

# US OPEN

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**David Haggerty**

**Bob Bryan**

**Feliciano Lopez**

**Jose Maria Arrabal**

Press Conference



United States would play against them, we would lose. I think four Davis Cup championships, so congratulations. A fantastic tournament director. He knows so much about tennis.

Jose Maria Arrabal, great to have you with us. Looking forward to Andalusia, Davis Cup, Billie Jean King Cup and our junior competitions, as well.

Also Miguel Diaz, president of the Spanish tennis federation, we enjoy working with you. Thanks for joining us.

**THE MODERATOR:** Welcome to Davis Cup Finals press conference this morning.

On the panel we have Bob Bryan, U.S. Davis Cup captain, legend, Olympian, gold medalist, I believe.

**BOB BRYAN:** Yes.

**THE MODERATOR:** How many?

**BOB BRYAN:** Bronze, two. But we don't talk about that in the United States. We only talk about golds. Michael Phelps won, like, 20.

**THE MODERATOR:** This is tennis. Weighs heavier.

Feliciano Lopez, tournament director, Davis Cup Finals, and Jose Maria Arrabal, general secretary of sport for the region of Andalusia.

I'll open to Dave.

**DAVID HAGGERTY:** Thank you. Welcome, everybody. Thanks for joining.

This is an impressive group that we have in front of us. I had the pleasure of being the USTA president and having Bob be one of those Davis Cup stalwarts that really helped the U.S. team.

He has a great story, which I hope he tells at some point, about his dad taking him as a very young child to Davis Cup, and he became addicted. We are so fortunate, the U.S. is so fortunate, to have him representing as captain and playing for so many years.

Feliciano, I have fond memories, but sometimes when the

**THE MODERATOR:** I'll ask a question to each of the panelists.

Bob, I'm looking at the schedule behind you, and see that the first tie for America is going to be I believe on the Wednesday. You have Wednesday, Friday, Sunday. How are you preparing the team?

**BOB BRYAN:** Look, the team's got their focus right now on the US Open. But I've talked to the guys. We announced the team during Cincinnati. Everyone is really excited to represent the United States again, to be on the team and compete, to try to make it to Malaga. Everyone is committed.

I think we have a strong team and we have strong competition over there, as well. It's not going to be easy. We're going to have to prepare and pretty much bring our best stuff to get through. I think it's an exciting opportunity for the guys.

I'm pumped to be captain. I told the guys that those are the ones you remember. Was passionate about it as a kid, like Mr. Haggerty said. Saw a Davis Cup match when we were 10 years old, the reason why my brother and I wanted to be professional tennis players. It's one of the reasons we chose doubles, Agassi and Sampras, had those singles slots locked down. We knew that was our best chance to play for the United States.

To have it come full circle, be captain, is really a dream come true. I hope the players really feel that passion that I have for this event, and it comes out in their play.

**THE MODERATOR:** Feliciano, you're tournament director



for Davis Cup Finals. We have quite a global representation of teams amongst the 16 playing in the ties. I think we have a very strong caliber of players competing for their nations. What are your thoughts about how this is all shaping up?

**FELICIANO LOPEZ:** Well, I think this is what Davis Cup is all about, it's about representing your country. So I'm very proud as a tournament director to see the lineup we have this year. We have many of the best players in the world are going to be competing in the Group Stage.

It's truly an honor for me also to be a tournament director of a competition that I love. I really love this competition. I have been so passionate about Davis Cup. We played many times. You know about my passion.

**BOB BRYAN:** Yes.

**FELICIANO LOPEZ:** It's been great to play you in the past. Most of the times we played, you kicked my ass, I have to say.

**BOB BRYAN:** Most of the time, Spain won...

**FELICIANO LOPEZ:** It's true we ended up winning, but I remember one in Madrid, was amazing, bullfighting arena where we played you guys. It was an amazing atmosphere. This is what the Davis Cup is all about.

Very, very honored to be in this position as a tournament director. Yeah, I think it's going to be great.

Thank you, Malaga, for your support. This is something special, a great competition that we all are very passionate about.

I hand over to Mr. Jose Maria.

**THE MODERATOR:** Jose Maria, the region of Andalusia has been under your leadership, been investing very heavily in sport. We're delighted that tennis is one of them. You've become really our 2023 super host because we have I believe the junior editions of Davis Cup Finals and Billie Jean King Cup Finals which happen ahead of the elite competition, followed obviously by the Billie Jean King Cup and Davis Cup Finals. I think this could be the first time in history of both competitions where you have such a cluster of these world cup events in the similar region and in the month of November. We're calling it November to Remember, and it's happening in Andalusia.

