**Matteo Berrettini confident Italy can take next step and win ATP Cup**

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Italy's Matteo Berrettini celebrates during his group stage match against Germany's Alexander Zverev(REUTERS)

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With two top-10 players in their ranks, Italy are an even stronger side than the one which reached this year's ATP Cup final and they are confident they can go a step further by winning the upcoming edition next month, Matteo Berrettini said.

Italy lost to Russia in the championship match at this year's event, which is played in a format similar to the Davis Cup. For the 2022 version they have been drawn in Group B with champions Russia, hosts Australia and late entrants France.

The top team from each of the four groups advance to the semi-finals of the $10 million tournament.

"I think if it's possible, the team is even stronger this year, so for sure our aim is to get the title," said world number seven Berrettini, who lost to Novak Djokovic at this year's Wimbledon in his first major final.

"We know it's going to be a tough job. Every match is going to be difficult, but we believe that we can do it."

Besides Berrettini, Italy also have 10th ranked Jannik Sinner and former number nine Fabio Fognini in their squad.

World number two Daniil Medvedev will lead Russia's title defence but they have been depleted with fifth-ranked Andrey Rublev and 18th-ranked Aslan Karatsev ruled out after testing positive for COVID-19.

"Obviously their team is different compared to last year for COVID reasons, so it's going to be for sure different match," said Berrettini.

"But obviously Russia with Daniil, what they've done in the last year, is going to be one of the toughest matches we have to play."

After winning the ATP Cup title at the start of the year, the Russian team also claimed the Davis Cup crown and Medvedev said much is still expected of them despite the weakened side.

"I like this kind of pressure," the U.S. Open champion said. "It makes you play better. I think it's going to make all of us four guys just play the best tennis that we can."