

Laver Cup

Thursday, 19 September 2024

Berlin, Brandenburg, Germany

Team Europe

Captain Bjorn Borg

Vice Captain Thomas Enqvist

Grigor Dimitrov

Daniil Medvedev

Alexander Zverev

Carlos Alcaraz

Casper Ruud

Stefanos Tsitsipas

Flavio Cobolli

Jan-Lennard Struff

Press Conference

TODD WOODBRIDGE: Good afternoon, everybody. Welcome to the seventh edition of the Laver Cup. I'm Todd Woodbridge. I'll be working on the broadcast here throughout the weekend.

It's my pleasure to introduce Team World, led by Captain Bjorn Borg and -- oh, gosh. I beg your pardon. It is Team Europe. They are on to me quick today, the boys.

So Team Europe, led by Captain Bjorn Borg, Vice Captain Thomas Enqvist, Alexander Zverev, Carlos Alcaraz, Daniil Medvedev, Casper Ruud, Grigor Dimitrov, Stefanos Tsitsipas, and we also have our alternates here, Jan-Lennard Struff and Flavio Cobolli. Welcome to all of you.

To get things started today, Bjorn, let's start with you. There is a bit of work to do after the last couple of Laver Cups. What have you been talking to the team about to get this one done?

CAPTAIN BJORN BORG: I'm just saying, the last two years, very disappointed, but this year, look at this team. I don't think I see we're gonna lose this year. This is going to be one of the good years.

But I'm happy to see these guys. Some of the guys have been playing in Laver Cup many times. We have a good atmosphere always, and to be here with all these guys, it's gonna be great. It's gonna be good tennis, as always,



LAVEL CUP.

good matches.

Rest of the world, it's a tough team, they play really good, they played really good in US Open. But I think we have a good chance, yes.

TODD WOODBRIDGE: Sascha, let me come to you, because it's playing at home for you. In fact, you have played the most matches in Laver Cup. I remember watching you a few years ago you had Rafa and Roger coaching you, and now you have become the leader of the team.

Is that a comfortable space for you?

CAPTAIN BJORN BORG: No, I think comfortable to see these young guys, to see this new generation. I mean, this is going to be the future, not only Laver Cup but in tennis. Yes.

TODD WOODBRIDGE: And Sascha?

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: Thank you (smiling). No, I don't see myself as a leader at all in this team, because I don't think this team needs anything like a leader. We have only champions on this team. We all know what it takes to win the tournament. We all know what it takes to win big matches. I feel like we have all done it.

Yeah, I mean, I have played the most Laver Cups, but it is a very special tournament. It is very different to maybe the regular tournaments that we play, but I think we should enjoy each other. I think we should enjoy having the best on our team. You know, normally we see each other at later stages of tournaments, and we want to beat each other, we want to do everything I can to win, and now we are here as a team and we have one goal and that's to win the Laver Cup.

It doesn't matter who is on the court. I think we, as a team, we all have full trust in that person. I'm just happy to be part of it.

TODD WOODBRIDGE: Well, from somebody that's played the most matches to Carlos, you, a debut here at the Laver Cup. There is a beautiful picture a day or two ago of you standing with Bjorn, John McEnroe, and Rod Laver. That's pretty impressive company to be in.

Are you feeling good about being alongside of those, considering now your Grand Slam titles start to match them in our sport?

CARLOS ALCARAZ: Well, yeah, for me it's a privilege to . . . when all is said, we're done.®



be surrounded by Bjorn, by McEnroe, Rod Laver, the legends from our sport who top the tennis in the top of the sport. So for me, to just try to learn from them so closely, and obviously here in the Laver Cup, I think it's a really beautiful tournament that I'm gonna try to enjoy as much as I can.

You know, with my partners, we used to fight against each other during the whole tournament. Now in this tournament we're gonna cheer on each other. It's gonna be a beautiful thing that I'm gonna try to enjoy, but yeah, I'm gonna try to learn from them as well as much as can.

TODD WOODBRIDGE: Daniil, many of us see you as the strategist of the team. Have you been sitting down with the captains and working out who should be playing who and where throughout the next three days?

DANIIL MEDVEDEV: No, not at all. The captains know everything better. (Laughter.)

Yeah, I think as everybody is saying, we have a great team and everyone knows what to do and the most important stage to win matches to get the points for the team. I'm pretty sure we're going to do it.

TODD WOODBRIDGE: Casper, back out in the first match once again. In Laver Cup, that first match has been hugely important. It's the momentum-builder.

Are you pleased to be there?

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, for sure. It's the third time I think for me, so third time is the charm, I guess. Try to keep it rolling. I have had a good record at the Laver Cup.

