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Davis Cup Play-off: Great Britain conquer Uzbekistan as Cameron Norrie avenges opening loss

Cameron Norrie gives Great Britain a 3-1 win in their Davis Cup tie against Uzbekistan in Glasgow



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There can be no worse way to return to your father's homeland and make your home tie debut than to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory.

That's what happened to the British No. 2 Cameron Norrie, as he unexpectedly found himself turned over by the World No. 434 Jurabek Karimov.

The crowd, who had been buoyed by an unexpected win by the returning Dan Evans over the vastly more experienced Denis Istomin had expected an early finish and time to goy enjoy the sights of a rainy Glasgow. Instead they were treated to eight hours of some sublime and some ridiculous tennis which left the countries tied at the end of the first day.

Nerves were starting to be shredded on the Saturday as the Uzbekistan No. 1 Istomin partnered Sanjar Fayziev (WR. 448) and they meant business, taking advantage of a slow start from the British pairing of Dominic Inglot and Jamie

Murray. Even when the Brits scrambled over the line in the second set, it felt more by luck than judgement, but the tide was starting to turn.

Once the breaks started coming for the Brits, they looked a little more dominant, getting that all important, pivotal doubles win for the hosts. With Sunday's reverse singles approaching, it seemed that victory in the Asian Games and a win in the Chicago challenger were a little too much for the World No. 60 who withdrew from the first of the reverse singles with an ankle injury.

That was not quite enough for the amassed crowds in Glasgow to give GB (and indeed the 'traditional' format of Davis Cup a rousing farewell) to start singing Proclaimers songs with reckless abandon. After all – Norrie had been expected to roll over his far lower ranked opponent on Friday and it had all gone horribly wrong.

Also bear in mind, team captain Leon Smith's meticulous preparation will have hinged around Istomin's fluid and elegant style of play.

The first set felt messy as Norrie made heavy weather of his chances at times and seemed to get to a double break cushion and then the first more by luck than judgement. The second set saw him free up a little more, moving around the court more effectively, and having more confidence in his ability to pepper the lines. The languid style of Fayziev gave way to a tighter arm as his own errors started to creep up.

The crowd dared to dream as Norrie started the third set in much the same way as he had started his Glasgow campaign a couple of days ago, finishing without dropping a game and hopefully putting Friday's performance firmly away with a 6-2 6-2 6-0 win.

After the match, Norrie told reporters: "Today was pretty different. I was expecting to play Istomin and I felt like I wanted to prove something to myself and prove I could turn it around so it's pretty different coming into today and having them change the line-up last minute so I mean not really, no.

"I gave everything I could on Friday, I was obviously really disappointed but I didn't get over the line there and today I was in exactly the same mind-set. I think I was more clear on my service games and just handled it better. I was really happy with how I closed out the match. On Friday I kind of let the guy back in a little bit and then he got some confidence. I was a lot more clinical today."

What this means is that Great Britain earns a seeding for the February tie for the new format, which will continue to follow the home and away tie format, although it is unlikely to be in Glasgow.

Smith looked ahead to the brave new world where confusion still reigns with regards to seedings and wildcards straight into the final next year are concerned.

He elaborated: "[The] important thing was to get a seeding to avoid the strongest nations, although I think it will be interesting to see how the draws pan out with some of the results.

"It feels like the wild cards are going to be a tricky one for them to decide to allocate before the qualies. It's difficult to have objective criteria. I'm really interested to see how they do it and their justification for who they give the wild cards to. Clearly, we'd be a strong candidate based on the last three or four years in the competition, how we've hosted ties."

The last 'traditional' Davis Cup final will take place between 23-25 November.