

United Cup

Monday, 1 January 2024

Perth, Western Australia, Australia

Team Serbia

Captain Troicki Viktor

Olga Danilovic

Novak Djokovic

Press Conference

DANILOVIC-DJOKOVIC/Zheng-Zhang

6-4, 1-6, 10-6

Team Serbia - 2

Team China - 1

THE MODERATOR: Viktor, how would you assess the performance today? Impressive from all team members.

CAPTAIN VIKTOR TROICKI: Well, yeah, it was a very exciting match. Great matches. All three matches were great. Novak started, yeah, unbelievable. He played great throughout the whole match.

Olga, unfortunately, she played against a really strong opponent. She started great, but Chinese player, she started playing unbelievable tennis. Yeah, she won in two sets.

In mixed doubles we saw a very, very exciting match from both sides. Luckily in the end, Serbia was the winner. Yeah, we're very happy that at the end we won. We are looking forward to the next match.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open the floor.

Q. Novak, was that the first time you've ever had a New Year's party on the tennis court?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yeah, it was actually. I think for all of us really. It was a unique experience. We enjoyed it very much.

What are the chances to finish seven minutes before New Year's? It was perfect kind of scenario that we won. Of course, a lot of Serbian flags present on the stadium. They all chose to celebrate the New Year's with us. We're grateful for that. A wonderful atmosphere.

Q. In terms of 2024 from a tennis sense, what are you hoping the year brings for you?



NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, I always have high ambitions and hopes. Yeah, I'm going to try to work to achieve the goals that I set for myself. Obviously Grand Slams, Olympic Games, playing for my country, Davis Cup, all these competitions where you represent Serbia is the greatest honor and pleasure.

It's a very long year, season. I'll have to obviously work in a way step by step with my body to see how it feels, how I react when I change surfaces, what kind of schedule I need to have in order to peak at the right time in the biggest tournaments.

It's a great start of the season. Wonderful way to celebrate New Year's. We have a saying in Serbia: if the entire year is going to be as kind of the sunrise or the first minute of the new year, then I think we're going to have a great season and great year, all of us.

Q. Olga, where does tonight rank in terms of your tennis career?

OLGA DANILOVIC: Well, first my singles match was good. I mean, I came back from an injury, so was my first match back. I'm proud that I was there. I'm not proud obviously of the result.

First set was tough. She had some luck. I didn't use my chances. In the second set, she was really a better player on the court, and that's it.

For the mixed doubles and playing with Novak, I think it was one of the best moments in my career. When he did the volley, when the match was finished, so many emotions through me. Just feeling proud of myself, how I hanged in doubles. It's not easy. It's my first time playing mixed, first time with Novak.

Yeah, as I said on court, bucket list done (smiling).

Q. Novak, Australian Open a couple of weeks away. You've had a lot of starts to seasons. How are you feeling compared to some previous ones?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: I mean, most of the years that I started in Australia, most of the years I came, started my season here, were very positive. I won 10 Australian Opens, also a lot of tournaments prior to Australian Open.

I think probably more than 50% of the times I was coming



to Australia, I was playing some team event as a lead-up, whether it's Hopman Cup back in the day, ATP Cup, now United Cup. Special, unique opportunities to really feel the team spirit, build the chemistry, feel a bit different.

Maybe you don't have all the things or routines that you normally have in place, but I think you get something different that you don't normally experience playing on the individual tour. I love that.

Being on Australian soil, for probably different reasons I always play my best and feel my best here. I think one of the reasons is I really want to start the year in best possible way. It's important to have the right start, kind of launch into the rest of the season.

Yeah, I think the more you win in a certain tournament, the more comfortable and confident you feel every next time you arrive to the place. I'm enjoying myself.

Q. Novak, in Turin you were asked if 2023 was the best year of your career. You said, One of the best. It was amazing that you could say that having won three of the four majors, being in the final of the other one, et cetera. Have you got it in your mind on what more you want to do, can do, feel you will do for 2024? Incredible to think, but can you go beyond what you did in '23?

OLGA DANILOVIC: We all ask that same question. He always does more, so... We always think this is it, but he goes more (laughter).

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, that's kind of a mindset that I nurtured over the years. Might seem unrealistic or impossible to some. It might seem arrogant to some others. I don't know.

I've always believed in myself very strongly. I know that I'm a very all-around player. When I'm fit, when I'm at the peak of my performance, I can win any slam or any tournament. I know that. I'm not afraid to say that.

It's not a secret that I want to break more records and make more history of the game. That's something that keeps on motivating me.

I mentioned a little bit, I mean, five minutes ago, that Grand Slams, Olympic Games, hopefully I can win another medal for Serbia in the Olympics. I would love to do that. That's one of the highest goals for this year.

But as I said, I have been in this kind of situation so many times in my career. I know exactly what I need to do to maintain my body and mind and spirit in the right, optimal state for me to have the opportunity to break records and to go further.

It's the only way, to be honest. I enjoy playing tennis,

don't get me wrong. When it comes to professional tennis competition, leaving my family to travel somewhere for four, five, six weeks, eventually for me there's only one direction or one goal that is in my mind, which is winning the trophy. I do everything possible to achieve that.

I feel like that kind of mentality, all I have been doing for the last 20-plus years on a daily basis, of course with my team and family, have helped me to reach the heights and be where I am. That mentality is not changing for 2024 or any next year potentially that I play.

CAPTAIN VIKTOR TROICKI: Seriously, this is big (smiling).

Q. Olga, with tonight, were you nervous? If so, were you nervous that you were playing a match that would decide the tie or if you were nervous, was it a case of Novak being on the court with you for the first time?

OLGA DANILOVIC: Obviously I had nerves, but I think those nerves were good nerves. I was really looking forward to this match. I think from the first point, I really was there. Of course, I had to control myself a little bit, to remind myself.

He's there as a great support. Knowing that maybe I'm on the net, but behind me serving is the best player ever. I mean, I'm secure. I don't know how to explain that. I feel secure. I feel good.

I really tried my best. I also felt responsibility to him and to my team, not only to myself. I think I did a good job. I'm proud of that, yeah.

Q. Novak, you have a huge fan base in China. Today you win China team. Maybe they will be a little bit upset. How about speaking Chinese to make them happy, like Happy New Year?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: (Speaking in Chinese.)

THE MODERATOR: There's no better way to end this (laughter).

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