I love playing for my captains and the fellow players and looking forward to it, starting off tomorrow. Hoping to have a good Day 1 and get Europe ahead right away.

TODD WOODBRIDGE: Grigor, you have come off some really great form, back at No. 10 in the world. Just talk about the resurgence a little bit for us and being back here in the Laver Cup team.

GRIGOR DIMITROV: Yeah, it's been great. Honestly, for me, every time I'm in that team environment, I think I light up even more. So, you know, for me, as I said last night to the boys and to everyone, I'm just, you know, it's a privilege to be here at that stage in my career. To be able to, you know, to contribute to the team is going to clearly be the ultimate goal.

I have been playing some good tennis, have been excited, so, you know, also one day at a time at the moment, I'm still feeling that I can pick up a little bit more, and let's hope it's going to be also this weekend. Really looking forward to that.

TODD WOODBRIDGE: Finally, Stef, you must be disappointed, you're the only one outside of the top 10, 12 in the world. What a lineup that you guys have got.

I have talked about Daniil as the strategist. I'd say you're the thinker of the team. I'd like you to talk a little bit about...

GRIGOR DIMITROV: Creative director (smiling).

TODD WOODBRIDGE: Creative director (smiling).

I'd like you to talk beyond Bjorn and Thomas as the captains and the fact that they will be moving on after this year, and what they have meant to the blue team here at the Laver Cup.

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: Well, I'll tell you this thing: I honestly feel privileged to be led by the most good-looking captains that I could have ever asked for (smiling). I'm going to definitely miss them. Bjorn and Thomas, both of them are the golden gem of the team, holding us together, making sure everything is operated and run smoothly.

We have had some really good memories together, and I'm hoping we can leave Berlin with some even greater ones, bigger ones, and we can both build something wonderful this week.

TODD WOODBRIDGE: Finally, let's go to the vice captain, Thomas. You do a lot of the work out on the court getting this team together. How are they looking?

VICE CAPTAIN THOMAS ENQVIST: As you can see, they look amazing. (Laughter.)

TODD WOODBRIDGE: Perhaps in their form.

VICE CAPTAIN THOMAS ENQVIST: No, it's such a privilege to spend the week with these guys. First of all, Bjorn, my big hero, always a pleasure to see Bjorn, my good friend, and then these guys not only they are unbelievable tennis players but they are also great spokesmen for our sport. It's amazing to see how they come together and work, how humble they are. It's a very easy job, but it's a lot of fun, Todd.

TODD WOODBRIDGE: To get things started, I'd like to open to the floor now to everybody for questions.

Q. Carlos, Laver Cup is sort of the unofficial start of the fall indoor season. What are the challenges for you as you go forward from right now through the ATP Finals in this part of the season?

CARLOS ALCAZAR: Well, I'm not used to play so many indoors, so for me it's always great to have matches in

my bag in the indoor courts just to get ready on it and try to play better, you know. But obviously here in the Laver Cup, probably it's not official ATP tournament, but for me, I'm gonna try to play like it is and try to play my best tennis and see what is my level against a really good tennis player who is in a really good form.

But yeah, right now until the ATP Finals end of the year, I'm going to try to play as much matches as I can. Right now is probably indoors, indoor swing, so I try to get better every tournament, every match that I'm going to play. I'm right now, here in the Laver Cup, I'm going to try to be the best partner, best player for my team.

Q. Sascha, you have played more than 70 matches this year. It's a lot. Considering your busy calendar, busy schedule, would you have played this Laver Cup this year if it was not on your home soil?

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: I don't know. It's a tough question. But I have played Laver Cup in a lot of different places. It's not only because it's on home soil.

Does it bring something special to me? Of course. I love to play in Germany, and I think having the Laver Cup in Berlin is great and very important for German tennis, because, you know, at the moment maybe we are struggling a little bit, especially on the up-and-coming sides from juniors. We are not the best. We are not what we used to be.

So I think bringing the best players in the world to Berlin and to Germany and maybe some younger fans to see them play is important. But yeah, I love playing Laver Cup. When I'm nominated for the team and when I'm trusted by the captains, I try to always play.

Q. Carlos, no Rafa here, which obviously is a shame, but you played against him, and I wonder how you found that experience, what it was like actually being on the other side of the court from Rafa?

CARLOS ALCARAZ: On the same side?

Q. No, when you played against him.

CARLOS ALCARAZ: Against him, I mean, I think for me I just think when I played against him the first time, you know, there were times for me was kind of a nightmare. Obviously play against Rafa is always tough. I tried to find in a good way playing against a rival.

