

China Open

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Beijing, China

Zhang Junhui

Lars Graff

Chen Jie

Xiao Yukun

Dong Jian

Liu Xingrun

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Very happy to meet with all of you here to have this press conference, 2023 China Open press conference for data information.

It's been 13 days. It went by really quickly. This is the last day of the China Open. We have seen great performances from tennis players, many top-10 players. We will be able to see great finals tonight. As well as great performances from Chinese players, we have seen first-class performances here.

Here we would like to hear the report of those numbers, operational numbers, from the China Open 2023.

We have Secretary General of the Organizing Committee, Deputy Director of the Municipal Sports Bureau, Dong Jian.

Zhang Junhui, Tournament Director.

Mr. Liu Xingrun, Director of the National Tennis Center.

Mr. Xiao Yukun, Secretary of the Organizing Committee.

Mr. Lars Graff, co-director of the tournament.

Now let us have Mr. Chen Jie, Secretary General of the Organizing Committee for the operational review of the 2023 China Open.

CHEN JIE: Ladies and gentlemen, with the care and support of all walks of life, the China Open, which has been absent for three years, was brilliantly presented in Beijing, adding a sports atmosphere to the Mid Autumn Festival as



well as the National Day holiday.

On behalf of the Organizing Committee, we would like to express our sincere appreciation to all of you. This is the last day of the 2023 China Open. I would like to report to you the operational data of this tournament.

Great performances from top players. We have in total 309 players from 51 countries and regions in the China Open. 128 WTA players, including all top-10 players. 74 ATP players, including eight of the top-10 players. Six of them were in Beijing for the first time.

The ATP tournament this year was praised as the strongest ATP 500 tournament ever. ITF was upgraded to J-300. We had 107 under-18 junior players.

We had four finals to date. We have in total 329 matches of the whole tournament.

We have seen great performances of the players of the Z generation, including Sinner, Alcaraz, Swiatek, Gauff, as well as Grand Slam champions, including Medvedev and Rybakina.

We have seen that the competitiveness and attraction of the China Open is leading in the tournaments of the same level. Players like Alcaraz, Swiatek, expressed that the facilities are great, and atmosphere it great. They like the very passionate Chinese fans and look forward to coming back to the China Open again.

We have seen the numbers showing the competitiveness of this tournament. The finalist Medvedev made the most aces in the ATP tournament, which was 33 aces in five matches. Jannik Sinner was the king of saving the most break points. He faced 24 break points in five matches, and he saved 18 of them. In the WTA, one of the top four, Rybakina, made 38 aces in five matches.

Egyptian player Sherif, break points saved percentage was the same as Sinner at 75%.

41 matches exceeded two hours.



Upgrade of the new Comprehensive Service Building, we have seen an upgrading of holiday consumption, sponsor traffic, as well as ticket sales.

In the past three years, there was an all-around upgrade of the China Open Park. The West Square used to have all the functions of the China Open, except for matches. Now we have an expanded South Park with more space for sponsor exhibition, with diverse activities and exhibition space, as well as more interactive activities.

The new Comprehensive Service Building is the biggest highlight of the China Open this year. The design language is very similar to that of the Diamond Court in the evening with neon lights. The Comprehensive Service Building, the Diamond Court, the Ice Ribbon Stadium as well as the Olympic Tower were glamorous scenes of this area.

With 15,000 square meters of inner space as well as the roof garden, we have upgraded the dining experience for spectators, players, as well as sponsors.

We also have greenery pavilions, fountains, an upgrading of the greenery percentage of the China Open Park.

Tennis fans not only can chase the stars, but they can also enjoy the holiday atmosphere here in the China Open. Watching matches, tasting great food are good ways of experiencing the National Day holiday for tennis fans.

The tennis tournament is also taking advantage of the cultural tourism as well as sports resources in China, inciting as well as encouraging more consumption in sports and tourism.

As of October 7, the total consumption exceeded 18 million, 40% increase compared to that of 2019.

We also have a lot of souvenirs favored by spectators. The flower of the China Open and the flower of ballkids have been a hot topic on social media.

As of October 7, spectator numbers exceeded 184,000. On October 3, the daily spectators number exceeded 30,000.

The attendance rate of October 4, which was ATP men's final singles, in the Diamond Court exceeded 99%.

With the fans coming and purchasing the tickets, the sales of tickets has doubled. As of October 7, ticketing sales doubled compared to 2019.

