

# United Cup

Thursday, 28 December 2023

Perth, Western Australia, Australia

## Poland

**Captain Tomasz Wiktorowski**

**Hubert Hurkacz**

**Daniel Michalski**

**Jan Zielinski**

**Iga Swiatek**

**Katarzyna Kawa**

**Katarzyna Piter**

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Captain, let's start with you. Your overall thoughts about being here in Perth and your return as a team to the United Cup?

CAPTAIN TOMASZ WIKTOROWSKI: My thoughts? We are super happy we are here because the year start in Australia, especially in Perth, for myself is something special. I have great memories from here, 2023.

The venue is outstanding. It's a beautiful indoor with open roof hopefully. Yes, we are here to play. We feel little bit responsibility because I know I have a very strong team with me, but also I have a great coaches, as I said, great players. We are waiting for Saturday.

THE MODERATOR: Iga, returning to the United Cup this year. Give us your thoughts about your return.

IGA SWIATEK: Well, I think it's a special event. Really exciting. Different than any other tournament. It's great to have opportunity to play with the team and feel little bit of the support from other players 'cause usually we're on our own on other tournaments.

Last year the atmosphere was pretty great. I'm pretty sure this year is going to be the same. I remember, yeah, it has different emotional baggage when you play for your country. I was really happy with how I performed last year. Unfortunately we lost in the semifinals. We gained a lot of experience. Hopefully we're going to be able to use it this year.

THE MODERATOR: Hubie, you are the No. 1 seeds here. Can you give us your thoughts coming in being on top?



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HUBERT HURKACZ: Hopefully, hopefully we'll be able to finish at the top, so... But I think we have a strong team. Hopefully we going to have a lot of fun, just play some good tennis.

Really excited to be here for the first time in Perth.

THE MODERATOR: Your thoughts from the rest of you playing at the United Cup?

DANIEL MICHALSKI: I'm really happy to be part of this team. That's my second time United Cup. I really hope we'll reach the goals, we'll get the better result than last year. Last year was outstanding. I will cheer, scream for Poland. Good luck, guys.

KATARZYNA PITER: It's my first team with the team. I'm really happy to be here. Will be supporting our players. It's my first time in Perth, as well. I really enjoy being here. I think it will be great time.

JAN ZIELINSKI: Yeah, also my first time playing for the team. I mean, we all have our parts in the team, our roles. Hopefully everyone can contribute their best tennis on the court, on the bench, whatever it is. Hopefully looking for the best result possible.

KATARZYNA KAWA: Yeah, it's great to be a part of the team, to be around such a great people and tennis player. I hope it will be a great event and we have some fun.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it for questions now.

**Q. Iga, how did you sum up 2023? What sort of goals have you set for yourself for next year?**

IGA SWIATEK: For sure, even though my ranking at the end of the year was similar to 2022, this season was totally different. Lots of ups and downs and some struggles that we had to deal with.

At the end, the end of the season, that's basically the only thing I can think about right now 'cause I remember it the best, and it was really exciting. I don't think it ever probably happened in the history of tennis.

Playing these final matches in Cancun with such a baggage on my shoulders in terms of rankings, it gave me a lot of confidence. I learn a lot about myself. I'm going to take it in 2024.

Honestly I'm looking ahead for these tournaments that are going to happen here in Australia for me. I want to take it step by step. I feel more prepared for sure to deal with the pressure of being world No. 1 this year than last year.

**Q. You've had a taste of a semifinal appearance at the Australian Open. What do you need to go that extra step? Do you feel ready now?**

IGA SWIATEK: Well, I did semifinals the year before. Last year was fourth round. I don't feel like I need to defend a lot.

But honestly I never think about stuff like that. When you are a defending champion, obviously there is something else to the tournament. I feel like I can kind of take it easy. I haven't won Australian Open yet, so I can only kind of look forward and try to achieve my goals.

But really for now, we're just starting the season, so I'll focus on the first matches to get into the rhythm and to just see what I learned during the pre-season and how I can just, yeah, put it into matches.

**Q. You spoke about having the No. 1 world ranking. Can you give us an insight as to what that's like emotionally, having other people always chasing you? What sort of challenges does that present?**

IGA SWIATEK: Well, it depends on the situation, my mood and mindset kind of. It can really be motivating and inspiring. There are plenty of tournaments, there were plenty of tournaments, where I really feel like I'm using that as an opportunity to have better confidence and to even have an impact on my opponents mentally a little bit.

