

United Cup

Tuesday, 31 December 2024
Perth, Western Australia, Australia

Team USA

Captain Michael Russell

Coco Gauff

Taylor Fritz

Press Conference

Team USA - 3

Team Croatia - 0

THE MODERATOR: Congrats on a dominant performance today, for advancing to the quarterfinals. Can you please each assess the performance today.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I thought we both played solid singles, and then the mixed was a great match. Yeah, I think overall we played well, and hopefully we can keep this momentum throughout the rest of the tournament, especially tomorrow.

TAYLOR FRITZ: Yeah, we've got to be really happy with everything today. It was smooth for me. You know, after the match I had two days ago, it was really good for me just to get a win in straight sets. Then obviously we stayed in to play the mixed just to get more reps in in the mixed, because we figure even though this match, it's dead, it didn't really matter, you know, there is a good chance that a really big match comes down to the mixed so we definitely wanted to just get more practice on the court.

CAPTAIN MICHAEL RUSSELL: Yeah, I thought the energy and the intensity from Coco and Taylor was excellent and more reps on the center court. It's not always easy to get practice time, so I thought they just competed really well and looking stronger with each match and looking forward to tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Congratulations. Michael, I just want to start with you. After the Felix match the other day, is there anything in particular that you and Taylor went back to kind of wanting to switch up going into this one today?

CAPTAIN MICHAEL RUSSELL: No, I mean, I think for a set and three quarters, Taylor played great tennis, and then Felix, the level that he brought when he was against



the wall was one of the higher levels that we saw. But, you know, Taylor knows that when he's playing at his highest level that he's one of the best players in the world, you know, tough to beat. It was just a few points and couple serves that barely missed and the match is completely different.

It wasn't a lot of things to change. It's just first match of the year, he hadn't played a match in over a month, so it was just going back to the table, learning experience, and you get ready to battle a day later.

Q. Taylor, in the first set against Borna, what were you most pleased with? Seemed like it was a bit of a struggle at the start, but then once you got into it, fired away?

TAYLOR FRITZ: Yeah, I think he was playing pretty well in the beginning from the ground, like, serving well. Going from the baseline, he was changing directions, hitting the ball well, not really making mistakes. So kind of just stayed with it and told myself I just need to stay in it and see if he's going to keep this up the whole time, you know, we'll go from there.

And then I did a good job of finding some, you know, good second-serve returns, playing some points, just giving him some opportunities to make mistakes and give myself openings, and that really was what I needed.

Q. Coco, you're playing China next. Have you been watching any of the Xinyu Gao's games? What can you expect from that?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I watched a couple of her matches, and she's having an incredible week, obviously. Yeah, I expect her to play loose. She has nothing to lose. Yeah, I feel I'm playing in good form too, so it's going to be a fun one.

Q. Coco, obviously you kind of said you wanted to come to United Cup, you felt like it was a strong field, you were guaranteed two strong games. Two games into the season, do you feel this has been a pretty productive start?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I can't ask for anything else. Yeah, definitely a productive start against two really great players.

Yeah, I was a little bit worried, like, having to start the season off against, like, tough opponents, but obviously I



think I managed pretty well.

Q. Obviously haven't played Xinyu Gao before. Is it tough to prepare for an opponent like that, particularly when she's so full of confidence after two big wins?

COCO GAUFF: I mean, obviously, yeah, any time you have to play someone who has nothing to lose, it's tough. You know they're going to bring their best tennis. But I feel like at this point in my career, the higher ranked you are, the harder people play you. I think at this point I just expect it.

Q. Taylor, you've got Triple Z coming up. I think you've only played once and you lost. What were your recollections of that game in 2023?

TAYLOR FRITZ: I remember having a lot of match points and losing that match (smiling). I remember it was such, it was such a just smooth-feeling match. Like up a set and a break, I was holding really easily, and then he broke me once and it just turned into a battle (smiling).

But yeah, I mean, it's going to be tight. He's a good player. Very good server. He's going to be tough to break. It's going to come down to who can protect their serve and kind of win some of those big points.

Q. When you have an experience like that, does it just make you a bit hungrier for the next match to right wrongs a bit, or do kind of just flush it and move on by the time the next matches come around?

TAYLOR FRITZ: Maybe if I played him that year, but I think it's been quite a while, so I've chilled out quite a bit from that loss. I think I've gotten over it (smiling).

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