

Laver Cup

Friday, 22 September 2023

Vancouver, BC, Canada

Team World

Captain John McEnroe

Francisco Cerundolo

Press Conference

F. CERUNDOLO/A. Davidovich Fokina

6-3, 7-5

Team Europe - 0

Team World - 2

THE MODERATOR: Francisco and John, thanks for joining us. We will get things started. Your thoughts on the match today?

FRANCISCO CERUNDOLO: Well, I think I played a really good match from beginning till the end. I felt really comfortable with the court, with my game.

My forehand was working really good today. I think I return amazing, like, yeah, I was always there.

He broke me sometimes, but I had those games couple of advantages. Probably could have won a bit easier, but overall I think I played a really good match because it was my debut year in Laver Cup. Yeah, I wanted to play well, and I think I did. And the energy on the team was fantastic. I really enjoy that (smiling).

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Talk a little bit about what it's like to have that kind of weight off your shoulders, because I know it can be a nervy thing to come into a match like that.

FRANCISCO CERUNDOLO: Yeah, of course. You can start the game playing fantastic with all the energy John and the guys give me, or you can play really tight because you want to show your best tennis and you cannot do it.

But it didn't happen to me. I tried to enter the court, just relax, and tried to play my game, forget about all the environment and all of that.

I really like playing team events. I really like Davis Cup and all that. To be honest, today I enjoy a lot. I tried to get what the guys were telling me, what John was telling



LAVEL CUP

me and try to do it on the court. I think that really helped me and not to think too much on what to do and who is watching me and who is there. Just focus on my game. I think that was the key.

Q. John, the start, this is sort of a new way for you guys to start, jump out ahead like this.

CAPTAIN JOHN McENROE: Well, we never had a lead, so needless to say, this is a good feeling. So having been able to come back and having had some close encounters, obviously know that the first day is the first day, but we've got some young blood, some new blood, and a good mix with what we have and some people that were there last year. I think it's just a great team energy. It feels awesome so far.

Q. How much interest is there in Argentina? I don't know how you measure it, but have you had lots of messages from friends, from fans? Is there a lot of interest from journalists? How much is this registering?

FRANCISCO CERUNDOLO: I think a lot. I was checking my phone right now, and I think a lot of people watched my game, watched the game before, like, they were super, like, telling me and writing on Twitter, I saw from playing, and I think, yeah, in Argentina people really love sports, football, soccer is the most popular, but they really love sport, so passionate.

So when there is a guy or whoever is playing a great event, not only country but a lot of people try to follow him and support him, and today I think they were really looking, watching my match. It's really happy for me.

I saw I'm the first South American that won a match in Laver Cup. Yeah, really happy for me. Most of my friends and a lot of people watched today.

Q. John, when do you know to gauge the way a match is going and what to say, when to say it, when to pull a guy aside, whether he's a young guy like Benny Shelton or a more veteran guy, how does that process work?

CAPTAIN JOHN McENROE: Well, almost every guy here has a coach with him or is speaking to a coach. So you try to understand what makes a guy tick and talk to the people around him, as well, like Fran, for example, get feedback from coach and people and what they are thinking. That's important.

I'm not going to walk in, couple days, and say, This is

... when all is said, we're done.®



what you're going to do.

You hopefully have the right feel for knowing when to say something, when it's needed. I have been around the game a long time, but just look at the second set. It was a pretty unpredictable set. Both guys were battling really hard.

So I think that's the question, really. That's the million-dollar question, in a way, knowing when to say something that you hope will make a positive difference. That's what I try to do.

Q. We noticed you did a little bit of Salt Bae celebration a few times with your teammates. Can you explain where that comes from and if it is, what it means?

FRANCISCO CERUNDOLO: I have no idea, to be honest. I just saw Foe and Ben doing it when I hit some good dropshots, so they wanted me to do it. I just did it because I enjoy playing the match, enjoy the guys celebrating my points.

I think it's quite, like, a back-and-forth energy. They give me and I give it back. I think it's, I don't know, when you hit some like good hands, you do like this? Probably that. They obviously did it when I hit good dropshots on some good volleys. So I just, yeah, did it (smiling).

Q. John, I guess Boston was pretty one-sided. Wondering what your thoughts are here, if you're hoping for a certain scoreline and if you have anything in mind?

CAPTAIN JOHN McENROE: As long as we win the last point, it doesn't matter. Obviously you sleep less and you have more butterflies in the stomach if it goes to the bitter end, and that has happened.

In a competition like this, it's like if you win a major, you know, would you rather win it 7-5 in the fifth ten years later or win it 6-2, 6-3, 6-2? If you knew you were going to win it, you'd rather win it 7-5 in the fifth, because it's more exciting. If you didn't know, you'd rather win every match if you could.

So we'll see what happens. We're early. This is early, very early.

Q. John, does it get any easier for you sitting courtside? What is it like? What do you go through? Are you still getting anxious and nervous after all these years?

CAPTAIN JOHN McENROE: The short answer is yes. Obviously you're dealing with some people that I've dealt with before, but also some new people, which is fun, actually.

You know, I really enjoy this event. It's one of my -- how often do I get to be part of something like this? I think you know from past experience that I love team events, you know, so it's been a big part of my career.

So to be able to -- and then I look over to my right and I see Bjorn, you know, so it's pretty hard not to be excited, but it's impossible not to be nervous. That just not gonna happen. But that's part of what makes an event like this in sports so exciting and unpredictable.

Q. While you're sitting courtside, do you ever feel the desire to be actually on the court?

CAPTAIN JOHN McENROE: I always feel that desire, in a way, but then I go look in a mirror and I start with looking at the color of my hair, and I'm, like, How about doubles? (Laughter.)

Then I start to play doubles, and the balls come twice -- I can barely see them. Then I go, How about sitting on the bench? (Laughter.)

FastScripts by ASAP Sports