What do you think the impact is going to be for the region?

**JUAN MARIA ARRABAL:** Thank you for your kind words,

as always. First of all, allow me to say good morning and hi to everyone here in the room. Thank you so much for coming. Of course, salute and credit and thank you to Mr. Haggerty, ITF, to Mr. Miguel. We share the same vision about sports. Obviously the two legends of tennis here, which is amazing to share a table with you guys. Really respect you big-time.

I mean, we truly feel that sports are the best possible platform to trigger the best values in our society. In the last five years, we have tried in Andalusia to optimize and see sports as a platform, the values of progress, teamwork, team spirit, the best possible values and quality in our society.

We have managed to reach a number of over 200 events this year in our community, in service of our country, Spain, always servicing our country, Spain, but with our accent, we always say, the Andalusian accent. A special set of characteristics, a special set of values.

That's why we embrace tennis, because we feel tennis is really represents certain values, and we share that love for the game.

We truly love the game and what it represents for our society in terms of respect, in terms of prosperity, in terms of health, as well. I mean, the number of participants in our community has boosted big-time in the last few years. That's the pathway we want to follow.

We're really looking forward to welcome the world through tennis. Last year was an amazing experience, having Davis Cup Finals in Malaga, Andalusia, Spain, was unbelievable. We just mentioned this as an example. This match on Thursday, 9 a.m., Italy-U.S., full house, 10,000 people, a working day, 9 a.m. I mean, Andalusia embraces tennis. We look forward to welcome the world, not only with men but women this year in Seville with Billie Jean King Cup, and with the juniors.

We strongly believe tennis is a very, very powerful tool to change the world, and we share that love for the game. So that's what we want to be part of. We want to be part of a family and we truly appreciate the fact of being here and the courtesy of the invitation. Thank you so much, all of you.

**THE MODERATOR:** I'm now going to pass it over to the media for questions.

**Q. Bob, you know how tricky it can be, a crowded calendar, players are busy. There's a lot of events during the year. How do you pass along that passion you've had to the players to keep them coming back**



## for more and committing?

**BOB BRYAN:** Yeah, that's just communication. Obviously we grew up watching Davis Cup at home, packed stadiums. We know how much it means. We don't want that to get lost in the shuffle of the events and all the stuff going on on the calendar.

It's my job to talk to these players and let them know I have their back, but also we have this goal as a team to come together and win this Cup, to bring up that topic throughout the year.

We had a meal at Wimbledon, kind of a Davis Cup dinner where we all got together. We talked about stories about Davis Cup, what it means. I told them that these are really the moments that, when the dust settles and you're retired, these are the ones you're going to remember, the ones that are going to keep you up at night. If you win that trophy, this is going to be at the front of the trophy case.

I think everyone's on the same page. Just making sure that this is a goal on their refrigerator every year, to win this Cup. I think it is.

I think these guys, like Frances, Tommy, Taylor, they all really love this event. They came to it as kids. I remember seeing them when we were playing. The USTA would bring a group of high-performance juniors to the matches. I met these stars when they were eight, nine, ten years old. They got to feel that energy from a very young age. I think that's going to be with them when they're competing for the U.S.

**Q. Bob, can you talk about the bond you've had with John Isner, him beating Roger Federer in Switzerland. Jose and Feliciano, your thoughts Luis Rubiales.**

**BOB BRYAN:** We want to congratulate John on an amazing career. He really flew the flag proudly for the U.S. for so many years. Has that ace record of 14,000-plus aces. Top 20 in the world for over a decade. Just a great guy. Beloved in the locker room, but also a really good teammate. He was one of the greatest Bulldogs in history at UGA, great team player there, then came on the Davis Cup team and was very clutch, especially on the road when we had hostile environments, the crowds were rooting against us.

He came through in France, in Monte-Carlo, winning two matches on clay, not his favorite surface. Then beating Federer in Switzerland to carry the U.S. past the Swiss, which was amazing.

He's a great friend of mine and did really a lot for U.S.

tennis, inspired a lot of young kids. We wish him best as he moves forward in the next chapter.

**FELICIANO LOPEZ:** About John Isner, he's going to be missed because he was such a great player, but such a great human being, as well. I played many times against him. He was one of those players that really deserves to get the - how you call it, I lost it - the reward that they give you when you behave good on the court.

**BOB BRYAN:** Sportsmanship.

**FELICIANO LOPEZ:** Yes. He really deserves to be winning this trophy every year. He was a gentleman and a great guy.

Regarding the other question, seriously I think we should be speaking about the title, about the huge achievement that our national team did in that finals.

