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World Championships: Dehnike and Arredondo, the future of padel that enchanted Doha

The stars of the **FIP World Padel Championships** had finished playing a while ago, but Tuesday night at the **Khalifa International Tennis and Squash Complex** in Doha still offered the fans a rare moment of sport beauty. On Court 4, where **Paraguay** and **Mexico** faced off, the first world-stage showdown — one that promises to be the start of a long series — took place between two leading representatives of the NextGen in padel: **Facundo Dehnike** and **Diego Arredondo**, just 33 years old between them, showcased one of the most beautiful and intense matches of the day.

Confidence of adults, grit of champions, and pure talent in their shot: over two hours on the court, they displayed the best of their skills to lead their respective teams, though it was the Paraguayan **Dehnike** who came out on top, securing his first win in this prestigious competition. The 6-3 2-6 6-4 win with teammate Samuel Rodriguez clinched the point for Paraguay and marked another milestone for the 16-year-old from Hohenau, a standout in what has been a memorable season. After his first victory on the **CUPRA FIP Tour** with the **FIP Promotion** in Castellón, Spain, the runner-up of the 2023 Under-16 Open World Championship in Asunción made headlines again in May by debuting in the **Premier Padel** circuit, also in **Asunción**, at just 15 years old. Last summer saw him reach both a semifinal and another final on the CUPRA FIP Tour, followed by his call-up to the World Championships. *“I’m thrilled to be experiencing this moment; it’s my first ‘grown-up’ World Championship, and today we played an extremely tough match against the Mexican duo”,* said Facundo at the end of the match, after embracing Arredondo courtside. *“It was an incredible thrill to have earned the deciding point for my team. On Wednesday, we’ll face Spain, and I can’t wait. My idol, though, is Tapia”.* Spain is also one of Dehnike’s dreams: *“My goal is to train there; I’ll go in January and stay as long as possible. I want to earn all the points I can to return to the Premier Padel tournaments”.*

This global enthusiasm resonates with that of the 17-year-old **Arredondo**, runner-up in the Open and with Team Mexico at the recent **Junior Panamerican Padel Championships**, and fresh off his victory at the **FIP Rise** in Metepec just last week. The loss against Paraguay left a bit of disappointment, but for Diego, the essence remains unchanged: *“I’m so excited to be here; it’s even hard to find the words”,* he commented after the match. The hint of disappointment suddenly disappeared, and his eyes lit up as he talked about his win at the Rise event: *“Metepec is my hometown; winning there was fantastic”.* From Mexico to Qatar and back to Mexico for his

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next challenges: *“I’ll play the FIP Gold in Potosi immediately after the World Championships and the Platinum in Mexico City in the second half of November. Then I want to aim for the Major in Acapulco”*. For now, he will continue savoring this special moment, sharing it not only with his teammates but also with other very special people: *“Here in Doha, my mother and brother came to watch me. It makes everything even more beautiful”*.

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