

United Cup

Saturday, 30 December 2023
Perth, Western Australia, Australia

Team Serbia

Captain Viktor Troicki

Novak Djokovic

Hamad Medjedovic

Nikola Cacic

Olga Danilovic

Natalija Stevanovic

Dejana Radanovic

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Welcome to the Team Serbia press conference. We will start individually with questions for each player and then open the floor.

Viktor, how are you ready for this tournament and United Cup? How excited are you guys, and how are the preparations going for Team Serbia, in your opinion?

CAPTAIN VIKTOR TROICKI: Yeah, hello, everyone. Everything is great so far. We arrived I think early before our match to get ready, so we had enough practices, and we're looking forward to our first-round match tomorrow, 31st. It might be during the New Year. But I'm happy about the match and looking forward to it, as I said. Yeah, all good so far.

THE MODERATOR: Olga, how are your preparations going for this tournament? A little bit different tournament than usual. How excited are you to represent Team Serbia?

OLGA DANILOVIC: Obviously I'm so happy to be here. This is my first time playing something like this. Perth is nice. People are so nice here always in Australia. I enjoy, and even more now with the whole team here. We have really good energy with us.

Yeah, I'm really looking forward to tomorrow to start playing, compete, fight, and hopefully win.

THE MODERATOR: Novak, beginning of the year. How are you feeling? How has it been so far with the team?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: It's great. Thank you. It's great to be back in Australia again. You know, really a place where I had some of the greatest success, I mean,



definitely the greatest success in Grand Slam, in Melbourne.

I haven't been to Perth in 10 years, I think, so it's nice to be back in the arena where I have played 10 years ago. Representing Serbia is greatest honor and pleasure, privilege.

As Olga said, we have great energy, great chemistry in the team. Some of the people and players that I met for the first time, actually few days ago, and it's nice, because, you know, I think this competition allows all of us to come together, both men and woman tennis, different levels, and represent our country and support each other and make some nice and memorable moments on and off the court.

Hopefully kick-start the season best possible way for us as a team and also individually, because the season is long. We're all here with the intention to start well.

THE MODERATOR: Hamad, newest NextGen champion, you're starting the year now in a great way with Team Serbia. How is the preparation going so far? How ready are you guys for tomorrow's match?

HAMAD MEDJEDOVIC: So hard to talk after Novak. I think he said everything. Yeah, it's really nice to be here, first time coming to Perth. It's really great, you know, being with the whole team and having the team spirit. I think we are ready, and yeah, we are looking forward for tomorrow's match.

THE MODERATOR: Natalija, you have had a couple days here already in Australia. How has it been with everyone? How do you see the United Cup so far?

NATALIJA STEVANOVIC: Well, I think it will be the hardest for Dejana not to say something new, honestly. (Laughter.)

As they all said, it's an honor to represent your country. I mean, here being in Australia, it has always been a pleasure for us. For me, it's the first time in Perth and I really do enjoy it.

We really had good practices and good time together, so I'm really looking forward to cheer up and to fight till the end.

THE MODERATOR: I will change it up a little bit. How ready do you guys think you are for tomorrow's match?



NIKOLA CACIC: I think we are ready, Olga is ready, Novak. I hope they're gonna finish tomorrow before the mixed doubles. But yeah, I'm really happy to be here and I'm looking forward to and I hope for the best, yeah.

THE MODERATOR: Dejana, I will finish with you. Novak touched on it, but I think one of the best things about Team Serbia is most of you know each other for so long. You can see how much you guys are close together. How has it been for you being part of the team and the experience so far?

DEJANA RADANOVIC: Yeah, it was amazing. As he said, I didn't get a chance to meet him till now. I know the rest of the guys and I have really good relationship with them. As everyone said, it's an honor to be part of the team, and I'm really looking forward to it.

THE MODERATOR: I will open the floor for questions.

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well done to you, Omar. (Laughter.) You didn't ask the same question. Well done. It's not easy. (Laughter.)

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Novak, so early in your season and so close to the Australian Open. In terms of a percentage, how hard are you going to be going out there for the Perth fans?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: There is only one percentage in my head. You know, it's always 100%, really. I don't make calculations when I enter the court, regardless of the event level or category, particularly when I play for my country. So it hasn't been the case in the past that I calculated; neither it will be tomorrow, regardless of the age or the state I'm in. I wouldn't be here if I'm not able to play or give my best in both singles and potentially mixed doubles.

You know, I look forward hopefully contributing with at least one win for my country.

Q. You said on arrival, saw you on Thursday, you were hoping to find your touch in the coming days. How do you feel right now?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, I mean, you know, Australia is not really around the corner for us Europeans, so we need a little bit of time to get used to the time difference. I guess you guys know when you travel to Europe how that feels. You know, it takes some days.

But, you know, we had practice sessions, as Viktor mentioned, quite a few practice sessions in the last three days. As a matter of fact, I'm going to play again today, you know, after this press conference, and really try and

get as much time on the court as possible.

