

# Billie Jean King Cup

Thursday, 9 November 2023

Team USA

Danielle Collins

Press Conference



D. COLLINS/C. Naef

7-6, 6-1

Team Switzerland - 0

Team USA - 1

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. If you look at the USA's lineup today, you see Danielle Collins, Sofia Kenin, Sloane Stephens, Taylor Townsend, it's such a huge depth in your team. Is there actually any disadvantage to that, or do you feel like that's the main strength of the USA team in this Billie Jean King Cup Finals?**

DANIELLE COLLINS: What would the disadvantage be?

**Q. I don't know.**

DANIELLE COLLINS: Yeah.

**Q. Choosing the leaders or something...**

DANIELLE COLLINS: Yeah, I think when we have, like, the strong depth, it really can only help us because we have such great players, and I think it helps with the captain and making the lineup. We could play anybody on the team and we always have a shot at winning.

Yeah, I would rather have really great depth than the other way (smiling). It's been a long year for everyone. I think everyone this year has had really successful years and going into it with full confidence, so yeah.

**Q. It's been a bit of a wait for USA to get going at these Finals, but I imagine it's always nice to get the first match out of the way and off to a winning start?**

DANIELLE COLLINS: Yeah. Yeah, we have been here quite a few days now, but it's nice because we had a few extra days to get acclimated to the conditions, playing indoors. Yeah, it's always nice to get a couple extra days.

I think all of us were eager to play. We're always ready, no matter what. If we are going to play earlier in the week or later, we're ready.

**Q. I read some comments you made about the impact of Kathy on you when she was driving vans and making breakfast. She really has had a huge impact on the girls' careers and continues to do so?**

DANIELLE COLLINS: Yeah, I think that separates Kathy from so many of the coaches, from my experience, is just her care for us as people. I think her coaching record speaks for itself, and she's been very successful with the teams over the years, and obviously on the court she had a tremendous amount of success as a player.

What really stands out to me the most, honestly, is the way she treats all of us and how she's been true friends to all of us. Whether it's been through big wins, really tough losses, personal challenges, she has been there for all of us. I could go into so many different stories of how she's always been the first person to pick up the phone if you're ever in a pinch or need something or just need someone to talk to.

I think all of us can speak to that and have had the same experience with Kathy. I know in any tough situation, I can look over at Kathy and there is this calming presence about her.

I was really devastated when obviously the decision was made to step down, because I have had so much fun with her over the years. She's one of my biggest role models, to be honest, on and off the court. Kathy is just an amazing, amazing person.

As I was saying yesterday, I feel like so much of the tennis world only gets to really see her on the court, helping us on the court, when she was playing, but they don't get to see the way she goes to junior tournaments after winning Fed Cup a few years ago and goes with a bunch of girls 14 and under to help them in their development. She takes the time to get to know them.



She really has inserted herself in all areas of the game, whether it's been community tennis, whether it's been junior tennis, wheelchair tennis. She reaches out to all of the players, supports all of us. She shows up at everyone's matches and does her very best with keeping in touch with all of us.

She just goes so above and beyond. I'm really gonna miss her. I feel like this is so important, and, you know, our lives, too, having people around us that really love and care about us. We all feel that from Kathy.

**Q. As a result, and obviously the last tournament with her as captain, does it give you added purpose, in a way? Of course you're going to be motivated and you're desperate to win. But in a way, we have seen with other sports teams and sports individuals, this extra sort of reason to go out on a high maybe gives you a little bit more belief or a little bit more hope or determination?**

DANIELLE COLLINS: Yeah, definitely. When you have a close relationship with your coaches, I feel like -- and even those around you, you feel more motivation to really get the win. You feel that support behind you all the way.

You know, coming out today, I had a couple of weeks off. You know, coming back from a little bit of an injury. Kind of got down there in the first set and had other plans, right, like I would have liked to have taken control of the match a little bit earlier. It did go through my head that this is Kathy's last match, and I want to do my best not just for my teammates but for Kathy in particular because it is her last match.

You know, I really just hope that all of us can make this week as memorable as possible for her. I know a lot of us have known Kathy since we were juniors, and so it really is surreal kind of having this all come to fruition with our games and where we are at with her careers and how now we are playing in the biggest stage of the world.

I remember playing against Taylor and Sloane like in junior, what was then designated tournaments in Florida. To be here on the biggest stage with them, to be out there with Kathy and for this to be her last tie, I really hope we can all make this as memorable for her as possible.

I know we're already having some great memories on court, but hopefully we can go all the way and make her proud.

**Q. As a result, maybe having had such an inspirational coach for this team here, is it a role that maybe one day Danielle Collins, U.S. team captain, is it**

**something that you would, having had that inspirational coach and experience, you know, maybe think I can learn something from this and maybe even one day bring something to the team in that respect?**

DANIELLE COLLINS: Yeah. I think one of my passions outside of obviously competing and doing this as a career professionally is helping a lot of the juniors and younger players and trying to be a role model for them on and off the court.

I have tried to make myself available for any of the up-and-coming girls, especially the American girls, to be able to be someone that they can go to and ask for advice, ask for help, to practice with.

It would be an honor one day to be able to be in the position that Kathy is in. But we'll see. I'm sure I'm not the only one that would like to do that, but Kathy's definitely inspired me to probably at some point later on more consistently work with juniors and try to help them in their development.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports