

Billie Jean King Cup

Friday, 15 November 2024

Team Canada

Captain Heidi El Tabakh

Leylah Fernandez

Rebecca Marino

Marina Stakusic

Gabriela Dabrowski

Press Conference



excited and really looking forward to our tie.

Q. One for the captain. Wondering how you spent the day a couple days ago when everyone was inside, how that affected your preparations and maybe some stuff that you did as a team just to get through a day like that?

CAPTAIN HEIDI EL TABAKH: Yeah, I mean, I feel like we're all used to circumstances like this. We adapt and of course can't control the weather.

You know, the girls arrived early enough to adjust to the time difference. You know, we stayed at the hotel. We went to the gym a few times.

But yeah, like the girls mentioned, this is such an enjoyable week. I truly enjoy my time with these girls, and I feel like so far we are having a great preparation. Yeah, we look forward to Sunday.

Q. Rebecca, Marina, you guys are both coming off of the biggest singles titles of your careers. If you could just tell me a bit, maybe starting with Rebecca, the confidence you have heading into this week after that win in Midland, and then Marina, same thing for you with the title in Mexico.

REBECCA MARINO: Yeah, from my point of view, I'm feeling fantastic right now. It's really exciting to be coming in off that win. A lot of confidence, especially coming into a team competition like this. I'm fully aware that my teammates have also had fantastic years, as well, or a fantastic year, as well.

So I think we're a really strong front, and that makes me super excited to come in again. Yeah, I'm very excited for everyone.

Q. Same question for you, Marina.

MARINA STAKUSIC: Yeah, I agree with Rebecca. That was the biggest title of my career. I'm coming in with a lot of confidence, as well. I know all of them are, as well.

THE MODERATOR: Good morning. Let's start the press conference with questions. Please raise your hand.

Q. Leylah, obviously last year was such an incredible moment for you as a team and you personally, as well. If you could just reflect on that, and how motivated are you to kind of turn one Billie Jean King Cup title into two?

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: It was a wonderful, wonderful week, 10 days that I spent with the team. I was having a wonderful time. We had Marina for the first time with us, so it was super cool to get to know her and then see her perform on court.

And then of course the environment off court with the rest of the girls and the supporting staff, I think that was probably one of my favorite parts of the year. You know, I'm excited to be here representing Canada with them, with the girls, and I do hope that we get the chance to do well and defend our title. That's our goal. You know, at the end of the day, it's also having fun.

Q. Gaby, I was wondering how you're feeling. I imagine you have a spring in your step after the Finals in Riyadh but maybe also some fatigue, as well? Can you just talk about what the last week or so has been like in your life?

GABRIELA DABROWSKI: Yeah, thanks. It's been crazy. Luckily it's not too far away and obviously not too bad of a time change, so I don't feel too bad, actually, which is really good.

Yeah, I'm so excited to be here, excited to be with the girls, get out there, compete, enjoy. I think, yeah, I'm super



But, yeah, I'm just very happy to bring hopefully some good energy this week, and hopefully we can continue as we did last year (smiling).

Q. Leylah, I think I'm right in saying you're a big Rafa fan. I feel like everyone is a Rafa fan. I just wonder what it feels like to be playing this event coinciding with him playing his last event. What's that like for you?

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: It's actually a lot of fun. It's really exciting. You know, actually yesterday was actually a fan-girl moment for me. I was in the gym finishing up my recovery, and then Rafa was coming in, and I was telling everybody, the team, that Rafa is here. I was just fan-girling the whole night (smiling).

No, I think for me it's a little sad that Rafa is ending his career here, but also, I'm excited to see him play, hopefully he does play, and see him compete one last time.

You know, I hope it all goes well for them, but hopefully they don't meet Team Canada too soon (smiling).

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