

# Billie Jean King Cup

Tuesday, 8 November 2022

Glasgow, Scotland, UK

Emirates Arena

**Team Australia**

**Storm Sanders**

Press Conference

S. SANDERS/V. Kuzmova

6-4, 6-3

Team Australia - 1

Team Slovakia - 0

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Congratulations. Can you just talk through the match from your perspective, the key moments, the end of that first set seemed pretty important, and what you felt like you did well out there today?**

STORM SANDERS: Yeah, thank you. It was a tough match. I think I started off a little bit nervous. My first service game was a long game, and I thought she came out playing really well. We watched a lot of analysis of her, watched some videos, and looked at the stats. But obviously it doesn't prepare you for going out and actually playing the match.

Yeah, she started off really well, and I did well to hold in that first game. Then it was on serve for most of the first set until I got broken. Even in that moment, I still felt like I was in control. I knew what she was doing. I just had to execute a little bit better serve, high percentage of first serves, and just mix my serve around a little bit.

Yeah, she went hot on her serve for a few of those games. I think she held quite a lot to love. Yeah, when I got broken, I was, like, Okay, it's now or never. Otherwise this first set is not going to go your way.

I just managed to scrap a few returns back, and I think that just made her feel a little bit more pressure. Yeah, I just played well.

In the second, same thing. Just tried to, on the return, just try and get any type of moment. Even if she's up 40-Love,



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try and win one point or two points whenever I could, just make the return, just to put a little bit of pressure on her. I think same thing; she just felt that a little bit. And I managed to serve a little bit better.

Definitely playing in this environment I think brings out the best in me. You know, it's been a long year and I have traveled a lot, played a lot more doubles. To be selected to play the singles today, I've been playing really well, and everyone on the team has been playing well. So anyone at any moment can play, which gives me and the team a lot of confidence. To go out and deliver for Australia today felt really special.

**Q. Have you got similar vibes this week to what you had in Prague last year where you obviously had a great week?**

STORM SANDERS: Yeah, definitely. I think these team environments, I love them. They are honestly my favorite weeks of the year. We have such a great team. We have such great team chemistry. Not just the players but the staff as well. We have a lot of fun. That's the most important thing.

To have them cheering for me on the sideline, I spent a lot of the year on my own traveling or with one other person, so to have 13, 14 people, it's a lot of fun. I'm really close with a lot of them. A lot of people are coming to my wedding next week from the team.

Yeah, we have such good chemistry. Yeah, in terms of last year, you know, that brings me a lot of confidence, as well, into my singles game knowing that I can produce that type of tennis in this environment. You know, at the same time, this is a new week, and last year was last year. I'm trying not to think about that.

You know, yeah, this is a new year, and playing Slovakia, a different team, and obviously we play Belgium again Thursday. I'm just really proud the way I handled the moment out there today.

**Q. Did you sort of use the confidence from last year as a bit of a springboard for this season obviously to**

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**really, as you have done, climb the rankings so much in doubles?**

STORM SANDERS: Yeah, definitely. Yeah, last year was, I think that was my career-best win, and to do it being the No. 1 player for Australia, for me, that was like a dream as a kid to be able to do that. I honestly never thought I would have that moment. Obviously it all happened last minute with Ajla being sick and whatnot.

Yeah, that definitely helped springboard my 2022. You know, I'm still focusing on singles as well. I had a really great doubles year this year. I won a couple of titles and cracked the top 10, which is awesome, but I'm also still trying to achieve some things in singles, but it's very hard to balance both of them.

This year I guess was like a learning experience trying to play singles tournaments and doubles tournaments. Even though my singles ranking has dropped a little bit, I still have a lot of confidence in myself that I can get higher and play in the Grand Slams in singles as well as doubles.

**Q. As you said, you have got some options in this team. Can you talk about the confidence that Molik has in you to go with you as the No. 2 player? How much belief does that give you?**

STORM SANDERS: Yeah, it gives me a lot. Like I said, everyone on our team is ready to play, and we are lucky that we do have a lot of options. Everyone has had such a great training week here. We are all playing really well.

I feel like the fact that she picked me to play does give me a lot of confidence that she believed that I could deliver today. Yeah, that was my job is to go out and try and get the win for the team and I achieved that, which is great.

Like I said, I feel anyone in our team can play the singles or the doubles, which is really cool, because, yeah, I think we are all ready and we all back Alicia's decision. Whoever she picks, if we are not picked, we are there cheering and supporting and trying to get the player over the line, and obviously if we are playing, then that's our job.

**Q. I think Alicia was in here the other day saying that she feels like maybe some of the teams are a little fatigued, end of a long season, have had players playing WTA Finals, but she feels like your group are really kind of fresh and ready and targeting this event. Is that how it feels to be part of this team like that?**

STORM SANDERS: Yeah, definitely a lot of us have played a lot this year, even on the Australian team, but I feel like for us we make this a priority week. Our best

players put their hands up, and Ajla, it's a priority for her. We want to try and win this event.

We came close in 2019, and I think that was a little heartbreak for the players and the staff that were on that team, and I think we were so close, we didn't quite get there, but we want to try and achieve that, yeah, again. For us, it is a priority this week, and it's a goal for a lot of us to win.

Even though it's been a long season, we are very lucky that we are surrounded by a great team, support staff that even if we are a little bit tired, they make us feel fresh. We get a lot of energy from the people around us, and, yeah, we are very lucky that we are all super close and get along really well.

THE MODERATOR: We will check if we have media online.

**Q. Well done. A couple of questions. Firstly, how nervous were you during the match?**

STORM SANDERS: I definitely felt a little bit nervous probably before the match and just the first one or two games. I guess, looking back on last year, I had that experience where I definitely was the underdog, kind of zero pressure on me, whereas I guess I was putting a little bit of pressure on myself for this match, opening up for Australia. But definitely once I started playing and I started focusing on what I was trying to do on the court, the nerves kind of settled and went away.

Having Alicia on the side, giving me some things to focus on, it's just another tennis match. For me, that was the focus, just what can I do to win this match and try to kind of not think about anything else, which I thought I did really well.

But, yeah, definitely before I did feel a little bit nervous, so it is nice to kind of play with those nerves. Obviously nerves, for me, it's a positive thing. It means you care. So for me to kind of get through, work through that a little bit and I think the hold in the first game was very important, just to kind of settle them, yeah, get going really.

**Q. You just touched on trying to put everything else to one side while you're playing. How difficult is it to do that when you've got a wedding a week or so away?**

STORM SANDERS: Yeah, it is a little bit tricky. I have a little bit of wedding planning to do while I'm here.

But, yeah, I'm getting married in 10 days now, which is very exciting. I don't know. To be honest, it's just really exciting

for me. Obviously it's been an amazing season. I have traveled a lot and had some, yeah, achieved some amazing things this year, and I'm really proud of myself.

But the most important and exciting thing is in 10 days. I'm very excited for that (smiling). Yeah, it's a lot of fun to be here with the team.

Yeah, when I get home, I get to get married to Loughie. He's at home watching me and supporting me. It will be really nice to get home and spend time with him.

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