

United Cup

Thursday, 26 December 2024

Perth, Western Australia, Australia

Team China

Captain Wu Di

Zhang Zhizhen

Bai Yan

Sun Fajing

Gao Xinyu

Zhang Shuai

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: There will be surely many Asian fans here in Australia to support you all during the Australian swing. How does it feel to have these Chinese tennis fans all around the world?

GAO XINYU: I think it's pretty cool. You go around the world, everybody have the Chinese friends to support us. I think it's pretty nice, yes.

SUN FAJING: I feel good with everywhere have Chinese people to support us.

THE MODERATOR: It's a big year for Chinese tennis, winning gold at the Olympics, young Chinese players making their way up the ranks. Do you feel interest in China around tennis has been growing recently?

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: I think start from Olympic Games, so more and more people following people, more and more people watching us. That's really great things for us. We really need to show everyone our tennis also is interesting. Is not only for basketball. Tennis is also quite interesting.

Really, I mean, happy it's like this.

ZHANG SHUAI: I think a lot of young kids, especially boy, when they saw Zhizhen doing so well last couple years and then they start to play tennis. Before when they try to learn some sports, they play ping-pong or badminton. Now they switch to tennis. I think Zhizhen do the really good job.

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: No, everyone did a good job (smiling).

THE MODERATOR: What are some of your favorite



parts about Australia as a country?

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: Surfing first try was in Australia. I'm really looking for to try the second time, yeah.

ZHANG SHUAI: Yeah, I think a lot Chinese player, they play so well in Australia, especially Australian Open. Li Na won the singles title. We have a lot different player that won the doubles, mixed doubles, also junior. Also he make to the semifinals, right, Australian Open junior? Not only one or two players they play so well in Australia.

Yeah, a lot of Chinese people here, and they all cheer for us. We play like a home tournament in Australia. That's why we play so well.

Hopefully this week we can play well.

THE MODERATOR: Will the team be doing anything fun off the court together?

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: This is the first day everyone was sitting together. He just arriving last night. Someone just arriving the day before. We are really, like, not arriving same time.

Maybe tonight have some fun, yeah.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up to some questions.

Q. Team captain, last year you made your debut in the United Cup. You progressed out of the group stage. Do you feel like you exceeded your own expectations last year?

CAPTAIN WU DI: (In Chinese.)

Q. What does the United Cup mean to the players, especially for players to shine on the big stage?

CAPTAIN WU DI: (In Chinese.)

Q. Zhang Shuai at 35 returns to the Australian Open as a wild card. Given her history, do you like her chances this time around?

ZHANG SHUAI: Last Grand Slam singles, even myself, my team, we try to working hard. We try to, yeah, one more time. When we know they have wild card tournament in Chengdu, I said let's try it maybe one more time in the draw.



Yeah, I'm proud of myself, what I did, all my career. Also we have strong team now. Many years ago we have only woman's team, great woman's players. Right now we can see a lot of men's players already top 50, top 100. They can easy reach to the second, third round in Grand Slam, and the final Olympic Games, yeah (smiling).

Also a lot of young player, like Xinyu. She will show everybody how good she are tomorrow.

Q. Back to Xinyu, what was your reaction when you heard the news that you were going to play tomorrow?

GAO XINYU: Actually, I know the news before I travel to here like two days ago. As my friend told me, You know you going to replace Qinwen?

I was like no idea. I was so shock. I start to feel really nervous and really anxious. I feel right now really anxious still.

Q. Do you think playing for China in the United Cup is going to be a big opportunity to start 2025 on a good note?

GAO XINYU: Yes, of course. This opportunity is not easy to got. Also when I know I have to replace Qinwen, it's really good opportunity to play top-20 player. I think I just try my best and we will see tomorrow.

Q. Zhang Zhizhen, last year you played Novak. Can you take anything from those experiences to this year?

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: This year first match was Lehecka, wasn't Novak.

Come back here again, for us you always happy to come back the same place. You have more experience, you feel more comfortable on the court because you been here last year, this year, whatever.

So yes, I mean, this time also feel much better than last year. I mean, this year. So I think, yeah, we may get a better result this year. We try.

Q. Starting the year playing the United Cup, do you think it's a good way to start the year?

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: For me is. Always start beginning of the year tough. You need to have some matches to get in the rhythm. Also United Cup, you really want to win match. Also you don't have too much pressure. Also you have teammates to supporting you. I think this is great place to start first tournament of the year.

Q. What are you excited to take from this week?

BAI YAN: For me it's also first time coming for United Cup. I try to do all my best to support the team first, then try to enjoy this time, try to learn something more, and support Chinese team always, yeah.

SUN FAJING: For me the same, try to enjoy watch them play together, like, high-level games in the court. Also try to see if I have chance to play.

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