be hanging out with them and just to be part of the team, practicing with them.

Yeah, if I get the chance to go out there, I'm going to give it everything, enjoy the atmosphere. I'm sure it's going to be incredible out there. Just, yeah, just really happy to be here. Yeah, looking forward to the atmosphere tomorrow. Yeah, it's going to be pretty special.

TODD WOODBRIDGE: Novak, the big four, you have been head to head against each other for so long. To be sitting on that same team must be a very different feeling for you.

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, it is, different feeling from the feeling that we mostly experience on the individual tournaments. We don't usually maybe interact as much with each other, have that social time off the court as much as we do here during this unique competition that is Laver Cup.

I have had an honor to play once four years ago in Chicago and still have these memorable moments that I remember for a long time. Already these last couple of days have been memorable for all of us. We had a lot of laughs last night at the dinner, and I think that the atmosphere and the chemistry that has been created in this team is something that will help us do well and perform well on the court.

But also, you know, get to know each other I think on a different level than normally we don't have a chance to do for individual tournaments.

TODD WOODBRIDGE: Rafa, you have played under a lot of pressure many, many times. What's the pressure going to be like coming out tomorrow in what potentially might be Roger's last match?

RAFAEL NADAL: Well, hello, everyone. Different kind of pressure. After all the amazing things that we shared together on and off court, be part of this historic moment gonna be something, yeah, amazing, unforgettable for me.

Yeah, super excited. I hope I can have a good chance to play at a decent level, and hopefully together we can create a good moment and maybe win a match. So let's see.

But I hope that the crowd will be supporting a lot. Yeah, super excited to be here with the team. Of course be on court, having Roger next to me one more time will be something that I am very looking forward. Just very happy for that.

TODD WOODBRIDGE: Roger, choosing a partner is about choosing people that you gel well with in competition. Was it difficult choosing Rafa? Are you ready for the emotions that might come your way when you get on court tomorrow?

ROGER FEDERER: Yeah, I'm not sure if I can handle it all. I'll try. I have had some tougher moments as well in the past, you know, being horribly nervous, you know, all these years sometimes before matches. This one definitely feels a whole lot different.

I am super excited to have them on our team and my team and not having to play against them on my last match. Of course, it's super special playing with Rafa. Feels really different, you know. Also just walking out on court and having the chance to play with the likes of Rafa or Novak also in the past has been an amazing experience for me. So to be able to do that one more time, I'm sure it's going to be wonderful.

Like I said, I will try my very best. I hope to be good out there, and of course I will enjoy it but it will be hard.

TODD WOODBRIDGE: We will open the floor to questions.

THE MODERATOR: Can we keep it to one question each, please.

Q. This is a question for Andy and Novak. You two have played doubles a couple times together in the past, I think at the Australian Open in 2006 and Miami 2011. Are you guys hoping to potentially bring that partnership back here?

ANDY MURRAY: Well, we were chatting about it last night about different combinations and partnerships in the team, and obviously that's up to the captain to decide that, but we have many great options in the team.

Me and Novak would be a good one, but, yeah, if we don't, whoever steps out on the doubles court, yeah, is going to be a top team.

Yeah, obviously it will be fun to play with Novak again. Yeah, 2006 feels like a long time ago (smiling). We were chatting about that last night. I had hair, like, out here.

Yeah, it would be fun to do that.

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: I'm probably the worst doubles player on the team, so I don't know if I would get picked. If we get a chance to play, we hopefully win match, because we lost both.

ANDY MURRAY: Yeah, 0-2 (smiling).

Q. A quick question for Rafa, if I may. Rafa, having that opportunity to go out and play with Roger in what may be his last game, what memories, some of the greatest battles come to mind when you think about Roger and his career that you have had with him out on court?

RAFAEL NADAL: Well, difficult to talk about that now in a short period of time. Well, I think the memories that Roger brings to the sport, in my personal way, they are not only in matches against me. I saw him playing comfortably before I arrived on tour. I saw him having success on TV, and then I was able to have an amazing, create an amazing rivalry together.

In the other hand, something that probably we are very proud, have been a friendly rivalry. Not easy sometimes, because we are playing for such an important things for our tennis career, but at the same time we were able to understand that at the end, personal relationships are more important than sometimes professional things. We were able to handle it I think the proper way.

Tomorrow gonna be a special thing. I think very difficult, difficult one. Gonna be difficult to handle everything, especially for Roger, without a doubt. For me too. You know, at the end, you know, one of the most important players, if not most important player in my tennis career, is leaving, no? At the end, live this moment will be difficult. Of course I am super excited and grateful to play with him.

