

# Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships

Saturday, March 3, 2018

## Leander Paes

## Jamie Cerretani

Press Conference

TECAU-ROJER/Paes-Cerretani

6-2, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. What are your thoughts on the final? The second set pretty much could have gone either way.**

LEANDER PAES: I actually thought that the boys started off on fire. They must have hit about five, six net cords which fell in their favor. They hit one miss-hit backhand return shot cross-court.

That's the margins you play with in professional tennis, in the scoring format. One or two shots in them favor or our favor, the momentum switches.

I thought they started out really well. The fun part about Jamie and myself, no matter what happens, we're always there pushing each other, supporting each other. We got each other's backs. We're intelligent enough to know what's happening on the court while it's happening so we can turn our strategy.

Like we did in the second set, we turned it around. I felt that at 4-All or 5-All, we didn't catch fire returning. Normally we do. At 4-All, 5-All I pride our team to actually catch fire, hit a couple good ones, and now the momentum develops in our favor.

But today didn't quite happen. Sometimes you just got to tip your hat to your opponents and say, Too good, well done. It goes to show what a great team they are. They played really well today.

**Q. You won here the tournament in '98, almost 20 years back, again making the final. It's an amazing feeling, it must be?**

LEANDER PAES: Yes, it really is an amazing feeling, to come back 20 years after winning your first one, still be in the final, play with a real fun partner, a great partner who I really enjoy playing with is awesome. Jamie put in a lot of effort this week.



For you guys who don't know, he was playing in Marseille last week. He finished the tournament in Marseille. I was supposed to play with another partner, who messed up a little bit, no names taken. Jamie had flown from Marseille all the way back to L.A. when I called him.

I am like, Hey, buddy, do you want to play in Dubai?

He goes, You kidding? I've already booked my ticket.

He got on a flight with him and his coach back from L.A. all the way to Dubai. We're very grateful as a team to the Dubai Duty Free organization, Ramesh, Salah, to the organizing committee for giving us this wild card.

I've always done great in Dubai. For us to actually get together, and I think this is your first 500 final?

JAMIE CERRETANI: Yes.

LEANDER PAES: This is Jamie's first 500 final. He's also the highest mover in the top 100 in the last week. I'm really proud of these things that we do. These things matter to us as professionals, to actually move in the rankings, to play well and still be so competitive at this level.

Very proud of what you've done this week.

JAMIE CERRETANI: Thanks, brother. Appreciate that.

**Q. Allows you to move up with Davis Cup around the corner.**

LEANDER PAES: Yeah, I mean, this is pro. Davis Cup, I've already created my history in it. If I get to play, I'd love to play. But on the pro circuit here, I'm really thankful to Jamie for putting in the effort, coming and working, doing our stuff, making me a better player. We get out there, we do our practice sessions, we work really hard.

After all these years, you need to keep being motivated, keep being motivated to do the hard yards. Last night I was here until 2:00 in the morning working, getting ready for today. You can see, I've got a bit of a ding-ding on my elbow. We keep working hard.

**Q. (Question about the pain.)**

LEANDER PAES: Yeah, I was in pain on every point (smiling).

**Q. Your thoughts on the tournament overall and playing with Leander?**

JAMIE CERRETANI: Yeah, where do I begin? First of all, it's just an honor to play here, very first thing, first and foremost. To play with a guy like, excuse me, a legend like Leander, is just a great opportunity. I'm very grateful just to the organization, to Dubai Duty Free, to all the sponsors and the organizers for giving us the wild card. Without that, I wouldn't be here. Without Leander, I wouldn't be here. I really am full of gratitude for that. So that's that.

In terms of the tennis, I mean, I think Leander summed it up pretty well. There's a lot that goes into it that you guys don't see in terms of the preparation and the practice, little nicks here and there on the body. That's a big thing.

It's a pleasure to come to work. It doesn't really feel like work when I work with Leander, to be honest. He's somebody that I only played with twice, but it feels very natural because he does things in a very special way that I can relate to. So it makes it easy to just get along day-to-day. It doesn't feel like work. It's a pleasure.

Things go well, we win. Things go not so well, we adjust, like he said, and find a way to win maybe when we're not playing so well. That is fun.

The fans here are fantastic. What a great stadium. You guys have been great. This is my first time doing this. It's kind of cool, flowers are nice (smiling).

I'm just so thankful for the whole experience, so... To you guys, Duty Free, the fans.

**Q. Plans together for the future?**

LEANDER PAES: I love playing with James. It's a lot of fun. That's a big compliment he actually gave me. James is my 120th partner, if I'm not mistaken, somewhere up there. Today was my 97th final in tour levels with the 15th partner getting to the finals.

It goes to show what a camaraderie we share. I take a lot of pride actually in making James a better partner and better player. Yeah, I mean, we take pride in helping each other become better. We're always striving for perfection. For me it's a lot of fun like this.

It's a long season, a lot of tournaments. To answer your question, I love playing with this guy. We have to look at where our rankings are on Monday. I'm going to take a couple weeks off because I've been going

non-stop since January 1st. Hence the body is a bit sore. But fitness-wise I'm unbelievably fit. I can do this for another five sets.

JAMIE CERRETANI: Another 10 years (laughter).

LEANDER PAES: Really, a little bit of time off, then back again to the drawing board.

JAMIE CERRETANI: I'd like to add one thing. We didn't mention, but a big part of the team is the coaching that we have. He has a guy supporting him, Mark. I have my coach here this week, Scott Crichlow. Those guys do a lot of extra stuff that, without them, this wouldn't be possible. So I just want to acknowledge them, give them our love and support, along with the physios, too.

You're working with a physio here this week. They never get any recognition. They're a huge part of the lifeline of the tour. A lot of these athletes wouldn't be able to maximize performance without them. Want to make sure they're acknowledged.