

# United Cup

Friday, 27 December 2024

Perth, Western Australia, Australia

## Team Germany

**Captain Alexander Zverev Sr.**

**Tim Puetz**

**Daniel Masur**

**Alexander Zverev**

**Laura Siegemund**

**Vivian Heisen**

**Lena Papadakis**

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Laura, Sascha.

LAURA SIEGEMUND: Yeah, I'm thinking about Bea. She's a great player. It's going to be a tough match for me, that's for sure. Yeah, it's fun because we're going to play some doubles together this year, so we know each other really well. We're good friends.

Yeah, on the court I think it's not an easy matchup for me. I think there's not much to lose. Yeah, I'm going to give my best and see if I can hurt her in some ways.

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

**Q. Sascha, you're not that far behind Jannik.**

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: Well...

**Q. A few thousand points.**

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: A few thousand points (laughter).

**Q. What is it going to mean this season, given the fact that proper circumstances might change places?**

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: Yeah, I mean, for me, look, I think in 2022 before I got injured, I was very close to world No. 1. I was one match away from being world No. 1. Then obviously the injury happened.

Of course, I'm happy to be back in that position. I'm happy that I am competing for hopefully big events, competing for the best spots in our sport.

I was never sure I was ever going to do that again, especially after the injury. I never was sure I was going to be back at that level.

For me to be here, it is satisfying, but I'm not satisfied yet, if that makes sense. I still want to achieve my goals. I still want to achieve my dreams. I felt like this year, yeah, I have been close on multiple occasions to maybe getting my first Grand Slam. Didn't quite get there.

Of course, if I stay healthy and if I stay fit, that is the main goal. As you said, I'm the No. 2 player in the world. I'm behind Jannik right now. That is definitely a target.

**Q. Laura, a lot of players talk about this tournament as serving as good preparation for the Australian Open. Having won it before, how rewarding is it to**

THE MODERATOR: Defending champions, how does it feel to be back? Do you feel any extra pressure being here?

LAURA SIEGEMUND: No, I don't think there is extra pressure. We obviously had a great experience last year here winning the title. It's not last year now, so we're back here. We are hoping for a good result obviously, but we have to take it one match at a time.

Trying to build some team spirit at the moment, having good preparations. Yeah, then we see how far we go.

THE MODERATOR: How have you been enjoying Perth, and how have you seen United Cup grow in the last years?

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: Yeah, I mean, it's the third year now. First time for us in Perth. Generally speaking, I think it's an interesting event. It's very unique, having male and female combined.

Yeah, I mean, we had a great time last year, obviously winning the tournament. Generally outside the court, I think we all enjoyed our time. We love being back here.

We obviously want to compete. We want to hopefully defend our title. But, yeah, we will have to play great tennis, and we'll see how it goes.

THE MODERATOR: Looking into your first matchups with Brazil, what are your expectations?

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: You got to be more specific who you're asking.



## win these tournaments along the way?

LAURA SIEGEMUND: It's always rewarding to win a tournament, no? I think it's a great format in a sense to get a lot of matches. Obviously particularly if you're No. 1 and you're playing the singles, you got a lot of matches in. If you play well, even more so.

Then I think with any tournament, if you get matches, if you get good wins, here particularly last year when we had just a great team atmosphere, that really pushes you. That adrenaline keeps pushing you forward.

Last year I went to play on really well in Adelaide and then fourth in the season. Hopefully we can get the same kind of vibe going this year and hopefully have some good results.

It's a good format to get matches and to have a good preparation for AO basically.

### **Q. Tim, you're coming off a really strong doubles season. How much confidence are you coming into this tournament with?**

TIM PUETZ: Yeah, I mean, I think last year was my best season individually so far. Obviously with Kevin. It feels like it wasn't very long to go. To be honest, wasn't much of a break with Turin and Malaga after.

