

December 1, 2007



BRYAN-BRYAN/Andreev-Davydenko

7-6, 6-4, 6-2

USA - 3

Russia - 0

An interview with:

THE U.S. DAVIS CUP TEAM

THE MODERATOR: We're not a full team. We're missing Mike and Bob, but I present to you the 2007 Davis Cup champions.

Q. Patrick, how does it feel?

CAPTAIN McENROE: It feels wet at the moment (smiling).

I mean, you know, it's been a long road. You know, I couldn't be happier for those guys because they've been through it all together. You know, we've had a lot of ups and downs, but it feels awesome. It feels absolutely awesome.

Q. Patrick, is this your best moment ever in tennis?

CAPTAIN McENROE: You know, it's not about me. It's about this whole group of guys.

ANDY RODDICK: Say yes.

CAPTAIN McENROE: Yes, it is (laughter). It feels great. Obviously, as I said, to do it with these guys for the whole ride has been unbelievable. So it's pretty sweet.

Q. Andy, you have been stressing the collective, but can you talk about your personal journey as a 10-year-old spectator, participant, and now champion?

ANDY RODDICK: You know, it's been a long road. You know, when I was 10, a lot's been

written about that. I never thought I would actually play. I just really enjoyed being there as a fan and it really kind of got a hold of me.

To be here and bring the Cup back to the States is an amazing feeling. But more important, just to share the journey with these guys, it's just been so much fun. For us to have our moment, I feel like we really do deserve it.

We've been the ultimate team, and it's just been a blast and it's been an honor to be a part of that.

Q. Patrick, is it tough coming in as the favorite, expected to win?

CAPTAIN McENROE: Well, it's a lot better than going to Spain on red clay, for sure. I think the biggest key for us this weekend was the guys really kept their emotions in check. They went out and prepared really well all week.

Even in the last sort of month or so, you know, they had different sort of schedules, but they all were thinking about this, sort of preparing themselves individually as well as they could.

There was pressure on us, but I think Andy really set the tone. He has been waiting for this moment for a long time. And I just thought the way he handled the match emotionally, you know, was just real professional and real mature.

I think it's always better to go when you've got the home court, you know, to play into your hands rather than going away. But we did win two matches on the road this year, which is pretty tough to do.

I think that was really the key to the year, was to win two away ties.

Q. Can you talk about the boys' performance today? Obviously the Russians played pretty well. Tight moments.

CAPTAIN McENROE: Well, I mean, you know, when I chose the court, when we chose the court this fast, that's always going to make the doubles a little trickier because it's harder to break on a fast court like that.

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The guys know that and they knew going in that, you know, it could be four tiebreaks. So that's sort of the mentality.

I think their comfort level showed in the first set tiebreak. They got down a quick mini break, but I think they sort of ran off I think five or six points in a row, whereas on a maybe slower court they might be able to get into more return games.

They're just so good at dealing with whatever conditions that's there, so I think, you know, we knew that the doubles could be a little bit tricky, just like it was in the Spain match.

We picked the court more for the singles matches. It makes the doubles a little bit tougher.

Q. Mike, Patrick kind of predicted you might not get a lot of sleep last night. What was last night like for you? Did the other guys try to keep your feet on the ground?

MIKE BRYAN: I mean, it's been the worst anticipation waiting for this match. The pressure is unbelievable. I don't know how we seemed pretty relaxed out there, but my stomach was just churning. I didn't sleep that great for probably the last week, taking Ambien, doing whatever it takes.

But the anticipation's tough. To see these guys go out there and handle it so well, you know, Andy looked so relaxed out there and just stepped up, and James played phenomenal, put us in the position to go out there and clinch it.

I mean, a dream for us to win the final match and have the guys rush and come jump around with us. I mean, there's nothing like it. Thought we played a good match today.

I thought, you know, it's a sneaky team. We're the heavy favorites. I mean, we have all the pressure on us. I thought they hung with us for, you know, a set and a half. I mean, we were getting a little frustrated. We wanted to jump on them right from the start and blow them out.

