



Federer wants Rafa as partner

Prague

Roger Federer revealed yesterday he wants to join forces in doubles with arch rival Rafael Nadal at the inaugural Laver Cup this year.

The Swiss tennis great made the confession at the unveiling of the new tournament scheduled for Prague in September which will pit a Bjorn Borg-captained European team against John McEnroe's rest of the world.

Federer, who beat Nadal in an epic five-set Australian Open final last month, admitted on Monday: "I've always wanted to play with Rafa... just because our rivalry has been so special.

"I've seen his wicked forehand go past me too often!"

The new addition to the tennis calendar is named after Rod Laver, the last man to achieve the calendar Grand Slam in 1969.

"Rod Laver wants us to represent our part of the world with pride and play our best and win for our teammates. We will play to our best possibilities," Federer, 35, told the media launch in Prague.

Federer, the world number nine, is due to figure with sixth-ranked Nadal at the September 22-24 event.

The Laver Cup will be held every year except in an Olympic season, with four matches each day -- three in singles, one in doubles.

Each team comprises six players -- four based on the ATP singles rankings after Wimbledon and two picks by the captains, Borg and McEnroe.

Federer refused to see Team Europe as a clear winner, although it currently has 17 players in the top 20 of the ATP rankings.

"I think Team Europe are going to be big favourites but because of the setup of the Laver Cup I think the margins are always going to be very slim," said Federer.

Before talking to journalists, the Swiss star played the Czech Republic's number one Tomas Berdych on a boat on the Vltava river in Prague's historic centre on a chilly Monday morning.

Berdych, ranked 14th in the world, said their game under the picturesque Charles Bridge was "a very nice opportunity to show Roger a little bit of the town."

"We were joking we should do this every day," said Federer.

"I thought it was very particular, very unique -- it was definitely a privilege," he beamed before confessing: "It was a bit windy though." (AFP)



File picture showing Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer following a match