Every time for me it was a privilege to share the court. It doesn't matter for me that I'm gonna play against him. So every time that I face him, when I tried to be a good player enough to beat him, I mean, as everybody sitting at the table playing against him, we think that it is a privilege, or at least for me.

Q. Daniil, I just wondered, you have obviously had some great on-court battles with Carlos in the past, and now he's on your team. How are you looking forward to having him on your side for once? And when you go against all these guys for like 50 weeks a year, how easy is it to switch into being their teammate?

DANIIL MEDVEDEV: Yeah, it's actually very easy, because usually against many of these guys, in a way, you don't want them to win, like rankings or your matches, et cetera, when you play them.

So here is like the only week where you are very relaxed, you want them only to win, you don't care which score, against who. So it's a very easy feeling.

Carlos, I just wish he plays like against me and we're all good. (Laughter.) Then, yeah, we get some points and we're all happy. So I wish him only this, yeah.

Q. Carlos and Sascha, playing doubles, can you tell us if you have practiced together, have you decided which sides you're going to play on? How do you look forward to --

CARLOS ALCARAZ: Up to you.

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: Look, we found out last night during our meeting that we had at dinner, but for me it's a privilege to -- don't listen, because you're 12 years old and I shouldn't say so many nice things -- but it's a privilege to share the court with a legend in our sport already. He's only going to grow from now on.

I had the privilege to play doubles with Roger a few times, which was very, very special here. So now sharing the court with Carlos is also extremely special for me.

We had some tough battles at Grand Slams this year together, in Australia and at the French Open, so being on the same side is incredible. I think we're practicing together today. We're probably going to talk some tactics later on and decide from there moving forward.

CARLOS ALCARAZ: I mean, for me, it's the same as he said. We battled a few times this year, so have the chance to play on same side of the net, it's going to be great, going to be fun. Obviously with his serves and me in the net, it's going to be easy work for me (smiling).

But yeah, I mean, as he said, we're gonna talk a little bit later about which side we're gonna play, about the tactics, and I'm pretty sure that the match is going to be well.

Q. I have a question for all of you. I would like to know how much tennis fanatic is into you and how

many of you did watch the epic 1980 Bjorn/McEnroe final? Maybe found it on YouTube? Anybody?

GRIGOR DIMITROV: I haven't seen it.

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: You have not seen it?

CASPER RUUD: I can say that I watched the movie made by John and Bjorn, and especially about Bjorn, the movie that's made. What's the name again? Borg vs. McEnroe. You had me crying at the end. It's a very good movie.

CAPTAIN BJORN BORG: You did?

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, I did. It's well-played and shows kind of Bjorn's side more. At least in my case it was a great movie. I think everyone here loves tennis. I watched countless of matches of him and all the other legends. For me it was at least a very cool moment.

CAPTAIN BJORN BORG: For me, looking back, to see these guys, to spend time with these players, future players, tennis is one of the biggest sports in the world, but to be part of this team, to know these guys, it's a pleasure for me.

It's very happy. I'm very happy to do that. History is history, but, you know, for me it's very emotional to spend time, like we had a great dinner last night, to hear different stories, to hear these players talk about different things in life. For me, that means a lot.

Q. Grigor, we all saw the crazy and good images of your battle against Novak. Can fans here expect the same show, striptease and everything?

GRIGOR DIMITROV: I was hoping you're not going to mention that one. (Laughter.) I'll let the boys decide on that, whatever they want me to do.

No, we had a great time with Novak.

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: We win, Grigor gets naked, just for the female fans. And for Bjorn. (Laughter.)

GRIGOR DIMITROV: Shirt off is fine (smiling).

No, no, we had a great time with Novak. Honestly, he was such a great sport for that. Just truly happy to be able to establish my foundation in such a way clearly.

Yeah, you know, times is also about that, about the enjoyment, something that is, you know, worth it and means something to you. Now I'm on the team with these fellas over here, so I guess whatever I promise I need to deliver. So I better be careful.

Q. Bjorn, you mentioned last night the great stories

that came out -- okay, you knew I would ask that. What's the best story that came out of last night that you can retell, from anybody?

CAPTAIN BJORN BORG: My mouth is like this (indicating zipping lips).

CASPER RUUD: Can I say something? I thought it was funny, because Bjorn told us a story about when he flew the Concorde to New York, and Carlos, he didn't even know what the Concorde was. (Laughter.) We had to Google the Concorde for Carlos because he's too young.

GRIGOR DIMITROV: I mean, last flight was 2003 or '04? And you were born when?

CARLOS ALCARAZ: 2003.

GRIGOR DIMITROV: So we had a, yeah, educational ending on that. We're good. That's what we're here for. That was a good one.

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