Services are becoming more people oriented. Also players

will have the opportunity to have in-depth experiences of tourism activities in addition to greet and meets as well as training observations and player zone visits.

We also have more activities, for example, VR activities, tennis games, and media tournaments. We also have seen collaborations with other cultural intellectual properties. We are transcending the energy in a very unique way.

Also in the service center we have added a luggage storage space as well as hot water delivery services.

On the Mid Autumn Day, the Organizing Committee also launched the Kickoff Reunion Day so that the tennis fans as well as amateur players could spend the Mid Autumn Day together in the China Open.

On the 5th of October, we had Children's Day so parents can bring kids during the National Day holiday to experience the charm of tennis as well as cultivate their interests in this sport.

We also had more diverse activities in Beijing. We had activities, for example, the Great Wall excursions as well as trips into the traditional courtyard as well as Chinese calligraphy, traditional musical performances so that players could experience the traditional culture of China, winning praise from players as well as international organizations.

Innovation in media broadcasting and technology. 342 journalists from different outlets, 103 outlets in total. As of October 7, 70,000 reports regarding the China Open were reported on the Internet, 46,000 from Chinese media and 24,000 from international media.

#2023ChinaOpen on Weibo had 500 million reads, 1.08 million discussions and 2.74 interactions, a record high.

On October 4, men's singles final also covered by CCTV Prime Time News Report as well as the Finance News Report.

In terms of television broadcasting, because of the overlap with the Hangzhou Asian Games, as of the semifinals CCTV5 plus, CCTV Olympics channel, and BRTV channel as well as other channels have broadcasting hours exceeded 30 hours. CCTV website Migu Sports and ITE Sports also had broadcasting of the overall tournament.

In terms of technology innovation, it was the first time for an Asia Pacific tournament to have electronic line calling system coverage in all seven competition venues.



There was a launch of the metaverse space of Diamond Court so that the spectators could click into the metaverse space so that they could enjoy a more immersive experience of the matches.

The Diamond Court initiated for the first time a 3-D sound system. While maintaining the high quality of the visuals in broadcasting, we have elevated immersive sound-making standards so that spectators on the TV ends could have a more immersive experience.

Green and sustainable development. Beijing Mercedes Benz provided 100 energy vehicles to facilitate green transportation for players.

Also through upgrading of the International China Open Park, more people will be able to choose public transportation, the subway, to come to the main venue.

Also the Capital Group provided 10 smart recycling bins to improve the efficiency of waste recycling and low carbon development.

Promotion of tennis culture. In addition to operation of the tournament, we also focused on the display of tennis culture. We organized China Tennis History and Culture Exhibition.

We also had this VR cloud exhibition room. 117,000 people visited the VR room.

We also provided more diverse experiences. For example, tennis players, including Zhang Shuai and Andy Murray participated in these lecture series providing first tennis class activities to students and teachers from a county of inner Mongolia so that we have integrated the international tennis with cultural as well as philanthropy.

Safety activities and management. We have received high attention from all walks of life because of the Mid Autumn Festival as well as the National Day holiday. We paid high attention to safety management, also trying to maintain a good atmosphere of the tournament.

With the support of different authorities of the Beijing Municipal Government, we have been working together to ensure the tournament was held in a safe, orderly and harmonious way.

Issues to be addressed. With increase of the traffic as well as spectators into the tournament, there were disadvantages witnessed by the management of the tournament. We have received feedback of spectators as well as netizens online. The organizing committees have gone through these issues as well as to improve these

issues and will see the improvement of these issues in the tournament next year.

On September 30, because of the competitive matches during the day, there were matches over two and a half hours. The second match of the evening session did not finish until 3 a.m. It was actually 2:40 in the morning. Because of this situation, there were criticisms from players as well as spectators regarding the scheduling of the matches.

With the discussion of international organizations, as well as officials, and also considering that the WTA tournament in 2024 is going to expand with more players, we will continue to optimize the schedule of this tournament.

That was an overview of the operation of this tournament. I would like to thank the friends of the media for your support and help. Let us look forward to a more spectacular tournament in 2024. Thank you very much.

THE MODERATOR: Question-and-answer session.

Q. A question for Mr. Zhang. It's been three years. The relaunch of the China Open as a leader of the management level, what kind of highlights and differences do you see in the tournament this year?

ZHANG JUNHUI: Thank you very much.

