

Billie Jean King Cup

Thursday, 14 November 2024

Team Czechia

Captain Petr Pala

Linda Noskova

Marie Bouzkova

Katerina Siniakova

Sara Bejlek

Dominika Salkova

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We will start the press conference with the Czechia team. Questions in English for Katerina, please, first.

Q. I know it's obviously been a long season and you were in Riyadh very recently. Was there ever any doubt that you would play this event? Was it always a big priority for you to be here?

KATERINA SINIAKOVA: Not really. I mean, the only chance I wouldn't come, I would be injured, so I'm really happy I'm healthy and I'm here.

Q. How different does this feel to last year when I think at the pretournament press conference it was a cardboard cutout of you and Barbora, and now you have had a bit more time. Does it feel better preparation this year?

KATERINA SINIAKOVA: I don't know yet. Now I have to practice in 20 minutes, and I'm not ready, so I don't know (smiling).

But definitely I enjoyed that I could come back to Prague for two days and at least change my clothes and everything. I mean, really tough to answer for now, because I don't know yet.

THE MODERATOR: A question couples for Marie, as well.

Q. You obviously made your debut in the Billie Jean King Cup this time last year. How did you find that experience and what did you learn that you're bringing into this year?

MARIE BOUZKOVA: I was really happy I could play last year and even get a win. So I definitely have really nice memories of that. If I get to play this week again would be even better, of course, because I know what to kind of expect playing a match.

So we'll see. But most importantly, I hope we have a great week as a team and I'm already enjoying so much here.

Q. If possible, after that, for the captain too, if you think it's an advantage now that the postponement of the other match between Poland and Spain for tomorrow, and they will have just one day to face you?

MARIE BOUZKOVA: I don't know if it's advantage. We'll see. Obviously they have to play in the morning, so, you know, then I don't think it's going to be extra long tie like till midnight. So I'm not sure if there is any advantage.

Hopefully we can go out there and watch their matches a little bit. I guess that's for us the most important right now so that we're prepared for Saturday.

Yeah, I don't think there is really advantage or disadvantage in any way.

CAPTAIN PETR PALA: I don't think there is any issue for the winning team playing the following day. As Marie mentioned, they're playing in the morning from 10:00.

So, no, the difference would be if they would play at 5:00 and finish 1:00 in the morning, then would be a difference. Because we know it from last year when we have to follow up from the previous day. But no.

Q. A question for the captain. You've obviously got such a strong record in this competition. It's been a little bit tougher since the format changed. I'm wondering, what are the challenges of these Finals compared to the old format and why you think maybe Czechia haven't had such success in the last few years compared to before?

CAPTAIN PETR PALA: Well, we played three times



semis. I think it's pretty good to be three times in the semifinals (smiling).

But we won many times before, so I think as the format change, I think the previous one was very difficult to beat us in five matches. So now the competition is more open, more teams, which is the way it is, and more teams has a chance to win it.

But I'm always happy and fortunate that we have such a good team and so many great girls coming up, you know, and trying also to lift the trophy. Looking forward with this team. I think it might be the youngest we ever had, I think, maybe. I don't know. I haven't checked the records.

But we are gonna have tough first round, but I'm sure we will make it very difficult for our opponent. We can beat any team who's here.

Q. For either Dominika or Sara, what's it been like being part of the team? How excited are you to be here? Have there been any, like, things you have had to do on your debut, for example?

SARA BEJLEK: I'm really happy that I can be here, because, like, it's amazing, the end of the season. Yeah, we are both looking forward to the matches and to support the team. We'll see.

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