

November 29, 2007



An interview with:

THE RUSSIAN DAVIS CUP TEAM

(All answers through translation unless otherwise noted.)

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the Russian team, please.

Q. Shamil, can you explain your choice of singles players? Obviously a lot of people expected to see Nikolay play, being the top-ranked player on your team.

CAPTAIN TARPISCHEV: The answer to this question is really very simple. We have four equal players. The choice of Youzhny was made for tactical reasons.

Q. Captain, we know that the former president was a great fan of your team. We wonder if you've heard from President Putin about this final?

CAPTAIN TARPISCHEV: Our president himself is a very athletic guy. A lot of attention is paid in Russia to the development of sports.

It's not by chance that Sochi is going to be the host of the Olympic Games. After the previous Davis Cup tournament, our president had a reception for us in his residence in Ogaryovo.

Also the president council on sports, which I am a member. These issues are discussed here frequently.

Q. How fast is the court? Do you like it? Dislike it? You beat your foes last year on clay. Now you're playing them on a fast court. How fast is it? Is this to your advantage?

MIKHAIL YOUZHNY: This court is faster than in Moscow, and it will be to the American team's advantage. But it's not as fast as we expected.

Q. Dmitry, when did you find out you were going to play singles? Can you take anything from last year's semifinal against Andy? It was a different surface to this.

DMITRY TURSUNOV: I learned only a couple minutes ago at the draw ceremony (smiling). It was our captain's Christmas gift for me.

As to last year's match, of course it's going to be played on a totally different surface, and it's going to be quite different.

Q. Nikolay, are you disappointed because you are not playing singles?

NIKOLAY DAVYDENKO: Well, it was our captain's decision that the strongest are at this point Tursunov and Youzhny.

Q. Andy Roddick is undefeated this year in Davis Cup play. Certainly on a fast surface he is a formidable player. You're known as a wily coach. What have you told your players about how to play and defeat Roddick?

CAPTAIN TARPISCHEV: We have less chance with the American team here on this kind of court. But Tursunov was able to win on the surface that was different from what we're having now, so we're going to utilize. We have resources. We have this kind of surface.

Q. Dmitry, where does that match with Roddick rank for you in your career in terms of victories? Will you have mixed emotions at all, or will it be strange for you to be playing in America with the crowd cheering against you? And if you could answer in English, if possible.

DMITRY TURSUNOV: (In English.) So I think that it ranks pretty high because it wasn't an individual competition; it was a team competition. I don't put an emphasis on country versus country because to me it's not a battle of countries, it's a battle of the team.

I was playing for the team. It was very

special to me that I was able to help the team move into the finals.

Q. Will it be strange for you? Will you have mixed emotions playing in America where you have strong connections and have the crowd cheering against you tomorrow?

DMITRY TURSUNOV: (In English.) Well, I don't really have any special connections in Oregon, but it's close to California.

I think on the court it doesn't help or it doesn't hurt me. It doesn't matter where I play. You know, I've lived here for quite a while, but I don't feel that Americans should be cheering for a Russian. I think everyone wants their team to win. You know, it's understandable.

So I will have to, you know, kind of block it out, if possible.

Q. James Blake has had pretty good success against your players. Can you talk about what you've told your team to go up against him?

CAPTAIN TARPISCHEV: We are very aware of the strengths of both the American team and our team. This is what dictated our nominations for the first match. Whether our reasons were correct or not, we'll see.

Q. As defending champions, do you feel like you have a deeper and more talented team than America does?

CAPTAIN TARPISCHEV: It's probably not fair to make this kind of comparison. Russia has made great strides in tennis in the last 15 years, and the United States has a long history of excellent and first-class tennis. It's really unfair to draw these comparisons.

All I can say is that we have a strong team and they're versatile. With this team, we won two victories. We hope that we'll do equally well here. It's very prestigious for us and a great honor for us to participate in this event.

Q. Captain, I'm wondering if you could elaborate a little bit more on your singles choices. Apparently his own players only learned moments ago they were going to be playing.

CAPTAIN TARPISCHEV: As far as Davis Cup events are concerned, the United States team has both strong doubles and singles players. We have four strong, powerful players for every style,

be it singles or doubles. So the choice was made for tactical reasons.

Q. Dmitry, you spend so much time here in America, spend so much time in Russia, as well. Kind of a tough question. What do you think the two countries have the most in common and maybe the one thing that's most different?

DMITRY TURSUNOV: (In English.) Well, I think obviously the main similarities are both countries are big geographically. Both owned Alaska at one point (smiling).

But I think the biggest difference, other than the language, I think that the cultures are quite different. Although, you know, there's obvious similarities. I'm not going to go into details because there's quite a lot of similar things. I think it also depends from person to person. Even from state to state everyone is slightly different.

I forgot the first part of the question.

Q. How are they most in common, the two cultures.

DMITRY TURSUNOV: (In English.) Both cultures eat food, cook food. I don't know (smiling). It's a very strange question because you could be very similar to a Russian, but the person next to you could be very different. It's very hard to answer that question. You dress. We dress as well. We don't have bears running in the streets. You know, you don't have Indians camping by the fire in the streets either.

I'm not even sure if it pertains to tennis.

THE MODERATOR: On that note, I'd like to thank the Russian team.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

ASAPsports

...when all is said, we're done.®

visit our archives at asapsports.com

Russia - 11 29 07 (2).doc