

**November 30, 2007**



**A. RODDICK/D.** Tursunov

6-4, 6-4, 6-2

USA - 1

Russia – 0

An interview with:

## **DMITRY TURSUNOV**

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Dmitry.

**Q. You played out a five-set match last year in Moscow in the semis against the same opponent. Is it really the surface that makes all the difference here? It was a one-sided affair in the singles today.**

DMITRY TURSUNOV: Well, I think that surface has a very big importance in that match because it was laid out for Andy especially, for his serve. So I think that was a big factor.

But I wouldn't say that he actually, you know, won the match in the sense where he didn't come up with great shots on my serve. I was the one who was playing a little too passive.

Had I not done that, I would say that the outcome would have been different. At least it wouldn't have been as easy as it was. I think I was the one who really lost the match.

**Q. I think your captain said at the draw ceremony you were informed you were going to play today pretty late in the game. Did that weigh at all in terms of how you performed today?**

DMITRY TURSUNOV: Well, you know, to be honest, I don't remember him saying that. I don't think that was a problem because all four of

us knew that we're playing fairly even and the decision was going to be made last second.

I don't think that was an issue.

**Q. It seemed like you were struggling with your rhythm not only on the serve but off the ground most of the day. Can you talk about that? Seemed like you couldn't find your form at all.**

DMITRY TURSUNOV: Well, I wasn't struggling until I was down -- until the score was even. When I was a break down, I was playing fairly well. I think it was more of, you know, a pressure, maybe self-imposed, whatever you want to call it.

But when the score was even, when there was no advantage to any of the players, I wasn't playing my game; I was playing way too passive. I was very cautious and playing like I was afraid to miss, which essentially you can see when your opponent is playing in such a way and you can make certain adjustments. It gives you a little bit of a mental boost because you realize that your opponent, you know, essentially is afraid of playing.

So I think that's what really lost the match for me. But, you know, "rhythm" is a very abstract thing. It's really your mental state that allows you to play well or not play well, at least at this level. You can't come out and hit three forehands great and one forehand bad and say that's because you didn't practice enough.

So obviously a very large part of it is mental, and I think that's where I was struggling today.

**Q. Obviously this was a big opportunity match. What are your feelings now? Are you pretty angry, disappointed?**

DMITRY TURSUNOV: I mean, was it really that obvious that I had an opportunity to win (smiling)?

**Q. The match was an opportunity.**

DMITRY TURSUNOV: Well, there's always an opportunity in everything.

I think that it was expected for me to lose to Andy. I mean, you know, obviously not my expectation, but most people would assume that looking at the rankings, looking at the results. So, you know, from that point of view I wouldn't say that I had a very good opportunity.

But, you know, I felt like I was playing fairly even. Again, like I said before, I was struggling with my game when the score was even, where you have to come up with something. I don't really know how to explain it. Unless you play tennis, you really wouldn't understand it.

Basically the idea is I was playing too cautious. I was playing like I was afraid to play, and that's when you lose. You play by the score, not -- you don't trust your game essentially. That was the problem.

**Q. My basic question is: What are your own feelings now?**

DMITRY TURSUNOV: I'm feeling excited tremendously. I'm going to go celebrate (smiling).

I mean, how can you feel after a loss? Not very happy.

**Q. It seems like you've handled Davis Cup pressure really well in the past. Good record. Haven't lost yet. Why do you think today was different? Did you sense that before you went on the court? Did you have a feeling it wasn't going to be quite the same thing?**

DMITRY TURSUNOV: I don't know, maybe I matured. I realize every single point has a certain weight to it. You know, sometimes you lose a match by one point. But, you know, I don't know. It really is different a lot of times.

Sometimes you come out and you know that you have no chances of winning and you play well because you have no chances of winning so you can only go up. When you do realize you can win and everything is in your hands, sometimes it's a very big responsibility.

A lot of times it's difficult to handle that. I don't think I handled that very well today.

**Q. Does it have any effect or does it cross your mind at all when he comes out and he's pumping up the crowd like he was, jumping around after every point?**

DMITRY TURSUNOV: I don't think I could pump up the crowd.

**Q. Right. But does it affect your concentration?**

DMITRY TURSUNOV: No, no. It doesn't bother me. I mean, I expect the crowd -- it would have been weird if the crowd wasn't cheering for the United States. What else can I expect from the crowd?

**Q. I meant more him, the way he was acting toward them.**

DMITRY TURSUNOV: You know, it's his personality. It's not going to irritate me. You know, I don't think the crowd was a factor today at all unless it was boosting his performance. But it wasn't affecting my game negatively, let's put it that way.

**Q. It's great to be the defending champion. On the other hand, you're playing a team that's hungry, that really wants to win the Cup. As a team, is it hard to try to match that same hunger to win the Cup?**

DMITRY TURSUNOV: That sounds like you're asking -- it could be interpreted as if we're not patriotic enough to win. But it's not the case, I don't think. Nobody wants to lose in the final, and I don't think that Americans are playing any better because they're hungrier.

You know, every time we step out on the court essentially we want to win. I don't think that's a factor in this match. I think, I mean, we can't really compete in the doubles department with the No. 1 team in the world who's been winning tournaments left and right this year. Can you say that we're not as hungry as they are just because we're going to lose to them? No.

Andy is a tremendous competitor, and he's going to be a tremendous competitor regardless of what he's playing. He'll be competing whether it's tennis, whether it's golf. Whatever it is, he's a natural competitor. So I don't think that it has anything to do with us defending the title.

You know, we are the least favorite team for this match out of the two teams. We have to come up with strategy, how David is going to beat Goliath essentially.

**Q. Have you ever thought about if things had gone differently a number of years ago with paperwork you might be playing Davis Cup for the U.S. instead of Russia?**

DMITRY TURSUNOV: Well, you know, had I been born to different parents, maybe I would have been American as well. You know, I think everything that happens happens for a reason. If that's the way my life went, that's the route I have to take.

I think that wondering about what would have happened had the paperwork been filed properly... It's not going to change my future. It's not going to change the present.

I try not to dwell on the past, although sometimes that could be a problem for me.

**Q. I'm surprised to hear you say that it's like David beating Goliath, being you're the defending champions, and Russia has had very good Davis Cup success over the last five or six years.**

DMITRY TURSUNOV: Are you really surprised about this matchup? I mean, judging by the rankings, judging by the record of every single player against another player. I mean, none of my teammates - me including - have a good record against any of the other players, certainly not in doubles.

I mean, we're very outgunned in this situation. You know, we've also had a very difficult time in Chile. Against France. Germany, we also won in a deciding match. I mean, we've been having a difficult season in Davis Cup, let's put it that way.

You know, next year we'll also have a pretty difficult match against Serbia. I don't think there's a clearly favored team in Davis Cup. But in this case scenario, in the final, I think it's pretty logical to say that we're not favored to win.

Again, we're not going to be giving up. We're going to try our best. But if we do lose, it shouldn't be coming as a surprise, you know, to the tennis world. Everyone expects the United States to win.

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