

United Cup

Saturday, 30 December 2023

Perth, Western Australia, Australia

Team China

Captain Di Wu

Zheng Qinwen

Zhang Zhizhen

Press Conference

ZHENG-ZHANG/Vondrousova-Lehecka

6-1, 6-2

Z. QINWEN/M. Vondrousova

6-1, 2-6, 6-1

Z. ZHIZHEN/J. Lehecka

5-7, 6-3, 6-4

Team Czech Republic - 0

Team China - 3

THE MODERATOR: First of all, congratulations on your win today. Perfect 3-0. If I could just hear from each of you on your thoughts on your performances today and just your overall atmosphere here in Perth.

ZHENG QINWEN: Performance of singles or doubles?

THE MODERATOR: Both.

ZHENG QINWEN: Wow. Well, this is the first match of the year, so always a little bit tricky. Actually, I had a really good first set. I stay in my game plan and I play really solid and also aggressive.

But in the second set I think I start to lose some concentration and she start to play a bit better. I had those easy shot mistakes, so I make her come back.

But anyway, I'm just happy to win this match. Doesn't matter second set or third set, because I play for my teams. And I'm happy also in the third set my performance much better than the second set, and I'm able to turn myself back and come into the match.

Yeah, that's all what I can say. I'm so happy to win for my country.



THE MODERATOR: What about doubles?

ZHENG QINWEN: Well, doubles was so funny and I enjoy a lot to play with him. We have lot of amazing shot on court, and sometimes when I make the volley I make to the guy, and then I had a mistake, and he's asking me, Why are you making volley to the guy? I say, because I forgot there is a guy in front of me (smiling).

For me, it's interesting to play mixed doubles, and we had a lot of great shots. Is one of the best doubles experience that I had today.

THE MODERATOR: Zhizhen, what about you? Your thoughts on your singles and doubles performance today?

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: I mean, was a great match, I mean, for me to win the singles and doubles. Singles was, well, I had already two months I think or maybe three didn't play -- no, two months, yes, so it's quite far away for me the last match.

I'm super happy that I was keep the mentality very well today, like, calm. Everyone say like when I am playing on court very calm, yes. This is before the match my coach telling me this is what I have to do for today.

Yeah, even I have some breakdown and other guy, Lehecka, breaking back, I still keep the same mentality, which is very good today.

Also for the mixed doubles, well, she's super good player, so for me, I don't need to cover her a lot. So I just need to, I mean, do what I have to do. She will make more chance, like, she will open the court and she will play in the baseline. She's fine. I don't need to be, like, crossing all the time.

Super enjoy it. Super good.

THE MODERATOR: English questions first, please.

Q. Qinwen, you have spoken in the past about the legacy of Chinese women's tennis players. I'm wondering if it helps now seeing some of the guys coming up the rankings, as well. Does it help you share some of the spotlight, some of that attention? Does it help you in your own tennis to have these strength in numbers across the men's and women's game now?



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ZHENG QINWEN: I think that great experience for us in both men and woman in China, we are pushing China to be better and better, because I always believe in China the men's tennis can be much better than what we are doing now.

I wish right now they shouldn't get relaxed. They have to push themselves more, because I really believe we can reach higher target.

Of course if we can be pushing each other trying to reach our limit, that would be the best, because anyway, I will always push myself to the limit, because I like to challenging myself and always looking for better result, but also, in the same time don't forgot to enjoy tennis. That's what I always say to myself.

But yeah, I wish the men's they can done better than that and trying to push, even I know you have already done a great job last year, but trying to push as best as you can because you only got one tennis career and don't make regret for yourself when you're retired.

Q. You had such a strong finish to the end of the year there, particularly on home soil. You finished in the top 15. How have you carried that forward into your hopes for the Australian summer? Good start today, so you must be feeling really confident.

ZHENG QINWEN: Yeah, I'm so happy to won all those tournaments in China, especially in front of all my peoples. But actually, I feel is come a little bit slow, because I remember at the beginning of 2023 I say I will make top 10, but after my one year passed, I was 15 of the world. So it's a little bit slow than what I expect from myself.

I really think that I can done much better than that, but in the same time, I just say before I don't want to give myself too much pressure. I want to enjoy, because after this year finally I realize when you start to enjoy tennis, when you start to enjoy what you are doing, when you are focused in the moment, on court also in life, you can performance the best of yourself.

So right now I just keeping telling myself the target is there, but I need to watch out my steps and take good every single step and live in the moment.

Q. Zheng Qinwen, if you could talk a bit about reuniting with Pere, and in terms of the great work you guys had together, then obviously you both went separately and you both had great success separately, and now you're back together. What makes this time maybe different or better, at least as you would hope?

ZHENG QINWEN: Yeah, first, congratulations to what he did with Coco Gauff. I think that was amazing

success for him, for both of them, very impressive. I have a big wish for them.

And second, yes, you know, we always had a good works together. Of course the finish after French Open, that was not my expect, but anyway, that's happen already, so I try to tell myself, you know, if it's a really good player you're gonna make it anyway. Doesn't matter who's side of you, because you just need to be mental strong and try to do the best as you can with what you have.

But right now, I'm really happy to come back with him. You know, I didn't expect that, to come back with him after the season now, but, you know, sometimes the destiny just right you the way and make everything happen.

So right now I think I have all my teams there. You know, we are enjoy every day on court, and I wish we can done something great, but I will just say enjoy tennis, enjoy moment. Yeah, enjoy the moment. We will see what's happen. You know, in tennis we never know.

Q. And you said that the key obviously to not putting too much pressure on yourself is to enjoy.

ZHENG QINWEN: Yeah.

Q. What does it look like for you or what do you have to tell yourself or do to enjoy your tennis compared to maybe what it was like 12 months ago what you were doing?

ZHENG QINWEN: Yeah, I think 12 months ago I don't have too much patience, so when I done something not good on court, I will put those bad energy and angry on court, angry with my teams, so I think that cost you a lot of energy.

Because you just have to focus on what you are doing, not focus on what you are doing bad. Trying to do what you can do on court. I mean, now I start to always question myself, You can do better on court? If the answer is yes, then you just have to focus, trying to do what you can do better on court.

Yeah, right now I think I'm more peace and more calm compared to 12 month ago. I mean, I make a lot of change, and, you know, a lot of things are happen with me during these 12 months.

So, yeah, I learn a lot from the life. It gave me a tough experience, but of course all this, like, hard way makes what I am right now. So I'm thanks for this all bad experience and good experience. Yeah, that's what I have.

Q. Zhizhen, we saw an impressive win there in three

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sets today. Wondering what you thought of the performance and what you think you need to do to take that next step to crack, be it top 50 or top 30 or higher?

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: Well, how to say, because I think keep my same level and get a little bit more improve, like, everything, and be patient. Because last year, like second part of the year, was quite successful for me. Normally beginning of the year, always problem, is always some issue to me, because, like, always losing quite a lot of matches and couldn't win a match and couldn't find a feeling on court.

That's, how to say, because I have three months can improve my point a lot, so which is big chance. Then try to be patient and try to be whole year at the same level. That's, yeah.

Q. And you passed Wu's career-best mark in July to become the highest-ranked Chinese man in history. How big was that for you and back home for tennis in China?

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: Like I have couple matches I could have win and even higher to pass top 50, which is this goal is going to be I wish is coming soon, but my goal is even higher. But in that moment I was still very enjoying that moment, because is making the history.

I'm also wanted to make more history and then to bring those ranking or higher ranking and start to play in the China season. Because China fans, they are waiting all the time. So I would like to bring all the best to them.

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