ANDY RODDICK: Real long answer.

JAMES BLAKE: Wrap it up.

MIKE BRYAN: I'm giving one of James Blake's answers (smiling). I'm done. I'm done.

Q. Patrick, what realistically do you expect this to do for tennis here in the United States?

CAPTAIN McENROE: Well, to be honest, I don't really concern myself with that too much. You know, I got this question a lot when I first became the captain. I always tried to focus on the

guys that are here and the guys that really wanted to be here, and that was this group of guys.

What else happened sort of around that, I mean, the fact that we sold out here in 14 minutes, we sold out in Winston-Salem, that says a lot.

What it does sort of on a bigger level, you know, you hope it has some effect. But to be perfectly honest, that's sort of out of our control. But I think we've done our part. I think the guys have done their part. I think the people see their passion and their commitment for playing for their country and playing for each other.

And, to be honest, I feel like that's enough. I mean, that's enough. I think we're doing everything we can. We're putting on a great event. The guys are into it. If the rest of the world catches on, great.

Q. You don't see this as a springboard?

CAPTAIN McENROE: I hope it is. I mean, I think it could be, absolutely. I mean, I certainly think that there's only positives that can come out of it. Remember, Andy went to the Davis Cup final in '92, and that was one of the things that spurred him on to become a tennis player.

The Bryans went and watched in La Costa when they were, what, 10, 11 years old, and that made a big difference in their life growing up as juniors.

So if we could have affected a couple of kids here or in Winston-Salem or wherever we've been the last few years, I think we've done our job.

Q. Patrick, I don't know if you're aware of what the Russian coach just said 15 minutes ago, that he came here with a strategy. If James probably would have lost yesterday he would have put in for the doubles the same team like Tursunov and Youzhny and saved Davydenko and Andreev for tomorrow. How would you feel if that would happen? How would you feel today if you know the score was 2-1 for the U.S. and have to face two fresh players for tomorrow's matches?

CAPTAIN McENROE: I think it's 3-0. I think it's over. It's over.

ANDY RODDICK: That's a good strategy.

Q. Two tough road wins, then facing the always tough Spaniards. When did you sense this might be the year that the magic

might be finally happening? You mentioned on court all the distant places. What was the toughest moment, Seville or otherwise?

CAPTAIN McENROE: Well, I think the win in Ostrava was big because we played a clay court away tie against a very good team. I think the fact we were able to play an away tie early in the year on clay. You know, the three other years we've made it far, the semis twice and the finals. We played very strong countries on clay.

So this year I think it sort of looked like, hey, maybe we could play a decent country, and Czech Republic has a good team, but maybe not one of the top, top teams, away on clay. When we won that, I think we thought maybe things can break right for us.

But to go to Sweden and to win away in the semis was big. I think we caught a little break when Argentina lost. They would have been obviously very tough on clay. But, you know, to win two matches away was big for us.

I think the experience that these guys have had over the years was really key towards handling the away matches and also handling the emotion of the home matches really well.

Q. The toughest part of the seven-year run?

CAPTAIN McENROE: I think probably the toughest was losing the first round against Croatia when we got Andre to come back and the court was maybe not to his liking, definitely not to his liking. That was partly my fault. So that was difficult. And they went on to win it that year. That could have been a year where we certainly could have made a real deep run.

But, you know, other than that, I think the guys had been there. Andy lost some hellacious matches on the road, including to Tursunov last year, where he's just put everything into those matches. He also won some big matches in the Czech Republic. Mardy wins in Bratislava. The Bryans win their match there 1-All in a relegation match. We remember all those matches.

JAMES BLAKE: Will somebody please ask Robby Ginepri a question (laughter)?

ANDY RODDICK: Ask him to multiply something (smiling).

Q. Can you tell us why you chose to have the young players with the team, inside the team, Michael and John?

CAPTAIN McENROE: About Donald and John?

Q. Yes. Why do you decide to have them with you?

CAPTAIN McENROE: Because we like them. We think they're real good. We like them a lot. Because they're our future, that's why.

