

United Cup

Friday, 27 December 2024

Perth, Western Australia, Australia

Team Croatia

Team Captain Iva Majoli

Borna Coric

Ivan Dodig

Luka Mikrut

Petra Marcinko

Lucija Ciric Bagaric

Donna Vekic

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: It's your second time here in Perth. What have you been looking forward to coming here and experiencing again or for the first time?

DONNA VEKIC: We have a lot of Croatian support in Perth, so really looking forward to seeing everyone again. The weather is really nice. I guess you don't have to really mention that about Australia.

People are very welcoming. Everyone seems happy to be here. We are also very happy.

THE MODERATOR: Since the first tournament of the new 2025 season, what did you do for your off-season and what was your preparation?

BORNA CORIC: I was in Dubai. I was there for the four weeks. I didn't take much of a break at the end of the season as I was not playing very well, and I was not happy with my level. I just decided I'm going to keep training. I was in Dubai.

I came here actually couple of days ago. I was preparing well. So I'm just happy to be here. Yeah, hopefully I can play some better tennis this year.

THE MODERATOR: Donna?

DONNA VEKIC: Yeah, I finished my season early. I had a couple of weeks off spending time with my friends and family. We did a great training block in L.A. first time in my career.

Yeah, looking forward to the start of the new season.

THE MODERATOR: A few words on your opponents



with Canada? What are your expectations?

DONNA VEKIC: I've never played against Leylah. So it's going to be a tough match. She's a great fighter, a great player. She's a lefty, which is always a little bit tricky for me.

First matches of the season are always very interesting. Really looking forward to playing.

BORNA CORIC: Same here, like Donna said, always the first match of the season, it can be very tricky.

Against Felix, we played couple of times. I remember once in Rome I beat him in three sets, but it was on clay, and I think in 2018. It was obviously very, very long time ago.

DONNA VEKIC: But a win is a win.

BORNA CORIC: Exactly. I'm just looking forward to the match obviously. I know him very well. I don't need to watch much of the YouTube videos, which is good. I'm just looking forward to it.

THE MODERATOR: I'll open it up for questions.

Q. Donna, making that Wimbledon semifinal was something that maybe some people didn't expect. How much of a boost did that give you? How motivated are you coming off that going into 2025?

DONNA VEKIC: I mean, grass is my favorite surface, my best surface. Maybe it was not that shocking, but it was a great run for me. Winning a medal after that was very special.

I love playing for my country. It's a great opportunity to start the year here, also in a team event, again playing for your country. It gives you good energy, good vibes in the team.

Yeah, hoping for an even better year next year.

Q. You'll have some strong matchups as well. Wasn't that long ago you beat Coco Gauff at the Olympics. Does that give you an edge over her?

DONNA VEKIC: I mean, it's a new tournament, new season, different surface. She's playing great tennis. It's going to be a very tough match. We have a tough group. We're going to give it our best, and hopefully we can go



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through.

Q. Ivan, you're a highly accomplished doubles player. How much will your experience help the group through this tournament?

IVAN DODIG: Yeah, I hope we as a team can play good here. Have so much experience in mixed through my career. Me and Donna played also last year. We had good matches. Unfortunately we didn't win. We lost tough matches.

This year I think we can do better. We'll have, again, very difficult matches. Both ties will be very hard, but we are ready. We're trying our best, preparing good. Hopefully we can start good this year.

Q. As younger players, how nice is it to be having a team tournament where you get to represent your country? How much of an opportunity is that to develop?

LUCIJA CIRIC BAGARIC: It's my first time being here, so it's really nice. It's great to have the team here. I can see we're all ready for it. Looking forward to the matches.

It's nice to be here, first of all. I'm really looking forward to experiencing this tournament as a team.

LUKA MIKRUT: Yeah, it's my first time also here. When I got a call to come here, I wasn't thinking too much. Yeah, here so many courts, players, opportunities to practice and be with the team, good atmosphere. I really can't wait for the matches.

PETRA MARCINKO: For me, I mean, this is my third time on United Cup. I already had two years with them. It was amazing, the team, the atmosphere. You could learn a lot from the other players. Now it's probably going to be the same.

Q. Ivan, post United Cup, who are you going to be pairing with this year in men's doubles?

IVAN DODIG: I have good surprise coming (smiling).

No, I'm playing with new guy. Borna was option, but he decide he want to play again singles (laughter). He's aiming again for top 10. He said, Sorry (smiling).

This year, 2025, I will play with Skander Mansouri, the new young guy who is coming up. I think he's very talented. I was always through my career loved have challenges, try with the new guys. I had good success in the past.

I don't know how long I will still play. I'm soon 40. I want to give myself one more good chance and good run with

somebody who is much younger than me with good energy. Really looking forward for this season.

Q. What is the age difference?

IVAN DODIG: 12 years. Just 12.

Q. How did that partnership come about?

IVAN DODIG: Actually I approach him. I saw him couple of tournaments. He just break to top hundred last year, something like that. He's 58 ranked at the moment.

I feel there is a lot of potential there. Yeah, we just played last tournament of this season, 2024, Belgrade. We had a good, good run. We played final there. Felt that we can continue for 2025.

Yeah, looking forward.

Q. Iva, what are your thoughts on the team's chances here in Perth?

CAPTAIN IVA MAJOLI: I always believe in my team. I think we have a very good team. Of course, we also have one of the toughest groups I think.

It's a challenge. We start tomorrow. It's going to be a tough day. Again, I believe that we can do well. We go day by day, step by step. Let's see how it goes tomorrow.

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