So I think anything that happened during the ceremony I don't think should overshadow the amazing achievement, so I really don't have any more to say about that.

**JUAN MARIA ARRABAL:** I fully agree with Feliciano. We barely spoke about it today. The headline here is that our women's football, soccer team, was able to accomplish an unbelievable mission. They deserve all the credit.

Whatever happens from the baseline outside the pitch obviously refers to a certain scope of responsibilities that is being taken care of, actions have been taken.

Public opinion has stated so much about it. I don't think we're adding too much in the exercise of responsibility from our end, and the exercise of respect to those women who accomplished that title.

I don't think there's much more to say from our end. Whoever is going to take action is taking action. Obviously with all the respect and spirit to assist you in your question, we don't have anything additionally to say.

We are actually hosting a women's national football team, first match in Andalusia on September 26th, in Cordoba. We had time before joining here to comment. We want all the attention of those women - men also on the technical team - all those who had an influence on such an accomplishment, that it's going to mean a huge inspiration for millions of girls who are interrupting their sporting activity at such an early age. That's honestly humbly what we're here for. We are actually here to talk tennis, right? We're happy to assist you.

**Q. On the 20th anniversary of Andy Roddick's US**

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**Open victory, can you talk to this generation of American men's tennis?**

**BOB BRYAN:** We've been really excited about this wave of young Americans who are now about 25 years old. They all came up together. A lot of them were training in Boca as teenagers together, just knocking heads, really pushing each other. They dominated the ITF juniors.

Unfortunately a lot of generations have been snuffed out by the big three or four and have been forgotten. Luckily they're coming at a time where there's a changing of the guard, and this is really their time.

I think all those guys really believe now. They're seeded at these events. They're favored on paper to win these matches. They're really coming through.

You see Taylor Fritz' scores in this tournament. Those are really beat-downs, and that comes from confidence. He's now a year and a half from winning his first Masters. The next step in that progression is to go deep in a Grand Slam, in a major.

I think once one of 'em does it, the other ones are going to believe they can do it, as well.

**Q. Are you thinking more adjustment to new formats for the new Davis Cup? Not everything is perfect. Do you think we can adapt to a new format for the next edition, and what can it be?**

**FELICIANO LOPEZ:** First of all, I think nothing is perfect in life (smiling).

I like this format, to be honest. I think the message was very clear when Kosmos left that the format is going to stay. This is what I can say so far.

I personally think this is a good format because it's been adapted to the new generation and to the calendar that we have right now.

We know about the commitments. There's a lot of events that have to be played. It is very difficult for the players nowadays to commit to all the tournaments, apart from the tour, these other commitments that they have to attend.

But my personal view is that this format is the best that we can have right now.

**Q. (Question regarding Davis Cup sponsorship.)**

**DAVID HAGGERTY:** When the change happened with Kosmos, we said that we were very pleased with the

format. We move forward. BNP is not a sponsor. We had a title sponsor. Right now we have secured most of the sponsors that we had as we move forward. We're looking for a title sponsor for Davis Cup. We're very confident we have a number of very interested parties in some final negotiations.

**Q. Rafa set his goal to play in Malaga. How will this benefit the competition? How excited are you as an organization of this idea, having Rafael preparing for this event?**

**FELICIANO LOPEZ:** I think you should be asking this question to David Ferrer, to our captain, because it would be a dream for him to have Rafa and Carlos playing together for Spain (smiling).

Well, I think Rafa is now going through a rehab process. I think he's doing well. I was talking to him just recently. He told me everything is going well.

But I don't really know if he's planning to play the Davis Cup. If this is going to happen, I'll be super happy because that will be a dream for David as a captain and for us as a nation to see Carlos and Rafa together playing for Spain. It would be amazing.

I think it's too early to say, honestly. I just wish Rafa a speedy recovery. I hope Carlos also will be able to play in Valencia. The most important thing is that Spain will qualify for the Final 8 in Malaga.

Having said that, I think David Ferrer would be a good guy to respond to your question.

**JUAN MARIA ARRABAL:** From my end, on top of comments from Feli and the rest of the Spanish armada represent the best of our country. We're here to tell the world that these guys deserve the credit.

Rafa is a flagship. Carlos is becoming that flagship, too. They represent the best values of our country and society in the world. They're competitive, they're unselfish, they are generous with the community. They respect their adversaries on the court and off the court.