I can't thank enough the rest of the team for await me until today that I had a tough personal situation now, so thank you very much, everyone, first of all. Yeah, I just think I gonna try to do my best in every single way, to help to have this moment even more special than what it's gonna be.

Q. A question for Novak, and other guys can join in if you like. The unique nature of this tournament where, because of this year you have four generations of tennis history from Rod, Bjorn, John, yourselves and Casper, Stefanos, and Frances, is that something you can process in the moment and enjoy?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: I think as everybody said, you know, this is probably the most special moment that I guess we all individually and collectively experienced or

will experience. Laver Cup is the only competition where we get a chance to be teammates and not rivals, you know, and things being even more unique and special because of, you know, Roger's last match. So the excitement is incredible.

You know, as you mentioned, there are different generations right now present in our team. You know, most of us have watched and admired Roger's success and achievements, you know, before coming on the tour. Some later, some earlier. But, you know, we will do our best to contribute to the team and a good performance, but at the same time marvel and celebrate his career, because, you know, he deserves it in a great way. Hopefully we will have a great weekend.

Q. Novak, obviously we haven't seen you, a lot of us, since the Wimbledon final. I was just wondering, without going back, we know the reasons for it, what it was like for you sort of watching from afar everything unfold at the U.S. and seeing Alcaraz emerge as a really authentic superstar, if you have any regrets about the last couple of months?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: No, I don't have any regrets. I mean, I do feel sad that I wasn't able to play, but, you know, that was decision that I made. You know, I knew what the consequences will be, so I accepted them. That's it.

I mean, I congratulate Alcaraz for winning US Open. He did it in an incredible fashion, you know, in three or four five-setter matches in the tournament. He's 19 years old and already No. 1 in the world.

I mean, it's quite amazing what he has achieved so far. He's, I think, a great addition to our sport, a great star in making. Well, he's already realized the Grand Slam champion, so we can't speak about him as future, because he's already a present.

You know, I'm not used to making obviously the last 15, 20 years, longer breaks before the tournaments, but it is what it is. That's a kind of situation that I was in, and I'm just excited to be able to play here now and most of the other indoor season for the rest of this season.

Q. Novak, just wanted to clarify what the latest situation is for your return to the Australian Open this January. Are you in ongoing talks about that?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: I'm waiting for the news. It's really not in my hands right now. I'm hoping I can get some positive news soon.

Q. Rafa, Andy, Novak, a Roger Federer match perhaps, the most memorable one that sticks in your memory, whether a defeat or a loss that would come to mind?

ROGER FEDERER: It's going to be a win (laughter). I hope so, for them. They all beat me many times.

ANDY MURRAY: I was actually in the stands watching the Rafa/Roger Wimbledon final. I actually left when it started raining, and I missed the end. I watched it obviously at home, but, yeah, for me, I went in with some of my friends to watch that one, to watch that one live.

I know it's probably the obvious one, but, yeah, for me, that would be a match that obviously sticks out and one I was actually present at and not just watching on the TV.

Q. Novak, with your battles with Roger, what one comes to mind, first of all?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, I'll pick my first Grand Slam finals, US Open 2007. I lost that match.

ROGER FEDERER: He's being nice now (laughter). Thank you, Novak.

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: I haven't finished. (Laughter.)

ROGER FEDERER: We are going to get to the other 20-plus matches. (Laughter.)

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: That was the first Grand Slam final obviously, was remarkable experience for me at the time. Kind of the first match that allowed me to believe that I belonged to that level.

2019, sorry, Roger, finals of Wimbledon.

ROGER FEDERER: What happened? I've blocked it out. (Laughter.)

Q. Rafa, is it 2008 or...

RAFAEL NADAL: Well, I have to name 2008 Wimbledon have been always special I think, for me of course, but I think for him too.

ROGER FEDERER: Yeah, very (smiling). It's all coming back.

RAFAEL NADAL: I have to choose this one. And I think honestly the 2017 final in Australia was another very special one, because different significance. But a few months before we were together, injured, talking about...

ROGER FEDERER: Yeah, we were.

RAFAEL NADAL: ...how the things are going to be, if we are going to be able to be back on the tour at this level, and few months later we are playing the final in Australia, five-set match.

I think, yeah, well, plenty of moments, but I think these two moments for different situations are very, very special.

