

# United Cup

Friday, 27 December 2024

Perth, Western Australia, Australia

## Team USA

**Captain Michael Russell**

**Danielle Collins**

**Coco Gauff**

**Taylor Fritz**

**Desirae Krawczyk**

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: What have you been enjoying in Perth, and how have you been enjoying United Cup for the first few days here?

COCO GAUFF: We went to Rottnest Island, and we got some pictures with the quokkas. I went on the fun fair by the hotel and went on some rides. We're all doing a team escape room later. So, yeah, we're having a lot of fun.

DANIELLE COLLINS: I just got here yesterday, so just enjoying hanging out with my girls, Coco and Des. Yeah, haven't really done a whole lot yet. Looking forward to probably doing the escape room later, as long as I don't fall asleep early.

THE MODERATOR: It's the first tournament of the 2025 season. What did you do in the off-season, and what was your preparation coming into here?

TAYLOR FRITZ: Yeah, I mean, I didn't have like a super long off-season, but I did a couple weeks in Miami and a couple weeks in L.A., and then came here. Didn't do too much. Kind of ramped it up the last two weeks.

I'm excited to get started.

DESIRAE KRAWCZYK: Pre-season is good. I was here in December training in Melbourne and Brisbane. I'm excited to be here and hang out with the team.

THE MODERATOR: Captain, how are you heading into your first matches, and what's the energy for the whole team?

CAPTAIN MICHAEL RUSSELL: Yeah, I mean, the energy is great. Coco, Taylor had a great fall. Danielle and Des have been playing well. Camaraderie is good, we all get along well. Had good practices the last few



days to get ready.

Come the 29th at 5:00, we'll be ready to go.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. Coco, you had a really successful start to the year, winning Auckland and then going to semis in Melbourne. What specifically has made you want to switch it up and come to the United Cup this year?**

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I love Auckland. I won twice there. It was a great tournament.

For me I wanted to play a higher level of competition and also a team competition. I had a lot of fun with the Olympics. Basically a similar crew here today.

Yeah, just had a lot of fun. The season's already so much by ourselves that it's nice to mix it up. I'm looking forward to hopefully having a good couple weeks here in Perth and hopefully in Sydney, as well.

**Q. Taylor, back to the off-season, do you think you've changed anything in your approach to the off-season considering the success you had last year or stayed the same?**

TAYLOR FRITZ: I think as I've gotten a bit older. It's not so much about, like, absolutely killing myself as much as I can in the off-season. It's about training but still feeling recharged and ready to go and very motivated to come back out and be ready to play in Australia.

I feel like it's kind of about finding the balance between working as much as I can but still not almost burning myself out just so I'm feeling good coming here.

**Q. Do you think you've found that balance?**

TAYLOR FRITZ: Yeah, I'm excited to start the year. I thought I was playing really solid tennis in the off-season. I got good work in. I think we did a good job.

**Q. Michael, captain this week. Does that mean you'll be making the doubles pick, or will that be a team decision?**

CAPTAIN MICHAEL RUSSELL: We discuss it as a team. Obviously ultimately I'm making the pick. We'll discuss it and put what we think is the best team for the matches.



**Q. Danielle, first United Cup. What specifically was the reason for coming?**

DANIELLE COLLINS: Yeah, I mean, after Olympics, we just had to get the fam back together. We had a good run there, had a great time with the same crew. It was a no-brainer after talking to everybody about coming back this year and kicking it off here in Perth.

**Q. Danielle, you said you got in yesterday. How are the energy levels?**

DANIELLE COLLINS: Yeah, it's actually pretty good. I played two and a half hours today. I played an hour with Des, an hour and a half with Coco. So, yeah, I actually took off the ground running.

Probably need a nap the first couple days. Other than that, pretty good so far.

**Q. Coming back to Australia, which has previously been a happy hunting ground for you, is that something you think about?**

DANIELLE COLLINS: Yeah, so many amazing memories here and a place I obviously love to come. I've played some of my best tennis here. Trying to keep the good times going in Australia. Looking forward to another year here.

**Q. Taylor, you were here last year. Got a good prep for the Australian Open last year. Was that part of motivation to come back?**

TAYLOR FRITZ: Yeah, I mean, obviously since they've had the event, I've played it every year. Even before it was United Cup, it was ATP Cup. I always enjoyed starting the year with a team event.

I feel like I play well in team events. They're also just really fun to kind of have that team energy. Like Coco said before, playing the whole year basically by ourselves, it's nice to change it up.

Yeah, I mean, there's not really any reason why I wouldn't come. Like I said, it's a great event. Perfect way to start the year.

**Q. It's obviously the start of a season. What does a successful start of a season look like for you?**

TAYLOR FRITZ: I'm not sure. It's changing every year I guess, like the expectations. I'd like to start out with a solid week in here, get some good matches. Obviously the main focus is going to be Australian Open. Hopefully a deep run at the slams. That's like my main goal all year long is the big results at the slams.

**Q. Coco, as a team you get to go up against Canada. Is there a bit of an extra motivation to win that one given the rivalry?**

COCO GAUFF: I guess from tennis we just think of players. You could put it like that.

Yeah, I think we're all pumped up to play regardless if it's Canada or whoever. I think we all want to win. It's not an easy start to the first match of the year, playing Leylah and Felix. But I think we're up, ready for it.

Yeah, obviously at the Olympics we actually lost to Team Canada. Hopefully we can get a little bit of revenge for that.

**Q. You mentioned you wanted a bit of a couple of tougher games, advanced preparation. What are you hoping to get out of these two games in Perth?**

COCO GAUFF: Similar to what Taylor said: a couple good matches to start off the year. Obviously you want to do well here. I think for all of us the main focus is Australian Open and doing well there.

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