

Brisbane International

Saturday, 28 December 2024

Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

Alexei Popyrin

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Initial thoughts on the draw from this morning? Looks like all going well, another exciting matchup with Novak.

ALEXEI POPYRIN: Yeah, not really focused on that. I did see I was in his quarter. Yeah, not focused on that at all. Focused on my next match against Matteo. We've had some battles in the past. Every time we've played we've had a battle.

I want revenge for that Davis Cup match. For me that was probably the most painful loss of my career. Yeah, I'm going to try to get revenge for that one.

Q. How long ago was that?

ALEXEI POPYRIN: End of '23.

Q. You still think about it?

ALEXEI POPYRIN: When I draw him, yeah. I haven't played him since then, so it will be interesting.

Q. How are you feeling?

ALEXEI POPYRIN: Yeah, feeling good. I had a really good pre-season this year. Tough, tough physically. So yeah, feeling pretty good out there. Just looking forward to getting the season started at home in Australia. I think this is the kind of swing that I look forward to the most throughout the whole year, to play in front of home crowd and stuff.

Yeah, really, really excited for that.

Q. We spoke to Jordan coming here after 12 months, what the promise of the Australian summer brings for him. What are your aspirations this summer?

ALEXEI POPYRIN: No, no, I don't have aspirations. I don't have goals. I go out there, try and focus on the work that we put in this pre-season, that we've been putting in the past few years. Just keep doing the things I've been doing. Try not to get too ahead of myself with the rankings, seedings, stuff like that. Just try to stay in the moment, focus on the match that I have to play, then

I think everything else will do the speaking.

Q. You talk about not having expectations, goals. How different is your mindset coming into this summer comparing to two years ago in Adelaide?

ALEXEI POPYRIN: The mindset I kind of put to myself is quite similar. It has been working over the last three years. Why change it? I think it might be everybody else's expectations, everybody else's mindset that has changed a little bit.

But for me, I can't kind of focus on that. I have to focus on what I've been doing well over the last few years, what got me up a hundred spots, and how to get up even more spots. That's all I'm focused on, just try to better my ranking and play better tournaments, play better tennis. That all starts from the practice court. For me, that's what I focus on the most.

Q. Back to where you've come from, career-best year, is it just a matter of continuing to do the right things or something else?

ALEXEI POPYRIN: I think it's continuing the same things. At the same time you do have to find different things, you have to adapt to how everything's going, to how tennis is changing. I think it's getting way more physical. You have to adapt to that. You have to really put in the work in the gym, off the court and stuff.

Yeah, there's a few things that has to be adapted. I've still got a lot to gain in terms of physicality, in terms of my physical growth. That's what we've been kind of working on the past pre-season, is just trying to improve that. We've got a good base to kind of improve on that.

Once we do that, you need it for slams, you need it for those longer matches, to go deeper in slams. I think at the ranking I am right now, that's kind of the focus for the next year, is the slams, try to make second weeks, put some pressure on the top guys in those tournaments.

Q. How do you reflect on the year that was? What foundation has it given you?

ALEXEI POPYRIN: Yeah, it's definitely been a good year. Unbelievable year if you ask me. I think it could have been really different had I not won a match in Montreal, Cincinnati. Had I not won a match there, we



would have been talking here, I probably would have needed wild card into this tournament.

Montreal happened, and since then it's been really good. That's all because of the work we put in. I look back on it as I'm happy and I'm glad it happened, but I can't look back at it and say, You've achieved something. I need to keep focusing, keep doing what I need to do to better my ranking and keep improving.

Q. To get that breakthrough into the second week of a slam, what has that done for you?

ALEXEI POPYRIN: That one was huge for me because I think I've been in the third round seven or eight times before, and haven't really quite made it to the fourth round. Two sets to love up against Dan Evans in 2021 I think in the third round of US Open, and lost that one. Yeah, couldn't quite go over the hurdle.

Managed to do it in US Open, in a big way against Novak. Also to beat him for the first time, I think that was probably, after Montreal, the biggest thing I'm happiest with, is making it to the second week of a slam. Hopefully the floodgates are open and I can keep doing that.

Q. What is your overall assessment of the Australian landscape at the moment? Does it seem like something is brewing here, end of an Aussie Grand Slam drought?

ALEXEI POPYRIN: I think Australian tennis is in a really good place right now. We have us three in the top 30, we have guys in the top 60, 70, who are really putting pressure on that, playing some great tennis.

It just shows that Australian tennis is in a really good space. What we've managed to achieve in the past three years in Davis Cup, two finals, semifinal, that doesn't come easy. That comes from us driving each other, making each other better and helping each other.

Hopefully that leads to Grand Slams. Demon is kind of leading us in terms of that. He's made quarterfinals in a lot of the slams in the last few years. Hopefully I can join him in that run and we'll see what happens.

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