

# Billie Jean King Cup

Thursday, 14 November 2024

Team Australia

Captain Samantha Stosur

Ajla Tomljanovic

Olivia Gadecki

Daria Saville

Kimberly Birrell

Ellen Perez

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Hello, everyone. Good morning. Let's start the press conference with Team Australia. Please raise your hands for questions.

**Q. It was obviously quite a wild day yesterday with the weather. I was just wondering if you could talk about your experience of the day and how it affected you in your preparations coming in here.**

CAPTAIN SAMANTHA STOSUR: Well, yeah, obviously it wasn't ideal, but, you know, every single team was in the same situation. I think it was the right decision not to come on-site or do anything like that.

I know decisions like that aren't going to be made lightly given the level of this competition and how important it is. So I think everyone kind of just took it in their stride. Can't do anything about the weather, unfortunately. You know, I think there was obviously bigger issues happening around Malaga than not being able to practice for the day.

It is what it is, but looks like everything is going to be all good now. Great news is the stadiums and everything really seemed to hold up well. Being able to start today at 9:00 a.m. was just, yeah, very pleasing, I guess.

**Q. Sam, obviously this is your first Finals as a captain. Wondering how you've found the experience so far and whether you're learning anything from your players who have been here before?**

CAPTAIN SAMANTHA STOSUR: Yeah, look, it's only my second tie in this position and first Finals. Look, it's something that I'm really proud to be in this position, and to

be able to be with all of these players is fantastic.

The great thing is we just have a great team of not just players but people who we can all hang out with and share experiences with. You know, then when they do get out on court, it's going to be absolutely give it everything they've got for their teammates, for our broader team, and then obviously for your country.

It's a real, yeah, honor to be able to I guess lead the team like that. Yeah, hopefully we can do well this week (smiling).

**Q. Ellen, talk to us about your time in Riyadh and how excited you are to be amongst the team again here in Malaga for the BJK Cup Finals.**

ELLEN PEREZ: Yeah, my time in Riyadh was great. I thought they put on a wonderful event. I think any time you can make the Finals, it's an incredible experience and an honor to be there.

I think it really just summed up the year, and we had a great result there also. So coming in here pretty confident, feeling good, really excited to be back in the team environment. I kind of thrive in that.

As you said, we have great camaraderie. I love being around these girls. We have good banter, playing games, hanging out. Yeah, there is nowhere I'd rather be. Looking forward to a really great week.

**Q. How did you pass the time yesterday? Anything fun? Did you get up to any funny games that you did to pass the time?**

KIMBERLY BIRRELL: Ellen and I lost in -- it's a new game. I haven't played it before.

ELLEN PEREZ: We played Sequence.

KIMBERLY BIRRELL: We managed to lose every time we played. But it was really fun. (Laughter.) Yeah, good bonding day. Yeah, despite the weather, I think we all kind of enjoyed it in a way.



**Q. Liv, you got to play at the Olympics, now here in the green and gold again, and then United Cup you've been selected for as well. How important is it to you to represent the green and gold and play for Australia?**

OLIVIA GADECKI: Yeah, it's an incredible honor to wear the green and gold, and to wear it a few times in a year is incredible. I think it's something that I strive to do every single year, and yeah, I'm really excited to get out there and compete.

**Q. Ajla, Australia have obviously had a lot of success in this competition in recent years, semifinals three of the past four times at least. How do you compare kind of where you're at coming into this edition versus previous ones? What's it like having the bye and knowing that the team you're going to face will have tested the court and played in those conditions? It's obviously an advantage in some respect, but is there a bit of a downside to it as well?**

AJLA TOMLJANOVIC: Yeah, I mean, our record is pretty incredible, in a way, because I find these weeks really tough. To make it to the finals or semis, you've always got to beat good teams and be consistent.

Especially in this format, every match counts a lot more than maybe in the previous times when it was best-of-five. But I think that having a bye is a little bit of a kind of, yeah, there is good things and bad things, but I think that you only, when you're in that position, you just focus on the good ones. And the fact that we have more time to prepare and watch the match before us, I think we can draw on that.

Yeah, it's nice to be kind of the person that the team that has a bye, because it means, I guess, we're seeded in some way (smiling). I don't even know how it works, but hey, we'll take it. (Laughter.)

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