Obviously different conditions here than any other place where I trained or played an exhibition recently, so yeah, I saw that, you know, China won today and I guess they won mixed doubles, as well, a clean sweep at 3-Love. They are in form. They have great players. Big Chinese community here. Also Serbian community. Hopefully we can feel the energy on the stands and support for both nations and really celebrate the New Year's in best possible way for Serbians. Maybe for Chinese the other day. (Laughter.)

Q. Novak, I just wanted to ask you, how different does it feel coming to Australia this year compared to last year when there was that huge emotion that came with it?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yeah, it's different. It's a bit different. You know, last year coming into Australia, obviously after what happened two years ago, I did feel slightly more nervous, you know, particularly in the first week or so being in Australia. But actually, people in Adelaide, because that's where I landed first last year, welcomed me with open arms and lots of support and very kind reception.

Then, you know, I had the perfect record, you know, actually winning both Adelaide and Australian Open. You know, that was pretty much the case throughout most of my career. I had the great start of the season in Australia. Always felt like that was my happy place where I felt great, other than that situation two years ago where obviously it wasn't really enjoyable.

But other than that, you know, I have always enjoyed myself, played the best tennis, and so my feelings coming into Australia this year are really positive, and I really look forward to again be part of the team, which is a bit different. You know, we don't get to experience that team atmosphere much. We play mostly for ourselves. But this is great where you represent your country, and hopefully that will be the great start of Australian campaign.

Q. Novak, you just mentioned about China scored a win today. Both Zhang Zhizhen and Zheng Qinwen say they are really looking forward to play with you.

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yeah.

Q. Do you know anything about those two? And Zheng Qinwen also said she really looking forward to play with you in mixed doubles. Can you talk about that?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yeah. Well, I have seen them play a little bit today. Of course I know both -- I never faced any of the two players, but, you know, I saw them play,

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

and I think she's 15 or 16 in the world right now. I think she won the award for most improved player. She's great.

The Chinese tennis, particularly on the women's side, is so strong over the years with Na Li winning first Grand Slam for Chinese tennis which opened a lot of doors for young girls to play.

It's really nice, as a tennis player, seeing how popular tennis is in China, and I think he now is probably the most successful Chinese male player of all time. That's great, as well, because we want to see the men's tennis in China picking up.

They are a strong team, very strong team. I'll get to play him. He won his match today. Going to be the first encounter. We play at 5:00 p.m. tomorrow.

As I said, it's going to be exciting to hopefully, for me, start off the new season with a win.

Q. Viktor, what are the positives and challenges in your position as captain with a team like this for United Cup?

CAPTAIN VIKTOR TROICKI: Well, obviously having Novak in the team, it's a huge advantage. We are proud to have him. As I said always in Davis Cup, when Novak plays for us, it's a huge help and it means so much for all other players also, with his experience and of course his winning percentage. I mean, of course he helps us so much.

Of course Olga, she hasn't played in a while, but she's coming back. I think she's ready for tomorrow's matches. I think we have a strong team here.

Yeah, as we all said, we're ready to give our best. Yeah, obviously China has a great team also, but I think we have our own strengths. I believe in my team, and hopefully we can go far in this event.

Q. Olga, being in a team like this, what is the biggest takeaway for you? What do you look to learn or pick up or develop when you're with a team like this?

OLGA DANILOVIC: Well, obviously having Novak in the team and on the side and hopefully on court with me, you know, it's a privilege and you can learn so much from him, but you can learn from every player.

You know, I try to grow as a person every day and as a player, so for sure, I mean, these couple of days and hopefully week can be good for me, for all of us, and, I mean, yeah, I cannot say nothing that you haven't heard before (smiling).

Q. Novak, what do you think of the prospects of a

new elite tour in 2024/2025 maybe, either linked to Saudi financial interests or not?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: As far as I know, the 2024 calendar is out, so that's not happening this year. I don't know exactly which elite tour you're referring to. There are many rumors out there, but I think as long as there are rumors and no factual, so to say, evidence out there and concrete formalized discussions on the table, I don't think it's worth talking about it.

I'm generally always supportive of improving the sport. I have said this many times before, that I think that tennis is not using its full potential. We are one of the most globally watched and popular sports in the world, but I think that we have been quite conservative and conventional in certain aspects, and that unfortunately hasn't really been a great appeal to the younger audience. I have seen some stats that are showing that the average age of, you know, the tennis support worldwide is quite old, so we need to, I think, which is very nice that we have audience across all board in terms of age, and don't get me wrong, I'm big supportive of our history and tradition and everything, I think we should always nurture that, but I think we need to try to adjust to the modern times and trying to understand what the younger audience wants and really make the tennis more appealing, yeah, to that group.

So that's in terms of, like, general overview and where I stand, but I have no idea what elite tour you're talking about. I have heard rumors, as well, but it's, I guess, still early stages and we didn't see anything concrete out there.

Q. (Question off microphone.)

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: I have not heard about that one, sorry.

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