

# Billie Jean King Cup

Friday, 10 November 2023

Team USA

Danielle Collins

Press Conference



D. COLLINS/K. Siniakova

6-3, 6-2

Team Czechia - 0

Team USA - 1

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. Many congratulations. Another rip-roaring start to the tie, just like yesterday. Could I just ask you about the level you're playing at? I know you play at a high level regularly, Grand Slam finalist, things like that. How would you rate your own level this week? It seems to be pretty high.**

DANIELLE COLLINS: Yeah, I feel like playing on a team, and especially since this is Kathy's last tie, and we have lost to Czech Republic three times before. Two or three? Two in a row. So you don't want to lose three times in a row. We want to go out there and give it a better start than, you know, what we have done previously.

I feel like I had some extra motivation today just to try to help my teammates out as much as possible, because Sonya does not have an easy match, playing against another Grand Slam champion. It's going to be a great matchup, but I really wanted to try to take control early and just kind of set the pace as much as I could.

**Q. We know the format, we are in group stages now, but this feels like a quarterfinal tie. I don't know if maybe you discuss it with Kathy early on before the match, but as you mentioned, having lost two times in a row, it adds a little bit of spice maybe in terms of getting revenge to offset Czech Republic?**

DANIELLE COLLINS: Well, I mean, I don't know if, like, with our personalities and how, like, laid back and fun-loving we are, I don't know if we're, like, Oh, we're going to try and get revenge on these players (smiling). But I think we are just always up for a challenge.

As individuals, we are certainly challenging ourselves to get better and improve, and then collectively, as a team, I think we want to come together and get the victory.

So we're just focused on what we have to do to win and really focused on, you know, our patterns, what we need to do, playing our games and doing the best that we can. That's all there is to it.

**Q. Obviously the Czechs have got so many options, kind of like the U.S. Just wondering how you went in to preparing for this match. Did you have a sense that they might put Siniakova out in that position, or were you more prepared to play someone else?**

DANIELLE COLLINS: Yeah, I think with the coaches having the ability to kind of change the lineups, too, I think it's, like, an hour before we go on, you never really know who you're going to play, so it's really important to prepare for really anyone, especially on a team that's so strong.

So we have our statistician who comes up with reports and helpful ideas and patterns that we can use against these players. Then we have that information we can go to, and we really kind of study everyone on the team so that we're ready no matter what.

**Q. I saw you midway through the second set just cool the racquet a little bit to suggest to me, at least, that you were on fire and so was your racquet, arguably. But I was thinking at the same time about the atmosphere. Of course it's kind of a unique situation, bearing in mind 95% of the time the atmosphere is much calmer and quieter, but do you feel as though you enjoy this kind of atmosphere more than the kind of quiet nature of most other tournaments?**

DANIELLE COLLINS: Yeah, I love the camaraderie that all of us get to share. I couldn't express that more. I think all of us do. I think we prefer, most of us, to be playing on a team.

And then having lots of fans and playing for something bigger than yourself, having people that are there specifically because they are American or they're



supporting the American teams, you know, we're just playing with a lot of passion and excitement.

You know, I just try to be myself out there, like, I'm pretty spunky and fun-loving, so I feel like most of even my opponents know that it's always in good spirit. But trying to have fun out there.

I think a lot of us, we get so wrapped up in our tactics and our strategy, and sometimes it's easy to kind of go out there and not show a lot of emotion or energy, whether it's positive or negative. And it can become kind of mundane. I just try to bring a little bit variety and fun to the match, and I think everybody gets a sense of that when I do things like that.

**Q. Congrats on the win. On paper I think a lot of people are considering the Czechs to be one of the favorites. The U.S. are usually the favorites going into most ties. Do you feel like the underdogs? Does that feel strange? Is it acting as extra motivation?**

DANIELLE COLLINS: Yeah, I mean, I think the favorites, it's all subjective, really. Especially with the depth that we have on the women's tour, any week, any player has a chance of winning tournaments and Grand Slams.

So I think it goes, it's the same for this type of event, especially when you're playing for your country, because I feel like the biggest thing I have noticed the most is that I think when people are just playing for themselves individually, it's easier to throw in the towel, it's easier to give in, but in these team matches, no one gives up.

People are fighting till the end. They are playing with more passion, more excitement and more energy. They are not getting as down as much, because they are not just out there by themselves. They have that extra encouragement. It makes it more difficult.

I really feel like any of these teams could win. I think in all of the teams' minds, no one is going, Oh, so-and-so is the favorite, we better be scared (smiling).

We are all competitors and really high level. That's never our mindset. We just go out and try to do the best that we can.

I think with the team that we have, I mean, Sonya's won a Grand Slam, I have made Grand Slam finals, Sloane's won a slam, Czech Republic, similar type of players with very similar accomplishments.

So I feel like, you know, I don't know if the favoritism really plays into it so much, to be honest. I think our mentalities

are just, like, trying to figure out ways to win no matter what (smiling).

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