

United Cup

Saturday, 28 December 2024
Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

Team Czechia

Captain Daniel Vacek

Tomas Machac

Marek Gengel

Patrik Rikl

Karolina Muchova

Gabriela Knutson

Vendula Valdmannova

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Daniel, you're the captain here. Just talk to us about the excitement for the team being here and what you're looking to get out of the United Cup this year.

CAPTAIN DANIEL VACEK: It is very exciting for us to be here, and I'm really happy to be selected as a captain. I'm extremely excited to have such a strong team with Karo and Tomas and the rest of the guys who came over.

We're really looking forward to do what we can, as the tournament is extremely nice and everybody treats us really nice. Weather is perfect. Conditions are perfect. We do our best to win.

THE MODERATOR: Then to Karolina, welcome to Sydney. Just talk about how important it is for you to get some really good matches in ahead of Australian Open, especially you're in quite a tough group as well. Talk to us about how you're going to approach the United Cup.

KAROLINA MUCHOVA: Thank you very much. Obviously taking it match by match, but it's actually the first time for me to play this format. Yeah, I'm pretty excited.

We have a nice team, and starting tomorrow, so I'll just focus on that, on the first match. Then we play after New Year's, so it's going to be fun I'm sure. I as well look forward to play maybe some mixed doubles with Tomas. Yeah, we'll see how that goes.

THE MODERATOR: Tomas, you've always done well representing Czech Republic in team competitions. Talk to us through how excited you are to team up with everyone



and represent your country here at United Cup.

TOMAS MACHAC: I'm very excited to play this tournament, and the team is great. I'm looking forward to play on tomorrow's match. Let's see what's going to happen.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Tomas and Karolina, obviously mixed doubles is such an important part of this tournament. Tomas, you've had a lot of success in mixed doubles in the Olympics. How are you guys preparing for the mixed doubles part of this event?

TOMAS MACHAC: Yeah, we've been practicing one month the mixed doubles only, so we are really prepared to play.

KAROLINA MUCHOVA: Yeah, I think after the press conference we go again, practice on mixed, as we do every day here. So hopefully we are going to be prepared well.

Q. Karolina, in terms of your fantastic finish to last year, kind of what was your offseason/preseason like? What were the priorities in terms of rest and everything, and physically how are you feeling to start the season?

KAROLINA MUCHOVA: I didn't have such a long offseason, to be honest, because I was still wondering if I'm going to play Billie Jean King Cup or not. I was keeping busy.

Then we don't have that much time to rest. So it was, I don't know, week two, and then immediately to preseason. I spent most of it in Prague at home. Yeah, it's most of the part I've been just home and around my people.

I'm looking forward to playing matches.

Q. Daniel, as a player you were in team competitions at Davis Cup, et cetera, but what's it like captaining in a team competition?

CAPTAIN DANIEL VACEK: Well, I think in general it's much more difficult to be a captain or coach than a player because you have to deal sometimes with very unstable individuals (laughing).



No, it's completely different. It's very nice to have the young players around, and it's very nice that I can pass on some of the experiences that I have managed to get over the years.

But it is different. It is completely different.

Q. And do you get really nervous sitting on the side of the court?

TOMAS MACHAC: Tomorrow definitely.

CAPTAIN DANIEL VACEK: No, I do. It's very difficult to be coach or captain because you cannot influence anything what's happening on the court. Basically you just have to pray that everything goes well because everything is out of your hands, and it's up to the players.

Q. Patrik, I'm just curious, how is it to start the year representing your country and being with some of the best players from your country?

PATRIK RIKL: I mean, it's perfect for me to be part of this team with so many good players on the team. I'm very happy about it and excited about it.

Q. This one is for the younger Czech women that are on the team. Obviously an incredible reputation and success for the Czechs on the WTA tour. I'm curious as you're building your careers up, does that create pressure of expectation for either you, or for Gabriela, in terms of wanting to be the next ones, or is it confidence boosting? How do you treat that, kind of the shadow that these players kind of cast?

VENDULA VALDMANNOVA: Well, I don't have any pressure on me right now because I'm obviously here the youngest. But, yeah, it's a privilege to be here for me. New opportunity. Yeah, I'm very excited to be here with the whole team. Yeah, I'm going to cheer for them.

GABRIELA KNUTSON: I think representing Czech Republic on the tour is such a privilege. We have such a respected country, especially in women's tennis. We have a great legacy, and I think it gives us a bit more respect on the court, but also a lot more pressure when people think that we'll be as good as they are.

Obviously that's the hope, but we're all trying to climb, and we're all on our own journeys. I'm excited to see how Vendula does here and in the rest of her career. I'm excited as well to play for my country.

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