Honestly speaking, we want to showcase to the world, that's what's country wants to be. Apart from all the considerations, honestly speaking, I think those guys fully deserve the credit and really represent most of the people in our country. That's what I would love to say. That's why I appreciate your question so much.

**Q. Jose, what is your favorite Feliciano moment? Bob, yours? Feliciano, you can say your favorite Bob**



moment?

**JUAN MARIA ARRABAL:** From a sporting perspective, Queen's, he achieved probably some of the most recognized tournament titles, such as Davis Cup. Again, this is something I never had the chance to discuss with him. Nobody expected, right?

**FELICIANO LOPEZ:** Not even myself (smiling).

**JUAN MARIA ARRABAL:** That's why it's even more remarkable. Again, if I may, off the court, the way they behave all the time, I mean, they really represent the best of our country and the best of athletes in sport.

These guys, the way they address media, sponsors, fans, is really an example, sets an example for any athlete. That's why we feel so close to tennis in general, and to our players in particular.

Also, I mean, needless to mention, our women, recently have a chance to spend time with Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario, comments about the movie on the Williams, the way she left the court. We need to have coffee to put that in the right place.

Apart from the funny comment, we're proud what these guys are bringing on the team for our country. It's amazing. We love to be part of this family, particularly in this country we respect so much and this tournament, so prestigious, something astonishing for us.

**FELICIANO LOPEZ:** Memories in Davis Cup?

**BOB BRYAN:** Of you as a fan of tennis, I would say you won the singles Queen's, then coming out after that and playing with Murray, who is a friend of mine as well. Murray is just five months removed from the hip surgery, from getting the metal hip. You guys run the table, winning that super breaker in the finals in London in front of his friends and family and the whole nation watching.

**FELICIANO LOPEZ:** That was an amazing week.

**BOB BRYAN:** As a fan of tennis, that was an exciting day for me to watch. As far as a player, you broke my heart a few times. French Open final hurt. Then when you beat Mardy in Austin in Davis Cup, I think you were down match point, that was a big match for the team to lose. That one hurt.

Those are the ones I remember, always the ones that hurt more.

**FELICIANO LOPEZ:** This is probably one of my best

memories from Davis Cup, together with the Finals in Argentina. Also my last match, the last match I played, in Madrid. I was 40 years old, I was able to beat Rublev. This is my last match.

I wasn't willing to play again Davis Cup because everything that I do is going to be worse (smiling). It's great that I finish my Davis Cup career by playing that match and being able to win against Andrey.

Talking about you, I mean, there's so many things, so many matches that you won.

**BOB BRYAN:** Don't worry about it. Let's move on (laughter).

**Q. Bob, you talked a little bit about going to the Davis Cup when you were younger, Tommy and Taylor and Frances doing the same. Who are the practice partners you might have selected this year, and whether you ever had that role being able to accompany the team?**

**BOB BRYAN:** Yeah, my brother and I were practice partners back in 1998 in Milwaukee, in the tie against Italy. Courier was on that team. Obviously the captain was Tom Gullikson. It was a thrill to be a part of that just from the practice side. It made us want Davis Cup even more, shoot for that, work hard for that.

As far as this tie coming up in Croatia, we're bringing one of my fellow Stafford Cardinal players, Nishesh. Can you pronounce his last name?

**Q. Basavareddy.**

**BOB BRYAN:** Historically we go with two practice partners, but this time we're going to go with one. I feel like Macky McDonald can step in and play singles and doubles. With the indoor courts, with the practice time being tight, we thought one would be more efficient.

He's a great guy, had a great season at Stafford freshman year. He's going back, going to bring it home for the Cardinal.

**Q. Bob, you had experience with this stage of the competition last year. How much will that experience or has that experience helped inform your approach to this stage of the competition this year?**

**BOB BRYAN:** Yeah, look, with the format change, I think doubles is definitely more pivotal. I think that lot of these matches are going to come down to the third match of the day: the doubles. You got to be well-prepared that way.

These are long days and they're fun days. I'm really looking forward to it. I think being in Glasgow, being on the bench before, is going to help me be more comfortable out there.

We get a ton of analytics. As you know, Feli, with the technology in the sport, we're getting a ton of information all the time. It's just finding ways to communicate to the player, making them feel good on the court.

I'm looking forward to working with these guys. Everyone is different, different personalities. I'm looking forward to going out there and putting it on the line.

I'm looking forward to having Mike there. He's going to be helping out the team. We have another great coach Dean Goldfine. I just think it's a great squad and I can't wait to get started.

**THE MODERATOR:** Thank you, gentlemen.

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