Q. A question to Rafa, Novak, and maybe Andy. When you heard the announcement of the retirement of Roger, did you have a minute where you thought about your own retirement? Did it change something in the way you see the rest of your career or not at all?

RAFAEL NADAL: You want me to start?

Well, I don't need to listen this news to know that the end is closer. You know, the normal cycle of life is this, no? Some people leaves and others needs to come. Nothing new. History repeats always.

Just this time it's us, and in this particular case is probably one of the most if not the most important player in the history of this sport that is leaving after super great and super long career. Some of us, we were able to have this to share this long career together, having some of us a lot of success.

Is true that when first is leaving, yeah, in your mind you miss something, no? In a personal way, yeah, have been very, very, very sad news and a tough day.

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, I think when we found out we were going to be on the team, Roger said at that point he still didn't know if this was going to be his last match and last time playing on the tour.

Of course it was huge excitement for me personally to be on the team, knowing that this will probably be the first and the last time that we will be all together, not knowing again that he's going to retire. But, you know, him announcing that made it even more special.

So of course it's a huge privilege and honor to be on this team, and considering what I have personally gone through on the court with Roger over the years, at the beginning of my career I was losing most of the matches between Roger and Rafa in the Grand Slams, and they have contributed a lot to the player I am today to figuring out how I can turn the tables. So I'm very grateful to be part of that era.

And with Andy, obviously we go back a long time. First time we played each other we were 12 in France. Was not a great day for me, but we had a lot of fun, you know, growing up in the junior days.

Of course we always wanted to win against each other. We always wanted to be better than each other. But as Rafa said, you know, on a personal level, of course it's different. It's a sad day for tennis but just sport in general. But, you know, Roger's legacy will live forever.

That's for sure.

ANDY MURRAY: Yeah, I mean, for me the last few years, yeah, I think as you get older as athletes and with some of the physical issues, yeah, you do think about, you know, what if or when should you stop and when is the right moment and how would you like it to be.

It's impossible to know, I think. But this, to me, I don't know -- maybe it doesn't feel the same way for Roger, but I think it feels right, like, seeing him and Rafa on the same side of the net together and finishing their careers as a team in this event with, you know, Bjorn on the side of the court, John McEnroe there, Rod Laver in the stands. Is going to be a really cool way to end an incredible career.

Yeah, I have thought about it myself, but I don't think there's many better ways to go out than like this.

ROGER FEDERER: Maybe one thing I would like to add. I always felt or sitting here it feels good that I go first from the guys. It just feels right (smiling).

Q. You're all making us cry, so stop it. Stefanos, I want to turn to you for a second. Yesterday you practiced with Roger. Can you talk a little bit about that and kind of what you learned from him, particularly indoors? And also from Bjorn who was guiding you as well.

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: Yeah, we started for the first few minutes, and I was quite impressed. I was, like, Roger, are you sure you still want to do this (smiling)?

No, it was a great practice. I enjoyed it very much. I missed Roger actually a lot. I haven't seen him on the tour. He's someone I always thought, like, when is he going to come back? I would love to have him back on the tour with us.

Having that opportunity a few days ago made me kind of feel alive again, feel in a way inspired, because he's the reason I pursued a single-handed backhand. He's the reason I felt a need to go for a professional career in tennis.

So it's a very special moment to be part of this competition. As Andy said, to top it off, you know, with Mr. Laver being here, Bjorn Borg, all the greats of this game, being gathered together to celebrate this amazing week of tennis.

Q. Bjorn, I wonder if you could just sum up what Roger Federer has meant to the sport? I know it's a bit embarrassing with him sitting right next to you. Given that you've only, I think, made one appearance at Wimbledon in 25 years after retirement, whether you have any advice for Roger about how to go

through the next stage of his life?

BJORN BORG: You didn't know, but he's going to play Saturday and Sunday, too. (Laughter.)

ROGER FEDERER: No, no, no.

BJORN BORG: No, first of all, just to have these big four guys and the new generation, Roger stepping away from tennis, but, you know, to have the greatest player who ever played the game to be part of Laver Cup, to be part of Team Europe, it's, for me personally, I cannot feel better to have all these players here.

What Roger did for tennis, he did so many PR for the sports, in general. One of the greats, all these guys here, but to promote the sport itself -- no one is bigger than the sport itself -- but what he did for the sport all around the world, it's amazing. We should all be proud. I'm proud of you, Novak, proud of you guys. But what he did for so many years, it's fantastic.

So for me to be part of this group of players, I'm very proud.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports