

# United Cup

Thursday, 4 January 2024

Perth, Western Australia, Australia

## Team Australia

**Captain Lleyton Hewitt**

**Alex de Minaur**

**Ajla Tomljanovic**

**Storm Hunter**

**Matthew Ebden**

Press Conference

Team Australia - 3

Team Serbia - 0

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations, everyone, for making it to the semifinals in Sydney. Lleyton, if you could talk about the 3-0 performance of your team today.

CAPTAIN LLEYTON HEWITT: Yeah, just really proud of the whole team. Alex obviously came out and had to play the best player going around. Yeah, we knew that he had to go out there and play well and execute his game plan. He was able to do that from the start. But it's not easy against that quality of player out there in those kind of conditions that he plays so well in, very similar to Melbourne on Rod Laver Arena. Just thrilled for Alex and that obviously gave us an unbelievable start.

Then Ajla has gotten better and better with each match she's played. For her to get the win tonight was very well deserved. She's been fantastic around the team all week. Then obviously the mixed doubles team, pretty special for them to go 3-0 here in Perth in their hometown.

Yeah, it's been great. Feels pretty good. Obviously go across to Sydney and we'll see what happens over there.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. Ajla, congratulations on the win today. How much confidence did the performance, particularly against Jess in that match, maybe buoy you and seem to, I don't know, carry into today's match? And then just talk through a little bit today's match what the key was there.**

AJLA TOMLJANOVIC: Yeah, actually, as soon as I lose, I don't think about how good it was, but thankfully a lot of



people around me gave me objective feedback of how the match went and that it was good quality and that I definitely improved from Friday to Monday.

I did know I did better but not getting the win doesn't really -- I don't really care really about a better performance.

Coming into the match tonight, it really felt, not deserved, but I did feel like it was due a little bit. But still really pleased that I got it done because it's never easy to finish off matches when you haven't played a while.

That's what's special about this event is that you can lose two matches but still end up in the semis, so thanks to a great team.

**Q. Ajla, when did you find out the Serbs were changing? Did you have to reset your mind as far as how you approached the match?**

AJLA TOMLJANOVIC: I found out just before the walk-on. Nothing really changed. Yeah, nothing.

**Q. Matty and Storm, you spoke the other day about becoming a regular mixed doubles combination. How satisfying was it to play that match? It was a bit of a slow start but you really got going after that.**

MATTHEW EBDEN: Yeah. I mean, the first game or two with that format in mixed with short juice (phonetic), yeah, we were down an early break, but we could have easily been almost up a break. There was just one or two points or one or two shots. There was nothing really wrong with our start, just the scoreboard only. We managed to turn that around pretty quick and then get back with it.

Yeah, never easy coming out -- well, I mean, it's better coming out when we're up 2-0 and it's over. But yeah, just trying to stay focused and still just get through the match, get the job done, and then get on over to Sydney.

Super nice to come out after we already won after an incredible performances by these two. Made our job really easy.

**Q. On Alex's performance tonight, there's going to be a lot of Aussie fans super excited as to what he can do at the Australian Open. Just from your perspective, what do you think he can achieve there? Does he have what it takes to go all the way now?**



CAPTAIN LLEYTON HEWITT: Well, you've got to give yourself a good opportunity to get through the first week and really reset once you get to the second week. Alex might be looking too far ahead. But it's been great preparation for him so far.

You know, to get these kind of matches under his belt before his home Grand Slam is really important. Gives him the confidence. He's been, yeah, working hard, working on small areas of his game as well, and it's nice when it pays off.

Yeah, he's got better and better with every match that he's played here. His last two matches have been exceptional. That's going to give him a lot of confidence going to Sydney, and then obviously he gets a chance to freshen up before the Australian Open.

Yeah, it starts again in Melbourne. Yeah, you've got to look at it one match at a time. Yeah, this has been great preparation for him so far.

**Q. Looking ahead to Sydney, it's going to be either Greece or Germany. Alex's record against Tsitsipas, it's 0-10 but --**

CAPTAIN LLEYTON HEWITT: He'd never beaten Novak before tonight either. So we're looking forward to changing that one. We'll change that one, too (smiling).

**Q. Alex, from your perspective, can you put your finger on why that's been such a lopsided tally there?**

ALEX de MINAUR: The beauty is we are yet to play in 2024, so I am undefeated in 2024. (Laughter.)

No, it's going to be fun. I'm looking forward to going to Sydney. Happy to be in the semifinals with this amazing team, and yeah, I'm enjoying every second of it. It's a joy to watch all these guys play, watch Ajla play, watch the mixed team, Matty and Storm just routine, everybody they step on court with. Yeah, I've enjoyed every second of it.

**Q. Lleyton, from your perspective, seems like such a well-balanced team. What's it like for you being captain? What's the group like as personalities as well as just their talent?**

CAPTAIN LLEYTON HEWITT: Well, they all have their individual coaches as well so it makes life pretty easy for me, to be honest. Yeah, obviously getting to know the girls a little bit better out on the court and, yeah, that's a big difference. You know, I know the guys and their personalities and how they deal with pressure and expectation, and that makes it a lot easier for me out there in the match scenario and when to talk or when to say something to these guys.

No, it's been a lot of fun the whole week. Everyone's gelled together really well, which is important. Everyone has had each other's back. You see everyone come out and support each other. Yeah, that's the Aussie way.

Yeah, it makes it easy for them to go out and play for each other out there.

**Q. Alex, earlier you were saying it was still sinking in. Now that the result is final of 3-0, has it sunk in? Looking ahead to Sydney, you've often said Ken Rosewall Arena is one of your favorite courts in the world. How much added comfort does that provide you for the semis?**

ALEX de MINAUR: Look, I'm excited to go to Sydney. I'm hoping we're going to be able to fill up Ken Rosewall Arena. Hope it's an amazing atmosphere. Love playing there. Had some great memories there. Played some great tennis there. Hopefully this whole team can keep it going. Yeah, who knows what can happen in Sydney.

**Q. Storm, just obviously being doubles No. 1 coming in to your home slam and this big event as well, I'm just curious, because of the change in format from last year, there is a lot of pressure on the mixed doubles teams throughout the tournament so far, and it very well could be in the semis as well. What has been, like, the key for you in terms of being able to deliver as you have been able to so far at the tournament?**

STORM HUNTER: I think just for me representing Australia is just the best feeling in the world. You know, I love that pressure.

Obviously with the mixed, yeah, it could come down to the mixed doubles in the live tie. Yeah, having Matty by my side, we have really gelled on the court. I have a lot of trust in him on the court, which makes it a lot easier and just enjoying it.

This format, first time I have played it, really enjoyed being with the boys this week and also with Ajla and Ellen and Pratty, and Lleyton has been unreal. I think we have all just really enjoyed this format.

Yeah, want to keep going, and obviously going to Sydney we have a few days to reset, get there, get ready for Saturday. No, I love these environments. I think I play my best tennis in these team kind of situations, and yeah, obviously if we're ready for the mixed doubles, we will be ready on Saturday if it comes down to it.

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