

U.S. ends tennis futility

The Davis Cup is in U.S. hands for the first time since 1995, after the Bryans outplay the Russian team

By BOAZ HERZOG
THE OREGONIAN

After a 12-year drought, United States men's tennis had something to celebrate Saturday at Portland's Memorial Coliseum.

The United States clinched its 32nd Davis Cup trophy — but first since 1995 — by winning its third consecutive match over Russia in the best-of-five finale. The world's top-ranked doubles team of twins Bob

and Mike Bryan overwhelmed Nikolay Davydenko and Igor Andreev 7-6 (4), 6-4, 6-2.

"It's been a long road," U.S. captain Patrick McEnroe said. "We've had a lot of ups and downs, but it feels awesome. It feels absolutely awesome."

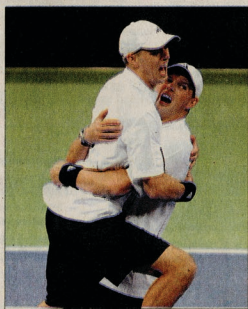
The defending Cup champion Russians knew they faced long odds against the United States. The right-kick U.S. team was hungry to claim the top team prize in men's tennis. Andy Roddick and James Blake joined the team soon after McEnroe was named captain in 2001. The Bryans jumped aboard for good in 2004.

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Davis Cup final
United States
defeats Russia 3-0
in best-of-five-
match competition

Saturday
Bob Bryan and Mike Bryan, U.S., def. Igor Andreev and Nikolay Davydenko, Russia, 7-6 (4), 6-4, 6-2

Today
Andy Roddick vs. Mikhail Youzhny, Russia, 1 p.m., followed by James Blake vs. Dmitry Tursunov (TV on Versus)



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Mike Bryan (left) jumps into the arms of his brother Bob Bryan after the doubles team won to clinch the Davis Cup for the United States.

Davis Cup: Russians don't sub Safin in doubles

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The U.S. crew came close to winning the Davis Cup that year but lost in the final to Spain on clay. This year, the U.S. was the host team after beating the Czech Republic, Spain and Sweden in the yearlong competition. Only the match with Sweden was in the United States. The host country gets to pick the court, and the U.S. gained a big advantage by playing the final on a fast hard-court surface hand-picked by McEnroe.

As a result, Russian captain Sjarini Tarpishev gave his team a 30 percent chance, 35 percent tops, of winning this year's Cup. Russia's chances dimmed further Friday after Roddick, the world's No. 6-ranked player, and Blake, No. 13, won their opening singles matches to give the United States a commanding 2-0 lead in the best-of-five match. The U.S. had only lost once — in 1939 — in 21 finals when it had such a lead.

The spotlight shifted to the pivotal doubles match Saturday. The Bryans entered the contest as overwhelming favorites against Davydenko and Andreev, two singles specialists cobbled into a doubles team by Tarpishev.

The tandems had never faced each other. But the Bryans had won seven consecutive Davis Cup matches and 12 of 13 times McEnroe named them as his doubles squad in 2004. Meanwhile, Davydenko, No. 4 in the world in singles, had just concluded an emotionally draining season because of a continuing investigation into a match he lost in August that generated suspect betting patterns and raised concerns about match fixing.

"We can't really compete in the doubles department with the



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U.S. teammates Bob Bryan (from left), James Blake, Andy Roddick and Mike Bryan celebrate winning the Davis Cup on Saturday.

No. 1 team in the world who's been winning tournaments left and right this year," Dmitry Tursunov said after falling in straight sets Friday to Roddick.

Speculation abounded that the crafty Russian captain might shift his lineup at the last minute, perhaps by substituting in former world No. 1 Marat Safin. Tarpishev did not add Safin, but said after the match that he

might have strengthened the doubles team.

The Russians managed to keep pace with their U.S. counterparts early on, saving a break point in the second game to hold serve through the first set. The Russians' resolve frustrated Mike Bryan, who said he and his brother barely slept in anticipation of the match.

"We wanted to jump on them

right from the start and blow 'em out," Mike Bryan said.

Instead, they moved to a tie-breaker. The Russians broke serve to go up 3-1. But the Bryans bounced back to the set ahead 5-3. Closing out the set three points later, the Bryans enjoyed their first chest bump of the match.

Another one soon followed, after the Americans broke the

Russians to open the second set. The Russians struggled to find another opening against the masterful serve-and-volley game of the Bryans.

"If they're serving well, they have unbelievable volleys," Andreev said. "Every service game was harder to keep our serve."

The Bryans held serve to close out the second set, then reunited for chest bump No. 3 after breaking the Russians' serve in

Davis Cup final

Results: United States defeats Russia 3-0 in best-of-five-match competition at Memorial Coliseum

Friday's singles: Andy Roddick, U.S., def. Dmitry Tursunov, Russia, 6-4, 6-4, 6-2; James Blake, U.S., def. Mikhail Youzhny, Russia, 6-3, 7-6 (4), 6-7 (3), 7-6 (3)

Saturday's doubles: Bob Bryan and Mike Bryan, U.S., def. Igor Andreev and Nikolay Davydenko, Russia, 7-6 (4), 6-4, 6-2

Today's singles: Roddick vs. Youzhny, 1 p.m., followed by Blake vs. Tursunov, best-of-three matches (TV on Versus)

Online: The Oregonian's Doug Perry saw Saturday's Davis Cup match this way: "Davydenko, ranked fourth in the world in singles, in particular showed his inexperience in doubles. The Bryans' movement at net repeatedly unnerved him, causing him to spray wild groundstrokes more and more as the match wore on." For more of Perry's observations, follow his blogging at http://blog.oregonlive.com/sportsupdates/davis_cup_final

the third game of the third set.

When a forehand by Davydenko sailed long to give the U.S. pair their second break of the set and a chance to serve for the match (4-2), Tarpishev could only scratch his head on the sideline as the capacity crowd of more than 12,000 rose to its feet in an almost deafening roar.

Bob Bryan clinched the Cup in the next game. At match point, he slammed home a volley. Fireworks erupted. Red, blue and silver streamers dropped from the ceiling. Net Diamond's "Coming to America" blared on the speakers as Roddick and Blake leaped over the net to join the Bryans in celebration.

"There's nothing like it," Mike Bryan said. "A dream for us to win the final match."

Notes: The reverse singles matches scheduled for today — Roddick vs. Mikhail Youzhny followed by Blake vs. Tursunov — will be shortened to best-of-three sets. — David Wagner of Madison (4) will be favored to win Saturday's match. The 33-year-old has been ranked No. 1 in the world in singles and doubles in wheelchair tennis the past four years.

Boaz Herzog, 503-412-7072
boherzogs@gmail.com