Here we are. It feels like it hasn't really been a long time. I guess we just try to ride the wave. It was nice to finish with a good win in Turin and also to enjoy it a little bit. It was kind of the only tournament where you have a little break after.

Here we are, new season. Obviously trying to take the confidence from the last few months, from the good results we had, and try to build on it here in a team atmosphere as well. It's more important that we do well as a team.

### **Q. Tim, despite the success in Turin, has it been explained to you that if you play with Laura, she's still the boss out there on the court?**

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: Laura is always the boss.

TIM PUETZ: It's generally understood that she's the boss (laughter).

### **Q. Have you had any discussions with Captain Alexander about the mixed doubles situation at the moment?**

TIM PUETZ: No, we haven't specifically talked about it. Yeah, I don't think there's really a wrong lineup that we can put forth. I think Laura has won multiple slams. I've won a slam in mixed. Sascha, obviously with his level of

tennis, he's good whenever he touches a ball.

I think we can't really go wrong there no matter what we do. We'll see. We'll cross that bridge when we get there, I guess.

### **Q. Laura, you must be particularly looking forward to this year. Last year, from memory, you were just there as the mixed doubles player, didn't even play the first two matches. Then came out, and of course was a big star. This year you're the No. 1 singles player. So are you looking forward to having an even bigger impact this year?**

LAURA SIEGEMUND: Yeah, I wasn't particularly planning to be the singles girl here, but I had some good results last year. It ended up being that way.

I'm happy also for my singles to go out there. Yeah, lots of matches for me coming up. I'm really enjoying the mixed. I'm looking forward to that. As Puetzy said, it doesn't really matter who. I think we have a good lineup either way.

### **Q. Alex, looking back to the semis and finals last year, in the span of 24 hours or so, was that close to one of your most impressive physical feats for the season?**

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: I think just generally the whole Australian summer for me. I did play a lot of tennis in the beginning of the year last year. Obviously with the United Cup, I played 10 matches in total. I played every single singles and mixed, right? So I played quite a lot of tennis there already.

Then at the Australian Open in total also I played a lot. I played two 7-6 in the fifth matches, played another five-setter with Daniil, played long matches with Carlos. Just generally speaking played a lot of tennis in the Australian summer.

That kind of showed me that, yeah, physically I was okay last year. I feel like I'm physically better this year than I was last year. Hopefully I can show that on the court.

But yeah, it's nice to have Tim on the team for sure because it does give us options in the mixed. It gives me the freedom if I say I am playing three hours a singles match, I don't have to come out in the mixed again, where last year we didn't have that option in the mixed doubles really.

It's a great addition to our team. I think, yeah, hopefully we can all be successful and get through the matches here, hopefully play another two great matches in Sydney.

### **Q. Alexander Sr., your thoughts on the team's**

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## chances this year?

CAPTAIN ALEXANDER ZVEREV SR.: I think we have normal chance. Last year, to example, we go to final, made the lucky loser. After Alexander and Laura play unbelievable deciding point, yeah, in the team.

Yeah, I hope if we all play good, like last year, and little bit lucky, we can win again.

## Q. Whether you get a chance to play or not, what are you hoping to get out of this week?

VIVIAN HEISEN: For me, I mean, I just enjoy being part of the team. I think I just try to support the team the best I can do. So I'll just, I don't know, support it. I don't expect anything. I think we have our clear No. 1s here. Yeah, that's fine. We know our role, yeah.

LENA PAPADAKIS: Yeah, I think it's quite an honor to be in such a team. For me it's a big experience, especially after struggling for one and a half years with injuries.

I'm quite happy to be here. Support the best I can. Yeah, let's see how the week goes.

DANIEL MASUR: Yeah, I see myself also in a pretty relaxed role here. I feel very comfortable here with the team. Trying to help as good as I can. Yesterday I was practicing with Sascha, today with Tim, tomorrow I'm hitting with Laura. Yeah, I think that's the thing I can do to help the team.

I'm just feeling very, very good here and looking forward to the first matches.

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