

# Laver Cup

Saturday, 23 September 2023

Vancouver, BC, Canada

## Team Europe

Vice Captain Thomas Enqvist

Casper Ruud

Press Conference

C. RUUD/T. Paul

7-6, 6-2

Team Europe - 2

Team World - 6

THE MODERATOR: Casper, Thomas, thanks for joining us.

Just to begin, an important win. Your thoughts on the match.

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, was very important for us to get this win. 0-8 heading into evening session wouldn't be fun for Europe. Definitely I think game on again. The goal obviously is to try to win two out of two matches this evening for us. Getting it back to 6-All would be incredible going into Sunday.

Even, if you think about it, one out of two would also be very interesting for tomorrow. We're only four points behind potentially. Every match being three points tomorrow, anything can happen.

It was important. Hopefully that can kind of shift momentum a little bit. I think the Team World bench were looking a bit too comfortable at times there this morning, so I'm happy to turn it around. I felt like I played great.

Tommy is a tough competitor no matter where you play him, when you play him. We had some really tough matches. We always played really tough matches in Grand Slams. It was fun to play him in Laver Cup.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. Even though you know bigger points are coming down the line, is there a feeling at all, a desperation in the locker room, where you guys are feeling our backs are against the wall or do you not carry that kind of pressure?**



# LAVEL CUP

CASPER RUUD: Not really. I told the guys yesterday in the locker room, Come on, I mean, we're 0-4 down, we lost four matches today, but 30% of the points have been given out. So don't worry. It's still a long way to go for World if they want to win. For us, we are not that far behind.

Like I said, just one out of two this evening, if we get one each, it's only four points, and the triple points for tomorrow is going to be huge.

I don't want to talk about it, but if we were to lose these two matches tonight will be maybe different story, but we will keep our heads up. We saw last year how they clutched up and won three matches in a row on Sunday, Team World, and kind of clinched a win there.

Even if we are coming from behind tomorrow, we can think about what they did last year and, yeah, it won't be over until it's over on Sunday.

**Q. Talk a little bit about your level. Obviously New York wasn't what you were hoping for. Just how you played tonight, seems to be a big leap.**

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, I felt really good. I went home after New York, disappointment. I wanted to do well. Did some few adjustments to my equipment, and it's been working out really well.

I really feel comfortable. I can hit a little more aggressive, hit more freely. This summer the ball has been kind of flying out of my racquet a little too much.

I have been mixing and trixing a bit with different strings, different string tensions. I feel like I have come to a point where I feel a lot more comfortable. I think my groundstrokes were pretty aggressive today, and I hit a lot of nice forehand winners. That's the type of game that I want to play.

This little break after US Open is, in a way, done me well. I feel ready to go for the rest of the weekend and also for the rest of the year and the fall.

**Q. Was there any kind of, I guess, pressure or feelings of just concern when you guys were trailing starting the matches so far today?**

CASPER RUUD: Both yes and no. In the end, of course you want to win, but Andrey told me after his loss, he cheered up and said, Just go out and have fun. Whatever happens, happens.



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He was disappointed, but he cheered me on. Of course I felt pressure, but I got a good start. I was a break up. Got broken back unfortunately, but I got the better start and that kind of calmed the nerves. Felt really nice to kind of steal, in a way, the first set.

From there, things went my way and, yeah, I just kind of never looked back and secured two points for us. It was big. Like I said, 0-8 would not look nice, but 2-6, there's a lot of matches left and a lot of tennis to be played. I have faith in Team Europe.

**Q. On court you were talking about perhaps being one of the leaders in Team Europe. Being a more experienced player, did you have to step up a little bit more to show what needs to be done to reverse that deficit that you guys came in with today?**

CASPER RUUD: I don't know. You know, the two first years that I played, I played one match each time and I played the first match, very different scenario than today, starting from kind of scratch, and luckily I was able to win those matches and get our team into lead.

Now we are trailing, but it's in a way an exciting position to be in. It's kind of fun to be on the chase trailing, and let's hope Team World in a way will feel too comfortable, and too comfortable can be dangerous because we will be giving it our all.

I wouldn't say I'm the leader of the team. I'm young. I played Laver Cup before, but everyone has faith in our Captain Bjorn and Vice Captain Thomas. I have shared some stories from the past with the players and with the team, kind of what's been working for me and for the team in the past. I'm trying, but I still seek advice from our captains.

**Q. On the tour, if you lose a match, your week is over because it's a knockout format. Here you can afford to lose a match and your team can still win. Does that free you up? If so, did you actually feel freed up today or was it almost like a situation where you had to win?**

CASPER RUUD: Well, I wouldn't say I played free, because you're 0-6, you think about it definitely, and if you lose the rest of the matches, might be a really bad lead going into Sunday.

I do think that honestly ATP or the tour should maybe look into having a couple of more events where you have like a group stage in the beginning of the tournament and then you go to semis or whatever, kind of like we do in Turin. I think it's interesting, because sometimes you travel so far and maybe you play a great match and you end up losing 7-6 in the third and you have to wait 10 days until your next match, it's nice sometimes to be able to play a little more free.

I think that's where the group stages, when that comes into play, you know you'll play probably three matches no matter what. Even though you lose the first match, there can still be a chance you make it into quarters, semis, whatever the playoffs are.

I think those formats are great. I wish, not sure it will change, but I do think it's a good feeling for players. You won't feel that much pressure on the first match.

Laver Cup is somewhat similar. You know there will be matches every single day, and even though you lose, you'll have a chance to bounce back in another day.

**Q. Thomas, when Casper won that match, how did you and Bjorn feel? Was this like, ahh, relief, or what was the emotion?**

VICE CAPTAIN THOMAS ENQVIST: Yeah, obviously very happy. I think Casper showed today why he's one of the definite best players in the world out there on any surface. If he can play like this on hard court and then on indoor hard, he's extremely difficult to beat.

I was very impressed about how Casper played today. He keep on developing, he keep on, he's been three times now on Laver Cup, and I've been lucky enough to be there for those three times. Every time you see him he gets better.

So I think he did a really good match today. To answer your question, yes, I mean, of course, we are down, so we desperately need the points.

But you need to, like this is sixth year we have the Laver Cup, and every Laver Cup comes down to Sunday. You really need to be, like, look, everybody needs to take the responsibility. Everybody needs to do their job in their match, and then we are there to support that and to prepare our team the best possible way.

So I didn't feel like the energy went down, even if we're down 6-Love. Hopefully we can keep it up. It's small margin if we'd have won the doubles yesterday, and were close in other match as well, we could have already been up.

**Q. Casper, sitting alongside Bjorn, you're pretty cool and laid back. Bjorn was the same. What was he telling you during today's match?**

CASPER RUUD: Well, both him and Thomas were cheering me on. Like I said, I got a great start. Kind of perfect. Was up a break.

Then it was tough kind of being broken back early on, but, you know, you get frustrated, but today kept my calm. It was a big hold for me at 4-All. I was four up,

and then he got three games in a row and 4-All was a quite tight game. From there I was kind of able to lift my spirits again. You know, Bjorn and Thomas really cheered me on.

Yeah, like you said, they were able to keep my cool, because Bjorn is very, very calm and cool guy. He's a funny guy to be around. He's watched so much tennis in his life, from playing it himself to watch the generations after him came up with Sampras and Thomas age group, and then Roger and Rafa, Novak, who kind of changed tennis in a way. He's seen it all. It's great to have a set of eyes that sort of really knows what he's talking about.

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