

Brisbane International

Thursday, 8 January 2026

Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

Rinky Hijikata

Press Conference

G.M. PERRICARD/R. Hijikata

4-6, 7-6, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Rinky, it was a really close match today. Probably not the result you were after. What are your key takeaways from Brisbane International?

RINKY HIJIKATA: Yeah, I mean, I feel like it's still a positive start to the year. You know, I felt like, yeah, I've been putting in a lot of hard work over preseason, and I feel like all three matches, my level's been pretty good.

Yeah, I feel like there is a lot of areas I have kind of improved on, and I think that's showing on the court, obviously. Tough one today, but yeah, I guess I've just gotta keep building, and obviously the big one is in a couple of weeks in Melbourne.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Rinky, pretty tough match against the big Frenchman. 29 aces he fired down. What was your tactic taking on a giant serve like that?

RINKY HIJIKATA: I mean, I was just trying to put as many balls back in play as possible, and I felt like, you know, maybe at the start he was missing a few more first serves and I was getting a few more looks. I thought I did well to extend points on his serve and obviously managed to get a break in the first set.

I felt like second set, especially the back end, I wasn't really getting any looks at second serves. I don't know what he served at, but it felt like it was quite high. Obviously when he's doing that, he can kind of take the racquet out of your hand.

But, you know, I just wanted to keep taking care of my own serve. I feel like that's probably the biggest challenge against these big servers. Obviously I didn't get broken today, so I feel like that's something to be proud of.

Yeah, obviously few points here and there, but credit to him, he came up with some big serving when he had to.

Q. You're heading into your fourth consecutive AO.



What will you take from maybe this Brisbane experience into Melbourne?

RINKY HIJIKATA: Yeah, I don't know. I guess I don't want to take any opportunity I can play at home for granted. It's only a few weeks of the year, and I really want to cherish it, because, yeah, there is no better feeling than playing in front of a home crowd whether it's here, Adelaide, or Melbourne.

Yeah, I guess I just really want to put my best foot forward and make sure I'm playing some good tennis this time of year. I feel like, yeah, as I said, this is a positive start, and I guess just keep trying to improve. Yeah, keep showing up and hopefully I'll get some good results.

Q. You're not the tallest tennis player in the world, but still, your serves are really, really good and strong and placed very well. What is the secret of this?

RINKY HIJIKATA: Thank you (smiling). That's probably the first time someone has said I've got a good serve. I'll take it.

I have been working very hard on my serve, and obviously to compete at the top level of the men's game, you're going to have to take care of your service games. There is no way around it, especially when you play someone like Gio who is taking care of his games in, like, 30 seconds most of the time.

I have worked really hard with Sharky to make sure that I can hit all the spots consistently, and maybe try and get a little bit more heat on my serve and a bit more variation on first and second. Yeah, I guess just keep players off balance as much as I can, and yeah, win my service points maybe in a bit of a different fashion.

Q. You have had some great results in doubles obviously, winning Grand Slam and making a final. Where do you want to take your singles game? I heard you speak about the fact you believe you can take your ranking better than what it was in 2024.

RINKY HIJIKATA: Yeah, for sure. You know, I feel like I've got so much more to improve, and I feel like I have, yeah, definitely got a lot of gears that hopefully I can keep ticking over and keep improving.



I feel like I'm not even close to playing my best tennis, whether it was last year or the year before, whenever it was. I feel like there is so many areas where I can get better, and I feel like that's probably, like, a really positive thing, you know. It's, yeah, I guess an exciting challenge. You know, I want to do as well as I can in my singles, and that's my main focus. Always has been, and it still is at the moment.

Yeah, I just feel like, you know, whatever my career high was, I feel like I've got a lot more to give. Obviously last year wasn't the best year, but I'm working hard, and I feel like, yeah, I have still got a lot of improving to do.

Q. Can you talk a bit about the crowd today? They really got behind you, especially in that final set. What did that mean to you to have them backing you all the way?

RINKY HIJIKATA: Yeah, the crowd was unbelievable. Such a nice court, playing on PRA. Yeah, it was a lot of fun.

As I said, we don't get to play at home too often. When we do get the chance, I really just want to cherish it as much as I can. I love playing here, I love playing in Adelaide. I got a taste of playing in Sydney in Davis Cup last year. Nothing beats it, nothing beats a home crowd, nothing beats the energy in Melbourne in January.

Yeah, I'm really thankful for everyone coming out, and hopefully everyone keeps showing up for the summer of tennis. It's only the first week, so hopefully we're going to see a lot more Aussie success over the next few weeks.

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