I see a lot of old friends. I would like to thank you for your support. I'm sure once you stepped into this tournament for the first day, you felt the vibrant atmosphere here.

After hearing this overview, I would like to add a few more points.

Number one is the organization of the venues was more orderly because in the past three years we have done an upgrading of this park. We reopened the south gate of this venue. The south gate is now the main entrance of the venue. Now we have this Comprehensive Service Complex. This will optimize the entry and exit of the spectators. It will be more convenient for the spectators to come into the venue and go into the different courts of the China Open Park.

I think we have a more optimized entry and exit routes of the overall design. That was in the more optimized service level for the spectators.

Number two is that an upgraded food and beverage experience for spectators because it's very important for the people to come to the China Open to enjoy good food. We're still calculating how many hours people spent in the

China Open Park, and we believe 20% or 30% increase was expected based on the numbers we have seen this year.

Number three is we have seen a very strong lineup of players comparable to a 1000-level tournament. With such a strong lineup and very good environment, we have seen spectators coming from neighboring regions as well as provinces from afar to come to the China Open, to come to Beijing during the National Day holiday to fully experience a festive atmosphere in the China Open.

I think this was a very good result after our effort in the past five or six years on the foundation, very strong foundation we have built in the past year. We have seen great results in consumption as well as ticket sales.

That was the first step of the relaunch of the China Open. We are still continuing our improvement of the China Open. We aim to further upgrade our services to the Chinese tennis fans.

Q. My question is, after hearing this report, spectators, ticket sales, consumption, we have seen great increases compared to the level of 2019. Was it within our expectations, with the rebound of consumption, were the China Open Organizing Committee prepared enough for such a rebound?

ZHANG JUNHUI: I think the schedule was decided in March. The marketing started in June 2023. In the past several months, the Organizing Committee, our whole team, was fully devoted to the schedule, the safeguarding of our services, the operational optimization schedule and plans.

We were a little bit upset before this tournament started facing the relaunch of this tournament, whether we can receive enough attention from international players, whether we can address or meet the expectations of Chinese tennis fans.

We have seen support as well as a rebound of the consumption markets in Beijing as well as neighboring regions. Because of the rebound, for example, the recent football matches, as well as concerts and music festivals. So once we saw the registration of the players, we became more confident in the operation of the tournament.

The attendance on the first day increased compared to previous years. So we were more confident in the success of this tournament starting from day one.

So from the first day of the preparation, we were confident that we could surpass the level of that in 2019. But the

numbers, the actual numbers, actually exceeded our expectations, including the ticket sales, consumption level as well as the feedback from our fans.

These were actually much better than we expected. So we look forward to a bigger rebound of consumption level in the Chinese market. We look forward to a sustaining level in the coming years.

Q. Lars, many players came to attend the China Open such as Carlos Alcaraz and Iga Swiatek for the first time in their career. They enjoyed themselves in Beijing in this tournament?

LARS GRAFF: Thank you for the question.

Many players came for the first time, and they had never been to China before, and they left China with a positive experience. I think everybody who came here, they realized that this tournament is at the top level in any area.

Players are normally very simple. There are four things they look at. It's the hotel, it's the transportation, it's the courts, and it's the food. In these four areas, China Open is on the same level as the best tournaments in the world. I'm not talking about ATP only, I'm talking about the Grand Slams.

The positive experience here is just spreading like the wind all over the world. I got more messages and comments from players, from my colleagues, former colleagues of the ATP, from the WTA, that China Open was fantastic. What a great tournament. What an amazing start or restart for the China Open.

I think all those players, they didn't know what to expect when they came to China, but now they know what to expect. Next time they come here, they have probably expectations from the beginning because everything was so good.

One thing they always remember from China is the people, how friendly everybody was. They were greeted at the airport. They were greeted at the hotel. When they came to the site here and asked for something, everything was possible. I think that is the most important asset to any tournament, the staff who is working.

You can have the best courts and the best facility, but if you don't have good people working... I'm very proud to work with Alfred and all my colleagues here because I think they're doing a great job.

I think this was just the beginning. For this tournament, I think the sky's the limit. So next time we come back here

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

for 2024, it will be more improvements. I'm sure that the players will be coming back because they liked it so much here and they felt so welcomed.

THE MODERATOR: I'm sure these remarks are our motivation to do better, to improve our tournament.

The women's doubles is going on, we have to wrap up the press conference right here. Gentlemen, thank you, indeed.

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