

United Cup

Sunday, 31 December 2023
Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

Team Canada

Captain Adil Shamasdin

Leylah Fernandez

Steven Diez

Press Conference

FERNANDEZ-DIEZ/Seguel-Barrios Vera

7-5, 4-6, 10-8

Team Canada - 2

Team Chile - 1

THE MODERATOR: Congrats, Team Canada. A brief statement from all of you.

CAPTAIN ADIL SHAMASDIN: It was a long day, but it was a successful day. We ended up coming away with the tie. Leylah kind of showed why she's where she is in terms of her tennis game, really able to kind of carry us on through that dubs.

Stevie had a gutsy performance in the singles. He went really, really tight, not knowing if he had to play dubs, we had to kind of substitute him in. Even though he was tired, fatigued, he came out there and did what he needed to do out there.

Really happy with the performance of these two. Even the guys who were behind me cheering away as well. We're happy to get that win, for sure.

THE MODERATOR: Leylah, two big wins today.

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: First of all, you're giving me too much credit in the doubles. Stevie was amazing, too. He was incredible from the get-go. Also throughout the match, it was extremely hard for him, but he was extremely positive when I was making mistakes, when things weren't going our way. That definitely helped me enjoy myself on court, keep finding solutions, chipping away.

Yeah, today was a very good tie win for us. I think it was a good singles match, and a doubles match complicated but we got away with it.

THE MODERATOR: Steven, you came in late.



LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: Extremely late (laughter).

STEVEN DIEZ: What can I say? I got in Sunday, right? Friday night. I had a quick hit yesterday with Felix. Yeah, Felix unfortunately wasn't able to play today singles. I thought he was going to play doubles. What can I say? It was really nice to play besides Leylah. She's a great player.

Having Felix on the bench right behind me and Leylah by my side on court, you can't really ask for more. I want to thank her, Adil and the whole team for supporting me. I was probably like five hours today, a long time on court. I want to thank them.

Yeah, really happy. Just really hope that Felix can play on the next tie against Greece because I think he's one of the best players out there. We really need him. If he's not able to play, I'm going to give it all out there until the end. So yeah...

Q. Steven, can you talk about your level in the singles, to step up and play so well, also how you thought your body would hold up playing mixed?

STEVEN DIEZ: I was back at home in the middle of the off-season because I finished the year pretty late. After like a month and a half, I hadn't played any points at all. Arriving in on Friday night, like, not doing any sets at all before a tournament. Usually you do a certain amount of points before a tournament. Not doing anything, playing like that, I'm really happy with my performance.

I wasn't able to win. What I always ask myself is to fight until the last point. I think I did that today. I'm happy about our team win.

Q. Leylah, it looked like you were having a lot of fun. Can you speak to that. When was the last time you played mixed?

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: Yeah, I'm having a lot of fun out there. I'm surrounded by a great group of people. They're super positive, super happy. I think in tough moments, I always try to find positivity. I think today in the doubles, the crowd was mostly against us, but that's what makes this sport so beautiful, that we get to experience these kinds of emotions. I tried to use it to my advantage.

Again, tennis is a sport. Tennis is meant to be played.



Just having fun. I try to smile in certain moments to help me remember that. It definitely did help at the end of the match.

Last time I played mixed doubles? Wimbledon last year, yeah.

STEVEN DIEZ: Me never. My first mixed doubles match (smiling).

Q. Leylah, very swift win in your singles match. What did you make of that? What are you looking to improve for your next match?

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: Yeah, it was a good win from my part. A lot of nerves in the beginning. First match of the season, it's never easy, especially after a very good pre-season. I wanted to show what I've been working on, what I've been doing well, but at the same time you have to control that emotion and keep it at bay.

I think I did well to try to maintain that and just enjoy my time on court. Try new things, going to the net. It worked out today.

I think against Sakkari, it's going to be a tough match. She's a great player. Top 10 for obvious reasons. I think I'm just going to talk with my captain, coaches, and see what I need to do to help Team Canada with the win.

Q. What is the injury concerning Felix, and if it is likely he'll be playing this tournament?

CAPTAIN ADIL SHAMASDIN: Yeah, it's a day-to-day thing at the moment. It is the knee. He's been dealing with that. He's looking pretty good. He's been playing some points out. I don't think he really kind of wanted to push it on that first day.

He said he will be available. I'm kind of assuming that he will be unless there is going to be some changes in the next few days.

He has his protocols that he's been doing this past off-season. I trust that he's in the right path. If he's going to tell me something, I'm going along with him. He's looking forward to playing again, so...

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