

# Billie Jean King Cup

Tuesday, 8 November 2022

Glasgow, Scotland, UK

Emirates Arena

Team Great Britain

Captain Anne Keothavong

Alicia Barnett

Olivia Nicholls

Press Conference



**BILLIE JEAN  
KING CUP**

2022 FINALS GLASGOW

BY ► GAINBRIDGE

BARNETT-NICHOLLS/Danilina-Rybakina

7-5, 6-3

Team Kazakhstan - 2

Team Great Britain - 1

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. What was the most enjoyable part of that victory?**

ALICIA BARNETT: The crowd.

OLIVIA NICHOLLS: Match point, winning match point. That final point is always the best one.

No, I mean, it was incredible energy and atmosphere from the crowd. We showed in the past like at Wimbledon and stuff we love playing in front of a crowd. Yeah, I felt we really brought our best game out there today.

ALICIA BARNETT: Yeah, definitely.

**Q. Where does it rank for you taking down a Wimbledon champion?**

OLIVIA NICHOLLS: Pretty highly, I guess. When you think about it, it's probably, well, it's definitely our best-ever win, isn't it? Top 20 doubles player, and a Wimbledon champion.

ALICIA BARNETT: To do that for your country, as well. Massive, yeah, on home soil. Just keeps on going, the list.

**Q. Anne, can you sum up your thoughts on the day?**

CAPTAIN KEOTHAVONG: Yeah, it ended, I guess, yeah, better than I would have hoped for. You know, after the singles matches, obviously there is the natural disappointment, because we have lost the overall tie against Kazakhstan.

You know, it was a real shame in Katie Boulter's match. There were chances, there were opportunities, but we know she's capable of playing better tennis. But unfortunately for her today it just didn't happen when it mattered.

And Harriet always had a big challenge on her hands against Rybakina. Sitting there courtside you have a greater appreciation for the level of Rybakina and what she brings to the court. Looking at the speed gun when she's hitting 125 serves is always going to be a tough ask I think for anyone here this week.

Watching that doubles and the energy that Liss and Liv brought to the court, how could you not feel joy? It was contagious. You know, we didn't want to go back to the hotel tonight having lost all three rubbers. So it was big to get that win in the doubles.

Yeah, it was fantastic tennis out there, as well. I think they have justified their selection on this team more than. You know, if they can continue to produce that kind of tennis, then there's, yeah, no doubt their doubles rankings will move in the right direction next year.

**Q. Just on that selection, how difficult did you find that one to make?**

CAPTAIN KEOTHAVONG: It was very difficult. The players were all aware, you know, I think it's been a pretty transparent process. I have been as open and honest with each of the players who were in contention about where I was at and all the difference scenarios.

You know, for those players who weren't part of this team, it wasn't an easy conversation. Inevitably they were disappointed to be left out. But the team we have here in Glasgow I think have bonded, yeah, better than I could have hoped for. We have been enjoying each other's time

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on and off the court.

Yeah, I think you could see as well, you know, from even this evening's doubles match, the support everyone gave each other was brilliant.

**Q. It's out of your hands now, and Britain could be eliminated by tomorrow night. If that is the case, how difficult and how will it be to motivate the players to have free rubbers on Thursday if indeed you are eliminated?**

CAPTAIN KEOTHAVONG: Yeah, look, I have no doubt about the level of motivation, because every player we've got on the team is naturally very competitive. You know, we are playing in front of a home crowd. There is a lot of pride on the line.

So regardless, what will be will be tomorrow, and we will prepare in the right way for Spain. Look, you see, just even today, we lost the match against Kazakhstan after the first two singles match, but that didn't stop anyone's energy levels to rise to the challenge of taking out the doubles team.

**Q. I just wanted to ask Alicia and Olivia, at what point in the year did you think perhaps we do have a chance of being on that team in November, and where were you when you found out?**

ALICIA BARNETT: I mean, we never take anything for granted, and we never expect anything. Liv and I have worked really hard to be here, and we didn't go the conventional route. We went to college, and we have grafted pretty hard all the way through.

Yeah, nothing's handed to you. I think this year has been incredible. And to be selected to this team was an absolute privilege. Yeah, today's win was obviously just the cherry on top. We're just really grateful to be here, and we just went out and just controlled what we could and let our results and performances speak for themselves.

OLIVIA NICHOLLS: I mean, it's obviously a difficult decision for the captain to bring in two doubles players, because, you know, you haven't got that second option or you can't swap people around. You've only got one backup singles player, so it was a brave and bold decision to bring in a doubles pair, but hopefully we proved to Anne today that it was the right decision.

**Q. This is a question for the girls in terms of their performance today. Do you think that playing week in and week out on the tour and being doubles specialists has given you an advantage today in the**

**match?**

OLIVIA NICHOLLS: Can I just start off by saying my best friend Amy listens to your podcast every day. Just giving her a little shoutout.

Yeah, of course, one of our biggest strengths is knowing each other as a person inside out and each other's games inside out. And when we are out there, we literally are almost telepathic at times. We know exactly where each other are moving. If she hits there, I'm going there, and of course that helps massively.

**Q. Anne, in terms of the performance of Olivia and Alicia today being doubles specialists, obviously it's a bit of a hot topic when it comes to Davis Cup whether we play a doubles specialists or play the top-ranked singles players. Do you think the performance today of two doubles specialists, where do you stand on singles versus doubles specialists, and is it on a case-by-case basis?**

CAPTAIN KEOTHAVONG: It's a case-by-case basis, in my opinion. Liss and Liv had an outstanding performance this evening. But you have to look at the matchup and the opposition, and I think we did a lot of prep for this match. You know, we prepared as if we were going into that match at 1-All, how were Liss and Liv going to disrupt the opposition? What was going to be the best team to disrupt the opposition?

And the decision was always going to be Liss and Liv in this case. Yeah, they showed how to disrupt. That's not to say, you know, there are other doubles options. Heather and Harriet also play very good doubles and have proven themselves on doubles court and equally capable. It just depends on the matchup and the style of play.

**Q. Anne, would you hope that maybe the sound in the arena is kind of more partisan on Thursday? The Kazakhstan band make a little noise, but how much does it feel like a home tie in the sense of having that kind of noise on your side?**

CAPTAIN KEOTHAVONG: Well, I think the British band, what were they called? Were they the Barmy Army? I thought they did a great job. The Kazakhstan band we knew they were going to be good. They are annoyingly good, actually.

I think they were here for Davis Cup, weren't they, and we experienced, yeah, the noise at the Copper Box. So the team were well prepped for that.

You know, I think all the players actually enjoyed it. It

helped create some atmosphere out there. Of course we'd love to see the arena, you know, fill out with more people and hopefully that will be the case come Thursday.

But just given the nature of this event, there is a lot of tennis, but I think, you know, I think Rebecca James, the tournament director here, has done a fantastic job, because having spoken to other players and other teams, you know, this venue has been very well set up for an event like this.

Yeah, ideally you'd like more people to come and support, because there is some great tennis on offer. How many opportunities do you get to see a Wimbledon champion and the British players play on your doorstep?

I also understand this is a weeknight and there has been tennis during the day as well, and there is only so many hours you can keep young kids up. You know, there are other challenges, but overall, I think we had, yeah, there was good support.

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