ANDY RODDICK: You've got to beat me before you become the future. I'm ready for you guys.

Q. Were you aware through reading transcripts or just by reading the body language of how depressed or pessimistic and how little the Russians came here expecting of themselves? Were you able to feed off of it, or were you just worried about your own game?

ANDY RODDICK: I think we were just pretty much worried about our own game. I don't know if we sit at home and read press transcripts. I can't read, so... James.

JAMES BLAKE: Yeah, just like Andy said, we were worried about what we can do. That's all we can control. It worked out well this time. You know, it's not always going to work out, but we're going to enjoy it when it does.

As they've all said, this has been a great journey. Seven years of ups and downs. It's great to feel like it worked out this year.

Q. Andy, you said before you thought this would be the equivalent of your Grand Slam win. Now that you've accomplished it do you still feel that way?

ANDY RODDICK: Yeah, I do. You know, Davis Cup probably doesn't get as much recognition as it should. But to have shared the last seven, eight years, you know, it wasn't really a seven-, eight-year process to try to win the US Open. All of a sudden I was on tour and it happened before it knew it.

But this has been a journey. Like Patrick said on court, we've been to some places. When you're just with these guys -- and we developed friendships. There's so much that goes into this. Winning the US Open, trying to compete for slams, you're playing for a lot of selfish reasons.

To come in here and to share this with these guys and to have developed the friendships and everything that goes along with it, the laughs and the tears, it's just amazing.

I think we're trying as best we can to enjoy this. It's definitely on par with anything that I've accomplished in tennis. Thank you.

Q. Mardy, you have a unique perspective, having been in Seville, at so many of these ties. What were the emotions going through your head sitting there on the bench this weekend?

MARDY FISH: I think, for the most part, you know, over the years, these guys, when I'm not playing, these guys have made me feel like I'm part of the team. That goes with everybody, from the trainers to the doctors to everybody.

These guys, all four of the guys, make everybody feel like they're part of the team. You know, we played -- I played the last Davis Cup final in Spain. We came up short there. You know, it really felt like, sitting on the sidelines I was part of it. I share everything that they -- I feel everything that they feel and I share everything that they share.

I see Andy, and I've known him for quite some time now and I know how much this means to him and I know how much it means to the Bryans and James and how they've played so many in a row.

You know, they've had great health and everybody's been really supportive. You know, to answer your question, they've made me feel like, you know, I'm part of the team. And I feel like I'm, you know, a player, as well. That's what makes it so special, as well.

ANDY RODDICK: Actually, before the next one, I want to say, that's kind of what makes the whole team. I mean, Robby's been the No. 2 guy. Mardy has been the No. 2 guy when James was going through his stuff a couple of years ago and trying to come back.

Robby is going to come back strong next year. It's been kind of like a family, to help people come back. For Mardy to come back here and be a practice partner at 25 in the world and 40 in the world is just unheard of.

So I think that needs to be acknowledged a little bit more than it has. You know, that's what kind of makes it special, is that we're all here together. You know, it's not just this year we won. It's a process. This is just kind of the final goal.

JAMES BLAKE: I wanted to add that Mardy is a part of the team. Robby is a part of the team. This team is not just this year. This team is from Winston-Salem in 2001, from Robby coming

back from two sets to love down in Connecticut, from Mardy winning a huge match in Bratislava to make sure we didn't get relegated.

This wasn't just a one-year journey. This is a long time, and everyone on this stage has contributed in a big way and that's why they're here. We're not just celebrating this, me, Andy and the Bryans and Patrick. Our whole team is going to celebrate. We've all felt like we're a part of the team.

I want to make sure everyone knows this is not just four guys. This is every single person sitting up here.

Q. Patrick, for a long time the thinking was on the doubles day you had to have a singles guy in there. Talk about how important it was to your decision to bring the Bryans into the mix.

CAPTAIN McENROE: Well, it was key obviously. You know, aside from what they bring on the court, which has been phenomenal, you know, the way they prepare and play, just their emotions, their team spirit and everything they bring.

