

## **Pakistan beat Korea in Davis Cup Asia-Oceania Group-I Tie-2018**

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan thrashed Republic of Korea 4-0 in the Davis Cup Asia-Oceania Group-I tie after experienced Pakistani pair of Aisam Qureshi and Aqeel Khan winning the doubles match and Abid Ali Akbar winning the reverse singles here at Pakistan Sports Complex grass courts on Saturday.

The long rallies, powerful backhand and passing shots and excellent first serves from the Koreans were the highlights of the first set, while both Aisam and Aqeel were struggling to control their first serve. The set started at brisk pace as Koreans were more aggressive and determined to clinch the doubles to keep the tie alive, while Aisam and Aqeel, who were fully aware of the fact that they couldn't afford any let ups and had to win the doubles to ensure victory, played superb tennis and fought for each and every point till the end. Both the Koreans were playing attacking tennis and the Pakistan pair was matching their pace and aggression. Both the pairs managed to hold onto their respective serves and it was soon 6-6.

The set went into tie break and it was soon 3-1 in favour of Korea , but hats off to Aisam, who showed his class and handled the pressure well, as Pakistan leveled the score at 3-3. Pakistan had golden opportunity to win the first set, as Aqeel was serving on 7-6, when Aisam gave Pakistan break, but Aqeel was under pressure and committed double fault, but Aisam once again gave Pakistan another chance to wrap it up and he finally hit an ace to give Pakistan first set 7-6 (8) in 1 hour and 5 minutes of highly entertaining tennis.

The second set started in the same passion, as the Koreans were trying their best to stage a comeback, while Aqeel was looking off-color and committing unforced errors, but Aisam was in great form and he staged a remarkable comeback, as in the sixth game, it was 15-40, but Aisam kept his composure and first made it 40-40 and then got advantage for Pakistan . It was arguably the most exciting games of the entire match, as it went right down to the wire. The Koreans had at least half a dozen chances to break Aisam's serve, who, somehow, managed to stay in the game and finally, he hit three aces to hold onto the game and it was soon 4-4. Aisam sensing the situation went to Aqeel and had conversation with him, who then took a turn and started playing aggressive game, which worked wonders and helped them break ninth game of Koreans. Aisam, who was serving for the set and the match, raced onto 40-0 lead and hit the ace to win the set 6-4 and also the crucial match.

Soon after registering victory, Aisam and Aqeel hugged each other and then entire Pakistani contingent rushed the spot to congratulate Aisam and Aqeel, who rushed towards main stand, where Aisam's mother and family was standing and some highly touchy scenes were witnessed. The entire Pakistan team lined up in the middle of the court to pay thanks to Almighty first and then to spectators and the visitors. It was a golden chapter in Pakistan tennis history, as highly underdog Pakistan beat high-flying Koreans. The crowd started chanting 'Pakistan Zindabad' slogans. There was festivity all-around, as Pakistani fans were dancing on drum beats, even Salim Saifullah Khan and Senator Dilawar Abbas were looking pumped up and their faces were telling the entire story. Aisam and Aqeel very supportively met with senior sports journalists and thanked them for their all-out support for them as well as for Pakistan tennis.

After the doubles match, it was dead rubber and both teams decided to play only one reverse singles rather than two. Abid Ali Akbar was picked to play against Minjong Park. Abid was looking highly motivated and charged up and he was also playing to prove a point to his critics. It was a see-saw battle, as both the players broke each other's serve in the first set and soon it was 6-6. The set was decided on tie-break and Abid took it 7-6 (8) in 51 minutes.

The second set was almost identical to the first one as both the players broke each other's serves and once again, the set was decided on tie-break. Minjong had twice chances to wrap up the set, but he failed to capitalize and Abid never required any second invitations, as he took the set 7-6 (7) in 51 minutes. Amid wild celebrations, crowd was not in a mood to leave the venue, despite the fact it was a dead rubber and had no impact on overall results. Now Pakistan will play semifinals against Uzbekistan on April 6 and 7 in Pakistan .