Also, I had some tournaments where I felt like the pressure is pretty big. So I guess as in life, there are going to be ups and downs. For now I'm really enjoying the fact that I actually did it last year, and I came back to be world No. 1 at the end of the season, and I'm really proud of that. That's the only thing I'm kind of thinking about.

As I said, yeah, it's giving me a lot of confidence.

**Q. Hubie, Iga, and Tomasz, a tricky year with the Olympics. How important are competitions like this, Davis Cup, Billie Jean King Cup, in terms of learning how to play with the flag on your shirt? Also, how much of a complication is it schedule-wise, mentality-wise, it being an Olympic year?**

HUBERT HURKACZ: Iga (smiling).

IGA SWIATEK: Really? C'mon.

CAPTAIN TOMASZ WIKTOROWSKI: Go ahead.

HUBERT HURKACZ: Okay (smiling).

I think, I mean, it's kind of like every single tournament: you play under your flag, you play for your country as well. This being a team event, it's something different. You want to perform good for the team, for all the players that are here with the team, that we're practicing together.

Yeah, we just want to make the team win. Obviously, I mean, the calendar is really long. Definitely it's a great way here to start the year.

**Q. Hubie, things really picked up for you from Shanghai. Back in the top 10. What do you feel with the start of 2024 and maintaining that? What do you have to do to move up even further?**

HUBERT HURKACZ: Well, I think definitely the end of the season was a little bit better. Yeah, we're just trying to build on it. It's just for the whole year we're working really hard, we're putting in the hours, thinking what to improve, which parts of the game to get better.

So, yes, I will just continue to do that, and hopefully that will be able to help me to win some more matches and get a little bit higher.

**Q. Iga and Tomasz, on the Olympics question, how tricky is it?**

IGA SWIATEK: I mean, I only played once. For sure the pressure was huge. I mean, you could see after I lost against Paula, I cried, it was a big fuss.

For sure this time is going to be a little bit different. I'm going to know the venue. It's going to be on my favorite surface. On the other hand, these also bring up more expectations from the outside.

I guess I'll have to do the same kind of work as I do on every other tournament. I'm not going to lie to myself that it's going to be easy or the same because it will be different little bit.

Yeah, if I'm going to be in the right mindset and focused on the right stuff tennis-wise, I think I can perform as well as on other tournaments, then have a chance to win as on any other tournament.

But, yeah, I mean, Tomasz as well. I mean, my coach. I don't do that in Polish ever. I don't know why I do that in English. My coach is really experienced, as well. I think together with the support from my team, we can use that experience and be ready for any obstacle and just fight for our success, and Poland as well.

CAPTAIN TOMASZ WIKTOROWSKI: We still have more than six months to Olympic Games. Obviously we won't be able to practice mixed doubles too many times, so this is a very good chance for us to play for our country and in the same time to practice for Olympic Games.

We're always saying we're always right here right now for this tournament. But, yes, with Iga we are thinking about the Olympics. Maybe we'll have one more chance in Indian Wells. There is a small X-O where we can play mixed doubles. We have a chance for Olympic medal. We're going to practice here and try to deliver to the court the best quality we could.

**Q. Iga, 2023 saw a different look for women's tennis with the challenge. It was you, Sabalenka, Rybakina. If you had to pick one other player that could really launch a challenge in 2024, is there somebody that comes to your mind, or do you think it's going to be the usual suspects?**

IGA SWIATEK: It's honestly too hard to predict. Yeah, it's impossible for me to know which. I mean, for the past years there has always been one player that was suddenly did a breakthrough and won a Grand Slam or was suddenly in top five.

Obviously I think these three players that you mentioned, I feel like we are more consistent than the others. I hope we're going to kind of save that consistency for next seasons, but I have no idea who is going to stand out.

Ons is also a really consistent player when she's not injured. I guess it all depends on their preparation. The season can go in different ways, as well, in terms of the injuries. Hard to predict. We'll see.

**Q. Hubie, going back to Shanghai, given the nature of how you won that, championship point down, how much confidence have you carried with you into the new season onto a surface you clearly love?**

HUBERT HURKACZ: Well, I guess we'll find out (smiling).

I mean, definitely, no, winning a tournament is a confidence booster. It's just all about improving the game. If your game is at the good level, then you're able to win the tournaments. Just try to work on that.

**Q. You went surfing this morning. I saw the footage. How do you think it went? Was there any competitive rivalry there?**

IGA SWIATEK: We barely knew what to do. I don't think we can compete.

Kata and Jan, they even stood up. They were for a few

seconds on the board. Huge respect.

**Q. Something you'd try again?**

IGA SWIATEK: I mean, in Poland it's pretty hard (smiling). Maybe in Miami. We'll see.

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