I mean, the guys, everybody knows when they come out on Saturday they're absolutely a hundred percent prepared for whatever's going to be in front of them.

We went through it this week with, Do you think this guy is going to play? Do you think it's going to be Youzhny? Do you think it will be Davydenko? So I mean, they literally prepared for each scenario.

That makes us all feel good, and I think it gives the whole team a sense of sort of calm that, you know, we're going to be ready to go on Saturday.

It's not a guarantee we're going to win, but it's a guarantee that we've got our absolute best team out there. So obviously having them come on the team in the end of 2003 was huge. And they've, you know, just delivered every match.

Q. James, what kind of effect does this whole Davis Cup experience have on your tennis throughout the year, how you look at that, not just this year but into next year?

JAMES BLAKE: For this year it makes this my best year on tour ever. 2006 would probably, as a ranking standpoint, be ranked as my best year. But I've never had a feeling like this that I

have right now. This by far is the best year of my career.

For next year, I don't know what it's going to do. I've kind of stopped looking ahead and feeling like I know what's going to happen, because I have no idea. I'm playing great right now. I don't feel like I'm getting too old to compete. I feel like there's a lot of young guys coming up, playing great tennis.

But I'm ready to put in the hard work and compete with all those guys. Whatever comes, I'll be -- I'll do my best and be happy with the situation that unfolds.

Q. You have all been competing since you were little kids. How unlikely is it that you would have a group that got along this well and liked each other this much?

ANDY RODDICK: Robby, if that was ever a question for you.

ROBBY GINEPRI: I'll take this (smiling). I'll take this.

No, I mean, I've known all these guys for quite some time, and it's been a pleasure to be on a team, as well as to play these guys across the court.

Patrick called me to be one of the hitting partners, and obviously I jumped at the chance. You know, we're practicing. They want me to kind of resemble a game of some type. If Dmitry is serving a second serve, I try to resemble that. That's what I do. I bring that intensity every day.

You know, the Bryans want me to hit a forehand as hard as I can, like Andreiev did this afternoon, and that's what I try to do. So it's been a lot of fun knowing these guys. But just getting to a victory today has been a pleasant surprise.

ANDY RODDICK: Surprise?

ROBBY GINEPRI: Just kidding (smiling).

No, it's been a fun ride, and Andy has a little more to add to this.

ANDY RODDICK: Really? What was the question?

Q. You're in a sport where 48 weeks a year you're trying to take bread off of each other's plates, then you get together and it's a love fest. Isn't that unlikely for a group of athletes at your level?

ANDY RODDICK: To be honest, I don't know if we're against each other 48 weeks a year. It's almost like when we're all on tour competing for ourselves we have a built-in support system. I

mean, there wasn't a week that went by after Winston-Salem that we didn't talk about Sweden; not a week after Sweden that we didn't talk about Russia.

You know, if anything, I think it's brought us closer and made it easier on the regular tour. I've told you before, I can't imagine playing with people you didn't get along with, just because we've always had this relationship and it just seems normal for us. It seems like the way that it is, the way that it should be.

I know it hasn't always been like that, but for us, it's just normal.

Q. Patrick, as a commentator, if you had to go big picture and talk about this seven-year process, the quest, bring it down to one word, one element, what would that quality be?

CAPTAIN McENROE: I think "commitment."

Q. Because?

CAPTAIN McENROE: Well, the commitment of these guys. I mean, as you said, as the guys just talked about, having Robby and Mardy here, having the young guys come along, too. You know, these guys have been a hundred percent committed to each other and to the cause. I mean, no matter what.

From, you know, Andy playing a week after he won the US Open away on clay, you know, after he had the biggest win of his career, going to Bratislava. James coming back from all his adversity, his injury and sickness. You know, it's just been the ride that these guys have been completely committed to the cause of playing for their country, but also for each other, and for the fans of Davis Cup. They really get excited about sort of pumping themselves up.

I think if you could combine commitment and passion, I think you would have the one word. But I'm not smart enough to do that.

