

Billie Jean King Cup

Monday, 6 November 2023

Team Australia

Captain Alicia Molik

Daria Saville

Ajla Tomljanovic

Kimberly Birrell

Press Conference



that makes team competitions so special for you?

KIMBERLY BIRRELL: I think, yeah, we just really enjoy being in a team environment. Obviously tennis being an individual sport, I think we all really just look forward to this week for the entire year.

Yeah, I think being an Aussie, we're quite a -- what's the word -- patriotic country. Yeah, you grow up watching the Australian team. I think we all really get behind each other, no matter what sport. Yeah, we watch a lot of sport growing up, and I think most of us have the dream of representing our country from a young age.

Yeah, I think it's a pretty cool feeling.

CAPTAIN ALICIA MOLIK: From my perspective, I think if you're involved in a team like this one, it's incredibly harmonious, too. The players and the staff, everyone is really looking forward to these weeks. Because they truly are really enjoyable and they are unique too. Because only too often players are off and traveling, if they're not on their own, just with perhaps a parent or a colleague.

So to come with a full team and be present here practice, train, we as the Australian team spend all day together: Breakfast, lunch, and dinner. We don't get sick of each other. So that's a good sign of a great team.

Q. Daria, looks like your comeback to competition is going quite smoothly. You have built up some ranking and also have some wins under your belt. The question is how are your feelings after those months, and how close to your best do you feel you are?

DARIA SAVILLE: Yeah, coming back from an injury is never easy, but I have done it so many times unfortunately. You know, I'm still building. I'm still getting better every day.

I just want to, you know, have that perspective that if I'm, for example, having a bad day that, okay, well, it was way worse few months ago where I was just doing rehab.

You know, I'm just grateful to be back. This time last year I

THE MODERATOR: Hello, everybody. Welcome to Team Australia. We will take questions for any members of the team.

Q. I just wondered if you've had a bit of a feel of the place, conditions? What is it like playing tennis here in this under-the-roof kind of temporary scenario that we have built here in Seville?

DARIA SAVILLE: We are really impressed with how quickly they could build this. I think we have been really enjoying it. We really like the speed of the courts and the conditions.

Yeah, we're excited. You know, we came early. We came on the Wednesday, so we definitely got used to the conditions.

Q. Ajla, this year has been a pretty frustrating year, I guess, having not played a lot of tennis. How are you feeling right now physically and mentally because of that?

AJLA TOMLJANOVIC: Yeah, I'm excited that I get a chance to end on a high. This week has always been a priority in my year. Not having played much tennis, it's definitely a little more nerve-racking coming into a week like this, but at the same time, you've got the whole team behind you, and special things can happen when you're in that environment.

I think the whole year how it's been kind of goes out the window, because on the day, you can do anything.

Q. Welcome to Seville. Hope you are enjoying the city. Australia has a pretty good record in terms of team competitions. You've been well known in terms of a country for team competitions. What's the thing



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had just had my surgery, so I'm even more excited to be here this time around.

Q. Alicia, what are your emotions coming into this week knowing that you made a decision to stand down at the end? How are you feeling? What are your emotions?

CAPTAIN ALICIA MOLIK: Yeah, I'm really excited for the tie. This also might sound weird, it feels really normal, because we have really attacked and approached the week how we always do with being really well planned with practices and training. You know, between the team and the training, there is not a lot of down time really probably, which is a good thing, to really reflect too much.

But it's been like all the other Billie Jean King Cup teams I have been involved in. We have a real focus. Our focus, first of all, is tomorrow against Slovenia. So it hasn't been an emotional week or anything for me. It's sort of like back to business and like work.

But for the future, I'm excited that I've got a great opportunity to leave the team in a great place. Ten years is a great portion of time I'm really proud of. Onwards for me and onwards for the rest of the team, as well.

Q. Initially there were five signs over here. You're still missing the Ellen Perez sign. She's still in Cancun, obviously. What would be your message to her? Have you been in touch with her? Or do you think she will make it in time, or are you still in doubt about that?

CAPTAIN ALICIA MOLIK: I would say to Ellen, "Andale, Andale." (Laughter.)

We miss her. We miss Storm. Storm's on her way. They are really important people in our team. I think they're one of the best doubles teams here in this competition. We want them. We are getting them here as quick as we can.

But we have had Olivia Gadecki join our three players so we have had four players here present. Practices has worked really, really well. The best practice for players is always match practice.

In a way, I'm also very glad that they had a lot of success in Cancun, as well. It's what we want. Few things out of our hands. That's the way it is. One or two will still get here in time for Thursday. That's fine.

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