

# Adelaide International

Tuesday, 7 January 2025

Adelaide, South Australia, Australia

## Rinky Hijikata

Press Conference



R. HIJIKATA/D. Goffin

6-1, 6-2

**Q. Rink, what would you put it down to, would you say you were on fire, Goffin was off, or a combination?**

RINKY HIJIKATA: Yeah, I'm not too sure. I think I started well. Obviously that second game of the match when I first broke him, maybe I got a little bit lucky, I hit a few good running forehands, one up the line and one cross, and I feel like that kind of set the tone for the match.

Then, yeah, I felt like I did a good job putting pressure on his serve, maybe he didn't quite serve his best today, and maybe that kind of put him out of rhythm a little bit. But, yeah, I would say maybe I was putting him under the pump a little bit. But then, yeah, maybe that also factored into him not seeing the ball as well as he normally does today.

**Q. You couldn't be any more pleased than having a result like that over somebody who is so experienced and has been around for so long.**

RINKY HIJIKATA: Yeah, obviously I'm really pumped about it. I played him at Winston-Salem last year, and he got me pretty comfortably, so I knew it was going to be very tough. Obviously I watched a lot of him when I was younger, and he's a quality player, tricky to play against, just because he moves so well, he counter punches so well. He takes time away from you and makes you feel rushed sometimes also.

Yeah, I had a pretty clear plan with Sharky today, and I felt like I executed it pretty well, and, yeah, happy to just get another match before AO next week.

**Q. How important was this kind of performance after your previous match as well, and obviously as you mentioned, heading into the Aussie Open, just how important was it, and how satisfied are you with how you played today?**

RINKY HIJIKATA: Yeah, huge. I think just any match play before Aussie Open is, yeah, it's critical, and

especially after kind of a long pre-season, and not having played in a competitive environment for awhile.

I felt like I played really well two days ago against Omar, obviously it was tough to see him have to pull out.

I felt like I was playing well yesterday against Waltz. I can't tell you how many practice sets we played over pre-season. He's playing some quality ball also.

I feel like, yeah, we've been putting in a lot of hard work, and I'm feeling comfortable in my game at the moment. I feel like I made some big strides, so to come out and play like I did today obviously gives me a lot of confidence.

Then going into next week I just really want to make sure I'm in good form and my body's feeling good.

**Q. On your next opponent as well, Brandon Nakashima, what are your thoughts on that matchup?**

RINKY HIJIKATA: Yeah, it's going to be tough. He's a quality player. He had a, yeah, a phenomenal year last year. I think he started outside the top hundred, if I'm not wrong, and he finished top 40. To be able to do that you got to be playing some really good tennis. I played him in Hangzhou last year and Houston, he got me both times. I felt like I was a little bit closer in Hangzhou, I think I served for the first, maybe.

So, yeah, I know I can play well against him, and I know I'm going to have to, to have a chance to win tomorrow. But I'm looking forward, again, home crowd, playing in Adelaide, I love playing here, so, yeah, just looking forward to it and, yeah, just excited.

**Q. Just a casual question, do you like the term "lucky loser", or you want a different term?**

RINKY HIJIKATA: I don't know. I guess I like it. It kind of sums it up well. You lose in quallies you, yeah, get a bit of luck, you find your way into the main draw, and, yeah, I don't know, feels like you got nothing to lose out there.

I had a good result in 's-Hertogenbosch a few years ago as a lucky loser, so I'm hoping to channel a bit of that this week, and hopefully, yeah, some similar results.



**Q. You just said you feel you've made great strides, what in particular?**

RINKY HIJIKATA: I'm feeling like physically very strong. I feel like, yeah, Al, my S & C, along with Vukic and a few of the other Aussies, Emerson as well, I think, I was working with. Yeah, he's a pretty hard taskmaster (laughing), so those were some pretty dark times in a few of his sessions over December. I feel like going through that, and then going through it together, I feel like we're all feeling fit and strong. And, yeah, we spent a lot of court time together, Tristan, Waltz, and I in particular, I'm expecting those two boys as well to have some big results over the summer. But, yeah, I just feel strong. I feel like I'm serving better, I think, which is a big catalyst in my game. I feel like, maybe not so much today, but my last two matches I feel like I served really well. Even against Novak last week I thought I served quite well.

Yeah, just returning a little bit better, being able to implement a few other things in my game where, you know, maybe my game plan A isn't working. But, yeah, hopefully I can kind of show it to everyone over the course of the summer and the year, but, yeah, I feel like I've put in a lot of hard work, and I'm feeling good.

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