Q. Bob, you've been talking about the dream, the dream, the dream for so many years. Now it's real. You go on court today. Are there nerves? Does it feel surreal?

BOB BRYAN: Yeah, I mean, I just puked my guts out in the shower about 10 minutes ago (laughter). Yeah, my stomach, I've been nauseous for three days. I'm not going to try to hide that my

stomach was doing back flips. I had a circus of monkeys in my stomach just playing tambourine in there.

I mean, it was a lot of emotion, especially running out for those intros with the crowd going nuts, fireworks, the whole deal. It was tough to stand on two feet without your knees knocking.

It's sometimes hard to just play the ball. You know all that's riding on the match. You got guys that you want to win for. But, you know, like Andy said, it doesn't matter how we get the three points, it's just putting all the individual goals aside and getting it done as a team.

That's what we've done for the last five years. Yeah, it's amazing having won this Davis Cup and now having pretty much done it all. We're all feeling great right now. We're going to take it out hard (smiling).

Q. Bob and Mike, would you talk a little bit about the communication and the chemistry you have. I know your opponents today were getting together and having long chats after just about every point. You seem to be beyond that.

MIKE BRYAN: Yeah, we played thousands of matches together. Most of these teams are makeshift teams and they come together for a match here, a couple weeks here. From that standpoint, we have a huge advantage.

As you could see, we don't use many signals. Just played so many matches that we flow together. I mean, you can say that we have ESP or whatever, but we don't. We've been playing together since we were two years old. I basically know what he's thinking, what shot he's going to hit every point, and we move together on the court, which is just huge.

We've played a lot of big matches together, so I know how he's going to react to the pressure. I know where he's going to serve on big points. That's big, just knowing what to expect from your brother, knowing that he's not going to choke basically.

But, yeah, I mean, you can tell these guys haven't played together too often. Sometimes they're a fish out of water at net. But we'll take a win. Doesn't matter who we beat.

ANDY RODDICK: They did peg Bob. They pegged you hard.

BOB BRYAN: And that pissed me off (laughter).

MIKE BRYAN: You got the mark?

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BOB BRYAN: I was waiting for my revenge. Never got it. Next year.

Q. Bob, I think you mentioned earlier in the week that doubles players often get better into their 30s. You guys aren't quite there yet. Coming off the amazing year you had, what do you see on the horizon for you guys if you keep getting better? What do you think you need to improve on evaluating your own games?

BOB BRYAN: As we go into next year, we're 30. Yeah, we are still getting better. We're getting more consistent.

ANDY RODDICK: How are they 30?

BOB BRYAN: 30 next year, buddy.

ANDY RODDICK: You guys are like 12.

BOB BRYAN: Yeah, I mean, we're getting more consistent. We know how to do this now. We know how to win. We know what it takes to win a Grand Slam. We're just going to scale back the schedule a little bit and try to peak for Davis Cup weeks. It's the most important times of the year, is Davis Cup and Grand Slams.

We got a great coach. Pat's helped us a lot. He watches a ton of our matches, gives us a lot of input. I know I can return my backhand better. I know we can do some stuff better. And that's maybe going to -- hopefully we'll pass the Woodies. We've got 17 titles left to pass those guys.

Hopefully we've got a nice six, seven more years on the tour. A little long for Mikey, you know (smiling).

Q. Those of us who have been around a long time used to write about the Australians, how the Davis Cup players would get together, have fun, great fellowship. We wondered would it ever happen to America. Today we found out that you can.

CAPTAIN McENROE: Thank you.

ANDY RODDICK: Thank you.

MARDY FISH: Thank you.

Q. Presumably you're going to be celebrating tonight.

JAMES BLAKE: No.

ANDY RODDICK: No. I have a match to play tomorrow.

Q. That's what I'm going to ask, how important is it to walk out of here 5-0?

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ANDY RODDICK: Absolutely not important at all.

JAMES BLAKE: We're not the Patriots.

ANDY RODDICK: I don't even have a little Belichick in me. Zero.

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