

# Brisbane International

Saturday, 3 January 2026

Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

## Jiri Lehecka

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Coming back, obviously you had a great offseason, but are you feeling any pressure? How are you feeling coming in as the defending champion here?

JIRI LEHECKA: Actually, it's always great to come to any event as a defending champion. I'm very happy to be back in Brisbane. This place has been always very nice place where to start the year.

I'm very happy to be here again after winning last year, but yeah, as I said earlier, I really feel quite confident, because I was having pretty good preseason.

Now, you know, it's always important, you know, to feel good in the beginning of the season. I feel that way. Doesn't matter how it's gonna go. I know that I prepared well to be here, but yeah, I feel excited to play again in this amazing tournament.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. You have not only won here in Brisbane but was also a champion in Adelaide. What is it about Australia that brings out your best game?**

JIRI LEHECKA: Yeah, I think there are two things. First of all, it's the fact that I have some time before heading to Australia, I have some time to actually put on a lot of work during the preseason.

So this time it's giving me some chance to reflect on what I was doing right in the last season and what I want to improve, because, you know, it's always important to reflect on what has happened, you know, also in my last years here in Australia.

And the second thing is that I just love the conditions here. You know, I always feel immediately well on court. I don't really need much time to adjust to all the conditions, to the court, to the balls. Australia is a lovely place (smiling). People are nice. The tournaments are very good, doesn't matter where you are, and the weather is perfect. So I don't know if today, but most of the time (smiling).

So that's definitely also something where I like to play in warm weather. If it's very hot temperatures, I like to play



in it, and I quite feel that it fits my game, as well, yeah.

**Q. Speaking of the weather, I think that you spent some of your preseason in Tenerife, in Spain? Was it important to acclimatize?**

JIRI LEHECKA: Yes, definitely. Back in Czech, was the weather temperatures a bit below zero. I think it's always important to kind of try to adjust your schedule during the preseason to make it as much similar as to the next tournament where you're headed.

So for me, I knew that I would be starting the year here in Brisbane, and that's why I chose to be in Tenerife where the weather was quite nice, as well. Of course it wasn't that warm as here, but yeah, I wasn't playing indoor. I was playing all my practices outdoor on a similar surface.

So that's something what I see very important to do ahead of going to Australia.

**Q. I assume you have had a look at the draw or someone has informed you. How challenging is that to start your year against someone you know very well and someone who is very talented, as well, in Tomas?**

JIRI LEHECKA: Yeah, Tomas is definitely great player. He proved it last year that he can play amazing tennis. Actually, we practiced together before we headed here to Brisbane, so I think it's gonna be great matchup.

Me, actually personally, I have never had a problem to play against a guy from the same country. I see it as another match. So I have never had any issues by feeling, you know, like nervous or unwell before. So, you know, that's tennis. I think that's once, twice a year, maybe more times it can happen to everyone.

Of course it's a little bit more challenging, as we know each other pretty well for a long time, but I think that I prepared well, and I feel good on court.

So that's what I will try to do, and we will see how it goes. Yeah, definitely, I mean, we are here in Brisbane. It's 250 tournament. I think that 500 would suit it a bit more. When we saw the top half of the draw, I think that it's a super-tough tournament for a 250. There is so many good matchups, so you don't really have an easy choice, an easy draw on a tournament like Brisbane.



I remember last year, my first round was against Holger Rune. You don't really have the chance to go smoothly through the tournament without the breaking the sweat (smiling).

Yeah, I think it's very important for both of us to have a good matchup on the beginning of the year, to see how we are, how we are feeling, also pointing towards Melbourne.

**Q. You're close to both your Czech teammates in Jakub and Tomas. Do you enjoy having them close to you in the rankings, high up in the rankings, or does it add pressure? How do you balance that?**

JIRI LEHECKA: I think it's good for all of us. First of all, it's good finally that we are in top 30, you know, attacking the higher spots. What I like also is during my first two years on tour, you know, I was alone on these tournaments. I was the only Czech guy.

I think that also for Czech tennis, it's very important that after infinite years of women's success in tennis, there are also good times and nice, I would say, nice times in guys' positions.

So yeah, I think it motivates all of us to go ahead, you know, and to try to kind of move, but what I think and what kind of approach I have to this thing is that I would much more rather be second in Czech Republic and top-10 player than being first male in Czech Republic and being 18 in the world.

So I think that all of us, we are trying to improve individually, which also helps to us bring our best during the Davis Cup ties and all of these things which I think is also very important to us to spend the weeks together and to practice together.

Yeah, I think it's very good that we finally have three guys in the top 30 or top 50, and I think that all of us, we have the potential to go even higher.

**Q. You are top 20 yourself now. Alcaraz said that when Machac beat him, he was playing like a top-5 player. He said the difference between actually becoming that top-5 player is consistency. What do you think it is for you to take that next step?**

JIRI LEHECKA: No, I absolutely agree. We all have the level, and we know that we can produce the tennis that can be on this level. But the consistency is the key. You know, if we are not able to produce most of the time, then you can play one good match, and then if you are not able to continue in that level, then you're simply not going to move forward, because you're not going to win the tournament. You're not going to go far.

That's definitely something what I was focusing on during last season, to be more consistent, you know, not to have many ups and downs, even though I didn't really play good tennis during the clay season, but straight on grass, it came back and I held it quite well since then.

So yeah, definitely. That's one of the key things on which I will try to focus definitely this year, to produce good tennis, but most importantly to have the ability to keep it.

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