

United Cup

Saturday, 28 December 2024
Perth, Western Australia, Australia

Team Canada

Leylah Fernandez

Alex Auger-Aliassime

Press Conference

Canada 2

Croatia 1

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations, 2-1, good performance. If you briefly, each of you, can tell your overview of the matches you had?

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: Yeah, for my singles match I felt very, very good on court. I was just happy that I was able to stay offensive throughout the game. My serves were going very well. I was able to hit my targets quite often, which that was super important.

Then I think also the atmosphere on court, the bench, how positive they were was amazing. So, yeah, I think overall today's match was a good one on the singles side.

Then doubles, we just had fun. Able to execute our games, and I had a lot of confidence in Felix on his side of the court. I'm glad that he had the same amount of confidence in me on my side.

FELIX AUGER-ALIASSIME: Yeah, positive day. We're both familiar with these competitions. There's a lot of matches to play, and you need to stay calm through it all, through the roller coasters. We went up and I lost, and we need to stay sharp and stay focused until there's still matches to play. We did that well.

Leylah got off to a good start and then we finished strong. Looking forward to tomorrow now.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Felix, well done in the end. You said that you're familiar with these team competitions. After the first match are you not worried at all? You kind of refresh? Is that the aim?

FELIX AUGER-ALIASSIME: I'm not worried. I'm a little bit like -- what's the word -- disappointed, frustrated a little bit obviously with the loss. Any loss is tough.



But I'm also encouraged that for the first half of the match I was playing great. I couldn't really be playing better and then things got very difficult, but credit to him as well. He stepped it up.

But I just know that it's important, yeah, to bring the best version of myself again in the doubles to try and win because now we won, and I've been in this situation a couple of years ago where we had a 3-0 start, 3-0 loss to the U.S., and then we ended up winning the whole thing.

So I like these team events. It just gives you an opportunity to play another match and then play maybe another one. Even if you lose the first one, you can actually win the whole thing. So it's pretty cool.

Q. Obviously your first competitive singles match since October. How were you feeling back out on court despite the loss in the end?

FELIX AUGER-ALIASSIME: Yeah, good overall. So great start. Not sure what to expect. Then I win the first set in that fashion, serving well. I feel like I'm moving well. So good. Good, positive signs.

The only thing that was missing was the win, but outside of the that, the game was good. I'm happy to play my part in the dubs and get the win.

Q. Just one more on the singles. What do you think was the turning point in that second set?

FELIX AUGER-ALIASSIME: Well, there was a few unfortunate points where the ball just didn't go on my side. Like it felt like I was doing the right things, but then, yeah, just didn't execute a few shots to win my service game at 4-3. Even at 4-2 I had chances.

Then he finally won that long game at 4-3, and that was going to be the turning point. But also after that I have to see how do I not let this slip away that much and lose three service games in a row? So I think that was the disappointing part.

But, yeah, I know there's a few things. I mean, I remember, and there's a few things that I can still improve.

Q. Leylah, did Felix's singles result change how you were feeling going into that doubles at all?

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: No, not at all. Yeah, of course,



we wanted to start the mixed dubs with a 2-0 lead, but for me I was just going to try to come out with a good, positive energy and just play my game, just focus on my objectives. I was just glad that we were able to start strong and just figure things out throughout the match. I think on key moments we were able to make them play and stay offensive on that front.

Q. Leylah, obviously there's not too much between you and Donna in terms of rankings, but it must have been nice to start the year effectively with a win over a high-ranked opponent.

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: Yeah, it definitely feels nice. Donna, she's had an amazing 2024 season, and she has a stellar career. To play against Donna, who has made the semifinals in Wimbledon -- or semifinals -- semis in Wimbledon and then silver in the Olympics, it's never easy it play someone who has that much confidence.

I was just happy that I came out there with a game plan and was able to execute it for the most part and just, as I said, having fun on court.

Q. Felix, it wasn't the biggest crowd out there. You probably felt it in mixed doubles as well. What was it like coming off against a team who had a bit of vocal support in Croatia?

FELIX AUGER-ALIASSIME: I like it. I mean, it brings a good atmosphere. I feel like Croatia is always this country that shows up for their athletes. You know, smaller country, and I think they have a lot of pride in their athletes, which is great to see.

So happy that a large number of Croatians came out and also a few Canadian flags and people wearing hockey jerseys. That was cool to see as well.

But even, yeah, if it wasn't the largest crowd, it's a big stadium, so it's tough to fill it up. There was good atmosphere with our team benches, and everybody was getting involved from our side. So it was nice to see my personal team, her personal team, and our teammates showing up and with good energy and positive mindset.

Q. You've got Taylor Fritz coming up next. You've played him a couple of times before. What are you expecting from him? What do you think is going to be the biggest thing that you need to change from tonight to tomorrow?

FELIX AUGER-ALIASSIME: Yeah, it's going to be different conditions. Obviously we're going to be playing in the shade, so I'm going to have to adjust to that racquet-wise, tension-wise.

Then, you know, with him we played in 2022 at the start and end of the season. We played actually the first time

in similar competition. ATP Cup it was. Every time, three sets. I lost both, but tight matches. Great serving from his part always.

I just feel like now he's reached a point where he has not really weaknesses in his game. Everything he does, he does it well. So we'll see. I need to play my best tennis to win.

Q. Leylah, you have Coco Gauff coming up as well. How exciting is that for you, the fact that you get to play one of the form players on tour a couple of weeks out from a Grand Slam, get to see where you're at with your preparation?

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: It's super exciting. That's also one of the reasons why I decided playing the United Cup. It's not only the team atmosphere, but I'll be able to play against the top players, see where my level is at, see what are the improvements I can do in the next couple of weeks before the AO.

Playing against Coco is never easy. She's a tough opponent, great competitor. So hopefully we're going to have fun tomorrow and going to put on some good shows.

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