

United Cup

Wednesday, 3 January 2024
Perth, Western Australia, Australia

Team Serbia

Novak Djokovic

Press Conference

A. de MINAUR/N. Djokovic

6-4, 6-4

Team Australia - 1

Team Serbia - 0

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Could you just give us your thoughts on the match and perhaps the reasons why you didn't perform to your normal level tonight?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, I mean, congrats to de Minaur. He was very solid from the beginning. He just played a great match. Deserved to win.

You know, I was not on my level, but, you know, it was just one of these days where you didn't feel your best, I guess, on the court, and your opponent played very well. That's all I can say.

I have plenty of time to -- plenty, I mean, I think enough time to get myself in the right shape for Australian Open, and that's what matters the most at this point.

Q. How is that wrist? How much did it impact you tonight in that match? Do you think you'll be okay for the Australian Open?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: I think I'll be okay, to be honest. You know, it did have quite an impact, you know, particularly on the forehand and serve.

Again, I don't want to be spending too much time talking about it and taking away credit, the victory from de Minaur. I mean, he was just very solid, as he always is. Congrats to him, to Australian team, and, you know, it is what it is for us. I guess we move on, and for me, with my thoughts in Melbourne.

Q. What was the exchange with the physio? What was the issue over there?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, I mean, I asked for the



medical timeout, but he said that you can't get medical timeout. You can only get a changeover if the injury is already existing, he explained.

So I didn't understand really what that means. But he said that -- I told him that it was improving, so that's why he didn't think that I should get a medical timeout. I said it was improving before the match, but then as the match progressed yesterday and also today particularly was getting worse, so I needed treatment. He didn't want to give me one.

So that's all. There's not much more I can say.

Q. Does a result like this linger for a little while, or it goes out of the mind pretty quickly?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: No, not much, to be honest. I knew that probably not going to be at my 100% physically, emotionally, mentally game-wise in the opening week of a season. Neither did I expect that. Neither did I want that, to be honest. It's all a part of the buildup for Australian Open, you know. So that's where I want to perform at my best.

So again, it's never nice to lose a match, of course, but, you know, it's not really going to stay with me much.

Q. Your debut at the United Cup, can you talk a little bit about the event and playing with the others on the team.

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, you know, this kind of atmosphere is really unique, you know. Being in a team with both men and woman tennis players from your country is something you don't get to experience either playing Davis Cup or Billie Jean King Cup for women. So this is probably the only competition where you can experience that, you know, that mix, which is an official competition where you get points, of course, and you get ranking points for winning a match, et cetera.

It's quite interesting. It's nice to be able to represent your country, always an honor, and to share the locker room with others. Of course it's at the same time a little bit draining because you don't have your own routines that you normally do in individual events. So that plays a part, as well. But you don't play many times this kind of event, maybe once a year or something. For me it's the first time.

But I did enjoy it. I think it was a really good, cool



atmosphere. We had fun and, in the end of the day, those kind of memories stay with you, stay with you forever.

Q. What's your plans now between now and the Australian Open?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, just trying to recover, first of all, you know, with the wrist and everything I have been struggling with the last couple of days, and yeah, just following the routine of recovery and training and building the form for Australian Open.

The process is not strange to me. It's not unusual. I've been in this kind of situation so many times and I know what I need to do along with my team to get myself ready.

Of course you never know what can happen. I mean, last two years I've been injured just before Australian Open, and managed to win both Australian Opens and, you know -- sorry, last two out of three years, '21 and '23. So I hope that I will not be injured this time around, you know.

That's what we're going to work on, to get my body in the right shape, optimal state, so that I can perform at the high level throughout hopefully the entire Australian Open.

Q. You touched on de Minaur before. You played him at the last Australian Open. What have you noticed in his game in terms of the improvement over the past year?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, I mean, look, he's one of the quickest players on the tour. He takes the ball early. He's comfortable to come to the net. He's using his serve well. He's a very all-around player and great competitor, great fighter. He's going to make you work very hard. You know, you're not going to get easy wins or easy points.

Yeah, he was trying to take the ball early tonight and be aggressive on every short ball. Trying to really challenge me. He did it. He did it well. He was consistent and played a good match.

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