



A Davis Cup Classic: India Stun Netherlands in Bengaluru

Bengaluru has hosted Davis Cup ties for years, but this one felt different from the first serve. On paper, it didn't look like an even contest. India came in ranked No. 33 as a team, the Netherlands were No. 6. Yet, over two days at the S M Krishna Tennis Stadium, India found a way to beat a higher ranked side and pull off a result that will be remembered for a long time.

From the start, the tie kept moving in different directions. The Netherlands got the early advantage, and India were suddenly under pressure. In the opening singles, Sumit Nagal went down to Guy den Ouden 6-0 4-6 6-3, and the visitors took a 1-0 lead. For a moment, it felt like India were already chasing the match. But then the story began to change. Dhakshineswar Suresh took the court next, and the tie started moving India's way.

Suresh, ranked 470, played like he belonged at this level and brought India back straight away. He beats Jesper de Jong 6-4 7-5 to level the tie at 1-1, and suddenly and the home fans found their energy again.

Sunday afternoon's doubles felt like the turning point, the kind of match where the whole tie can swing on both the ways. Suresh teamed up with Yuki Bhambri, and they edged past Sander Arends and David Pel in a nail biting three sets, 7-6(0) 3-6 7-6(1). It wasn't smooth from start to finish, but they stayed solid on the big points, and it left India just one win away.

Captain Rohit Rajpal made a bold call in doubles. He brought in Dhakshineswar Suresh and paired him with Yuki Bhambri, leaving out the experienced N Sriram Balaji, and it turned out to be a match-winning decision. The Dutch pair, Sander Arends and David Pel, kept putting Bhambri's serve under pressure, again and again, but India held their nerve when it mattered. And when the match reached the final moments, Arends needed a medical timeout for his left hand, the tension only went up from there. India still had to finish the job, and they did, closing out a tight, three hour doubles battle to move 2-1 ahead in the tie.





“He has been very high on confidence,” Bhambri told afterwards. “He has done great for India in Davis Cup. I just wanted to let him be, play and really just bring his firepower which he did today.”

Even then, it wasn't over. The Netherlands pulled it back in the fourth rubber, when Jesper de Jong came through against Sumit Nagal in a long, draining match. Nagal took the first set 7–5, but de Jong turned it around and won 7–5 1–6 4–6 to make it 2–2 and force a decider.

So it came down to the fifth rubber. This is the kind of match where one bad game can change everything, and every point feels twice as important. Once again, India put the responsibility on Dhakshinewar Suresh. With the tie on the line, he beats Guy den Ouden 6–4 7–6(4) and sealed a famous win.

As soon as the last point ended, the stadium burst into noise. The Indian players rushed to the net, hands in the air, and the crowd kept roaring. That's the thing about Davis Cup, you don't celebrate alone, you celebrate with everyone around you.

Afterwards, Suresh spoke in the simple, emotional way players often do after a Davis Cup moment like this.

“Emotions have been high since the beginning. It's surreal, unreal playing three matches for India and getting it all done. I want to thank my parents, coaches and all of India,” he said.

The opposition noticed too. Netherlands captain Paul Haarhuis was quick to credit the star of the night and to suggest that the rankings don't reflect his level right now.

“Hats off to Suresh, who played fantastic tennis,” Haarhuis told. “He carried the Indian team. He is definitely not ranked where he should be ranked, when he plays like this. I am not sure if he is playing enough tournaments. I think he will definitely improve his ranking very fast as soon as he turns pro. He has got a good future. What he showed this weekend was very promising.”





For India, it also continued a perfect start to Suresh's Davis Cup journey. He remains unbeaten in the competition, after making his debut with a win over Jerome Kym in Switzerland last year.

"It's just a different feeling when you are playing for your country," Suresh said after the win. "You are not playing for yourself, you are playing for the whole nation. I have played some different tennis in these last four matches at the Davis Cup. I'm really happy that I did that."

The only real concern for India was Sumit Nagal's fitness. The country's No. 1 came into the tie with very little match time, after an injury in Thailand, and it showed across the weekend. He couldn't get India a point, but he kept trying. Against Jesper de Jong, he made it a real battle. Even after falling behind by two breaks in the third set, he pushed back and brought it level at 4-4. After that, his movement wasn't the same, and the match slipped out of his hands in the last two games.

"It's not been easy because our No. 1 player had a grade two tear," Rajpal revealed. "He fought battles, on both days with only four days of practice. It's not easy, there were a lot of ups and downs. But believe me, this is not the Sumit Nagal who played in Switzerland, this is not even the 50 percent because if he was firing both ways, it would have been a different story."

The win matters beyond just one weekend. India are into the second Qualifier round, where they will face South Korea next. But the bigger feeling is that India walked into the tie as the underdog, and walked out with belief, noise, and a new Davis Cup match winner the country will talk about for a long time.

