

# United Cup

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

## Team Great Britain

### Captain Alex Ward

### Billy Harris

### Jan Choinski

### Charles Broom

### Katie Boulter

### Yuriko Lily Miyazaki

### Olivia Nicholls

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We'll start with Alex, the captain. Talk about the team atmosphere and how pleased you are all to be in Sydney representing your country at United Cup.

CAPTAIN ALEX WARD: I think the team atmosphere has been really good. All of us really enjoy team competition. I'm actually thrilled to be here as captain. Very proud.

I've been enjoying Sydney. We've been doing various activities. Went to the beach on Christmas day. Yeah, it's been really enjoyable.

THE MODERATOR: Question for Katie: You're no stranger to United Cup. You played it last year. How much thrill do you get out of representing your country and playing in that team atmosphere each year?

KATIE BOULTER: Yeah, for me I come back every year. I feel like I thrive in these situations. I had some really good wins, some of my best actually, here last year.

I feel like starting the year this way, it speeds me into the year. It makes it a lot quicker for me. I just enjoy bouncing off other people's energy. I feel like we've got a good team this year. Looking forward to seeing new faces and people that I've not really been in a team with before, so that's going to be exciting.

Yeah, I'm just happy to be back in Australia.

THE MODERATOR: Also, Billy, you've had a bit of a late call-up in the last week or two to step into this No. 1 spot. How much are you looking forward to getting some tough matches ahead of the Australian Open?



BILLY HARRIS: It was late notice that I was going to be playing No. 1. Great opportunity and love playing for Great Britain. It's a great honor to play for your country, and can't wait to get started.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. This is for all of the members of the team. If you can just talk through the three matchups against Australia. Billy against Alex, Katie against Olivia, and then the mixed doubles match against Matt Ebden and Ellen Perez.**

BILLY HARRIS: I played Alex actually years and years ago in Spain. I haven't played him since then. Obviously we've both improved since then.

I know it's going to be a tough match, but yeah, looking forward to it. I'll try and bring my best tennis to the court.

KATIE BOULTER: For me obviously I know Liv really well. She spends a lot of time in the U.K. I've practiced with her a lot. I think she knows me well as well. I think we'll be going in with strong tactics.

Obviously first match of the year for me. Second for her. It will be interesting. I mean, I've put a lot of work in in preseason, but you never know what's going to come out on the day. I feel like she's a very strong player. She's got a lot of weapons, and I'm going to have to be sharp.

CAPTAIN ALEX WARD: For the mixed doubles we've obviously got Argentina first. Yeah, we'll see how that goes. Undecided on exactly how we'll play against Australia right now. Obviously they've got a really good pair, really strong mixed doubles pair. We'll see how it goes with Argentina first.

**Q. Just a question for the doubles players. How do you prepare for a matchup like this when you've got a team that has so much experience? How did the team come about? I think Salisbury pulled out, so how did you choose to sign up for the United Cup after that happened?**

CHARLES BROOM: I mean, just signing up for it, yeah, I just put my name down and sort of hoped for the best. Obviously I had intentions of playing other tournaments to start the year. Yeah, when Alex called me and said, like, Joe has pulled out, and you're in, then I was thrilled to come represent GB.



Whatever opportunity I get, I'll really look forward to it and help the team out as much as I can.

OLIVIA NICHOLLS: For me my season ended pretty late last year with BJK. So I was kind of thinking to use this week as an extra training week. Then obviously if I get the opportunity to play, I'm ready. But I don't think we're 100% decided on the mixed doubles yet. We're going to be trying a few things out this afternoon. Yeah, we're going to be trying some pairings out, getting a little bit of mixed doubles action going.

Yeah, I don't think it's totally decided yet, but all of us are ready for any possibility.

**Q. Katie, obviously it's been a very big week for you off the court. I'm just wondering how you manage this type of extra attention, I guess, and media and if you feel like you're someone who is able to harness that on the court?**

KATIE BOULTER: Yeah, I think it's definitely something that we put a little bit of thought into. Obviously some incredible news from our side, but I think we kind of wanted it to die down a little bit before matches started.

That was very important to me because I'm someone that likes to stay in my own bubble and keep myself to myself and try and lock in a little bit. I think I wanted to start the year well and not have any distractions.

For me I'll be keeping my head down. Obviously my private life is out in the public a little bit at the moment. But yeah, in terms of the stuff that I'm doing on the court, I'll be doing the best I can every single day to stay in my own little bubble.

**Q. Just that bubble that you're talking about, as you continue to rise up the rankings and your profile grows, does that become more difficult?**

KATIE BOULTER: I think there's pros and cons to everything. I feel like it's really nice to get some gratitude for the achievements that you've made and the improvements that I've done. You see people really care about the things that you've been doing and supporting you. It's such a nice feeling to know there's more people behind me.

At the same time it can also become a distraction and something that I take pride in knowing that I'm really focused on the right things and the processes of every single day instead of getting too involved in everything else. But of course, I do enjoy doing those things and having the support from people. It means more than anything.

So, yeah, it's a little bit of a combination and a balance,

but I feel like I got it right at the moment.

**Q. Billy, just to you, how much do you recognize what you've achieved? Your backstory is obviously well-documented and traveling around in vans and things like that. To be in this situation now with the results that you've had through 2024 and the attention that you've received, how important is it to be part of a team like this with United Cup, with Davis Cup, or with those sort of formats?**

BILLY HARRIS: I've had the best year of my career so far and just making the most of these opportunities. It was great to play in Davis Cup earlier in the year. I managed to get a win.

I felt like that environment, playing for your country, just brought out a little extra in me, so hopefully I can continue to do that.

But, yeah, just making the most of the opportunities that I've got. It's great to be here in Sydney playing United Cup for the first time. Wasn't expecting earlier in the year to be playing No. 1.

Unfortunately, Jack wasn't ready, but I'm here, and I'm as ready as I can be.

**Q. Katie was just saying about the extra focus that's being put on her career, her life. Have you enjoyed the additional focus certainly the Brit media have put on you in the last number of months?**

BILLY HARRIS: I haven't really been thinking about that too much. I haven't had as much attention as Katie, I'm sure. No, I just keep my head down and focus on each tournament and try to just focus on myself basically.

**Q. Just for Katie again. You were talking about playing some of your best matches here last year. What is the challenge in then taking the form you have in a team environment like this into then the Australian Open, a singles tournament?**

KATIE BOULTER: Very different tournaments. I mean, I feel like I kind of have my own little team that I've created who support me probably just as well as all these people here. I think that's where it's very much the same coming into an environment like this.

Then going into something like the Australian Open where I know I can rely on people in my team to help me, I think that's probably where it's exactly the same. It's just maybe a slightly different group of people.

Yeah, I find it quite easy. I think that's why I enjoy these moments because it's fresh faces, new people, great energy. Especially at the start of the year when, you know, we've had a few weeks off, and we're all ready to

go again and start a fresh season. I think it's nice to bounce off that energy, especially at the start.

**Q. Katie, the other day you used the term "bragging rights," if you were to play Alex. Do you like the fact that you could play against him, or would you rather not play against him? The pressure at home from both sides, what's that like?**

KATIE BOULTER: I can confirm I would rather not play him. On a personal level, on a tennis level, on every level I would much rather play someone else. But of course, I will still try and do my best and hopefully get one up on him on something.

So, yeah, I'm relying on the team for this one. We need a win. I'm not taking anything else other than that.

So, yeah, it will be interesting to see what happens out there, but I don't know if he'll play mixed. I don't know if I'll play mixed. I think there's a lot of unknowns at the moment.

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