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## **FIP European Padel Championships, not just Spain wins on a night of celebration and friendship. Carraro: "Technical value, friendship, and fair play: padel is also this"**

The most beautiful page of the **FIP European Padel Championships** was written on the court, but without rackets, by the players from **Spain, Italy, France, and Portugal**. They did it amidst a shower of fireworks, lights, music, waving flags, and endless smiles. It was during the awards ceremony when **FIP President Luigi Carraro** and **Coni Sardegna President Bruno Perra** gradually handed out trophies to the top three teams in the men's and women's tournaments – **Spain** and **Italy** in both tournaments, then **Portugal** third among the men and **France** third among the women – that the essence, the meaning of a sport that knows how to be both on and off the court, emerged, with a display of friendship, fair play, and sportsmanship rarely seen. The French men's team, defeated by Italy in the semifinals, won the gold for sportsmanship by singing, cheering, and dancing for every entrance of a rival team, even Italy, who had defeated them.

Then there were the Italian women dancing when Spain entered and the Italian men doing the same, and finally, all together to the tunes of Raffaella Carrà's 'Pedro' and 'Freed From Desire,' the unofficial anthem of the padel world. A celebration with a fantastic epilogue: all the teams on the court in an explosion of colors, singing along to the Gipsy Kings' version of Domenico Modugno's 'Volare,' a perfect metaphor for a great European Championship that literally took off both technically and as a sports show.

**THE VALUES OF SPORT** FIP President **Luigi Carraro** later said: *"It has been a great European Championship, an extraordinary celebration that once again demonstrates how team competitions can ignite all the values of sport: technical, competitive, for the audience and, as we saw in this beautiful awards ceremony, of friendship and fair play. This, regardless, is something precious for everyone who loves sport and especially padel, a demonstration of the great teamwork with the national federations, players, referees, and everyone who worked for the success of this event."*

Spain's double victory in this European Championship, besides being highly predictable, is once again a sublime display of talent, technique, tactical precision, and power. A spectacle that goes beyond the concept of victory: playing against the Spaniards, being able to measure oneself beyond the narrow concept of results is an important opportunity, a talent thermometer that outlines measures and differences. And why not, valuable from the perspective of trying to grasp some of their secrets.

**THE LAND OF TALENTS** But there aren't no secrets: Spain is simply a perfect organizational machine that produces dozens of talents, nurtures them, and helps them grow through the sublimation of technique before physical training. Thus, reaching the end of a major international event like the **FIP European Padel Championships** by challenging the 'Invincibles' is already a victory in itself. And Italy, led by Marcela Ferrari, achieved this both on the women's and men's fronts.

The "azzurri" world emerges from this European Championship with the awareness that in Europe, only Spain is up there, so far away that it cannot be touched, but can be challenged in a great home final, regardless of the outcome. And in the end, not even that bad. Indeed: Italy lost 2-0 but without losing face, with **Ruiz-Arroyo** winning in two sets against **Dominguez-Patiniotis** (7-5, 6-4) and **Cardona-Gonzalez** 6-0 6-2 against **Graziotti-Sinicropi**.

**STRATEGY** Marcela Ferrari tried strategic sophistication to attempt the feat: fielding the pair that in the elite circuit, Premier Padel, is used to facing the giants of padel. And so here we see **Facundo Dominguez** and **Aris Patiniotis**, an already well-established and united pair, against the two Álex: **'Captain America' Ruiz** and the hammer **Arroyo**. In the end, a great match by the Italians, who in the first set performed miracles and even led 5-4, amid the roar of the full Central crowd believing in the great miracle. But it ended 7-5 for Spain. The second set was very similar, but the strength of the Spaniards eventually made the minimal difference until 6-4 closed the account. The European champions Spain, in the end, gently touched their opponents and the young teammate born in 2001: *"We knew that Aris and Facu are difficult players, and we knew we had to fight point by point. We entered the court prepared for this, and we were good in the offensive phase and solid in the defensive one when they played effectively and aggressively. Arroyo? His way of playing is surprising, he has shown it throughout the season, and the truth is I enjoyed playing with him a lot, a lively style player who brings intensity and a desire to do well. Despite still being young, he is already a leader, which means Spain has a youth system to win for a long time"*. Arroyo thanked and responded: *"We have played a lot in these days. Ale is a player who transmits calmness to me, knows how to make me be patient, which I need"*.

In the second match, there was little history: the number 12 in the FIP ranking, **Momo Gonzalez**, and number 27 **Pablo Cardona** conceded very little to **Riccardo Sinicropi** – hero of the semifinal against France – and **'Giulietto' Graziotti**, one of Italy's most interesting players and in great form in the **CUPRA FIP Tour**, inflicting a clear 6-0 6-2. In the end, celebration for Spain, with a 'double' that **Gutierrez's** boys comment in unison: *"A great joy to win with the Spanish jersey, we are a team that is a perfect mix of experienced players and new generations, all thanks to the great work of the FEP (Federación Española de Pádel)." For Momo Gonzalez, however, it was the second victory in two weeks here in Cagliari: after the FIP Platinum Sardinia, the European title. "Going from a professional circuit tournament – says the number 12 in the FIP ranking – to this team event with the Spanish jersey, a jersey that gives you unique emotions, was easy because I know I can count on fantastic teammates who know how to make a group and think with a team mentality where one helps the other without any problem"*.

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Press contacts:  
International Padel Federation  
Email: [press@padelfip.com](mailto:press@padelfip.com)