

United Cup

Friday, 2 January 2026

Perth, Western Australia, Australia

Team France

Captain Lucas Pouille

Arthur Rinderknech

Geoffrey Blancaneaux

Edouard Roger-Vasselin

Leolia Jeanjean

Tiantsoa Rakotomanga

Rajaonah

Elixane Lechemia

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: If you can give your thoughts on heading into the United Cup this year.

LEOLIA JEANJEAN: I'm really excited to be here. You know, it's been my third time now that I'm playing the United Cup, so it's always a pleasure to be part of the French team and to play matches here.

LUCAS POUILLE: It's the first time for me, so I'm really, as Leolia said, excited and very proud to be the Captain of this team, and hopefully we're going to have some great matches and some great wins.

ARTHUR RINDERKNECH: It's always a pleasure to represent France. Doesn't matter the competition, but being with the team, it's always a great pleasure, and I really want to hopefully do great here.

THE MODERATOR: We will open it up to questions.

Q. Arthur, I'll start with you. First on finishing a season, I believe, in the top 30 as the highest ranked Frenchman at the end of the year. Can you just reflect on your amazing season last year?

ARTHUR RINDERKNECH: Yeah, it was a great second part of the season. We had good results. Hopefully we'll be able to build on this for this year. At least that's the goal.

And, yeah, really enjoy the time on court, so the main goal is to enjoy also this year.

Q. Can you reflect just a little on that amazing



Shanghai run where you took out four top-20 players, including Zverev, and then had that amazing final with Valentin? Can you just share your thoughts again on how much that run meant to you?

ARTHUR RINDERKNECH: I've said a lot about it, but, yeah, it was a good week, great week. Some weeks you play better and feel better than others, and this one was part of them.

Unfortunately, I didn't go all the way. I tried my best, but it was still a very positive week. And as I said, we hopefully will be able to build on this and get some experience out of it.

Q. Did you do any training with Valentin over the offseason?

ARTHUR RINDERKNECH: No, we didn't. We didn't.

Q. You look tan, though. Have you been spending some time in the sun?

ARTHUR RINDERKNECH: Yeah, we were in Dubai for a few weeks. Now we're here for almost a week. So, yeah, we've seen the sun in the past three weeks.

Q. Question to you, Eddie. If you get a chance to play mixed doubles here, what would that mean to do that on a big stage?

EDOUARD ROGER-VASSELIN: Yeah, it's always a pleasure here to play for France. Not the Captain this year, so I'm not sure I will be picked for the mixed doubles. But yeah, if I have a chance to play, I will be, of course, ready. We have been practicing already for a few days. Yeah, it's always nice to represent France and have a good match here to start the season.

Q. Geoffrey, question to you, what are you hoping to get out of the week?

GEOFFREY BLANCANEUX: Yeah, I mean, for me, I'm the second player, so just waiting (inaudible). I'm just ready. I'm here to support the team and to give my energy to them.

I'm just so happy to be in the French team this year. It's my first time in Perth. So I will just enjoy the moment, and I hope we have some matches and some win.

Q. Last question from me to Lucas, as Captain, what



are your thoughts on the team's chances this week?

LUCAS POUILLE: Well, we know that we're going to play some great teams with some great players, but we do have an amazing team. I think we have all our chances to reach a quarterfinal and to go further in the competition.

So we're going to give our best, and that's the most important.

Q. Leolia, I know you said this is your third time here at the United Cup, and I think you recently slid into the top singles spot. Ahead of that, how prepared are you feeling, especially against your matches against Jasmine and Belinda?

LEOLIA JEANJEAN: Well, I'm really excited to play because I never played matches for France in the previous United Cup. For me, it's really a big pleasure to be able to play, to be able to play against such good players as well. You know, I'm going to play against Jasmine, as you say, and Belinda.

For me, it's really good preparation I will say for the Australian Open. A really good opportunity to see also where my level is compared to those players. I'm just really happy to have the chance to play against them.

Q. And you talked about it there a little bit. It's your first time actually playing. Can you elaborate a little bit more on representing France, especially when...

LEOLIA JEANJEAN: It's awesome for me. It's really the first time in my career that I get a chance to represent my country. So like I said, it is an honor and really big pleasure to be able to carry the French color on the court. Yeah, I'm just really excited to be there.

Q. Then you'll be playing your fourth Australian Open, I think your first direct entry, which is really exciting. What do you plan to get out of the Aussie swing as a whole?

LEOLIA JEANJEAN: Well, it's the first time I'm playing the main draw of Australian without getting through quallies. I'm really proud of it. I'm getting a little bit old now, so I'm just proud of myself and the season I've done. I just hope it will be the same in 2026.

You know, I will give my best, as always. Australia is a country that I really like. I usually play really well or so. We will see how it goes.

Q. Then, Tiantsoa, I know you had a strong 2025 season. You won in Sao Paulo. Why did you choose to come here and play in the United Cup? What do you hope to get out of the end of the week?

TIANTSOA RAKOTOMANGA RAJAONAH: It's the first time I play for France. So I'm really exciting to see, I don't know, like -- I'm really just happy to represent France.

Q. Can you reflect on your 2025 season? You climbed heavily in the rankings, and you had your win in Sao Paulo. How proud are you of that 2025 season?

TIANTSOA RAKOTOMANGA RAJAONAH: I did a very good year, so I'm really happy. I hope 2026 is going to be the same, so yeah.

Q. Elixane, what do you hope to get out of the week, United Cup and Perth, and the entire Australian swing?

ELIXANE LECHEMIA: I was a really late addition to the team, so it was a last-minute surprise for me. I was not expecting to be here. I was expecting to be playing in Europe for the few weeks of January. So really good surprise.

I'm really happy. I'm really prepared to cheer on the team this week. Ready to play as well. So, yeah, good surprise. First time for me in Perth. I was in Sydney the last two years. I love it so far.

Q. Arthur, obviously you're hitting your straps last year. Career best form. Did you change anything about your game, or was it just hard work over an extended period that got you to that level?

ARTHUR RINDERKNECH: I got married first last May, so that changed a little bit my personal life. I changed also my coach, who is the captain now. Yeah, a few changes to be more serious. A few changes here and there, but nothing that crazy.

Yeah, we were able to switch around a little bit the dynamic and have a really good second part of the year. So, again, happy about '25. Now let's look at '26.

Q. So having a wife, does that make you more relaxed? Does that inspire you more to be better?

ARTHUR RINDERKNECH: I don't know. I don't know. It was already my wife before, so I don't know. After that point I felt, I don't know, release or better. I wasn't even stressed about the wedding, but maybe I wasn't stressed at all anymore. I don't know.

It was just probably some coincidence about the timing, and Roland Garros was coming right after. It's always great for a French player to play in Roland Garros. So I got some feeling and emotions, again, on court, and that was also a starting point.

Q. So you've got Stan Wawrinka coming up. He is 40. He won Grand Slams when he was around where you are now, sort of the 30 years of age. Is that your goal? Do you think you have a Grand Slam in you or two?

ARTHUR RINDERKNECH: Well, I'll try to focus about my match against Stan, first of all, and then we'll see after that, yeah.

Q. Do you talk to him, though, about that, maybe? He's probably one of the oldest on the tour. Do you talk about getting into not the twilight of your career, but aging and maybe having a crack at it as you get a little bit older?

ARTHUR RINDERKNECH: I look at Stan -- first of all, I look at Stan as a great champion. He's a really big example for all of us, especially Swiss players, speaking French, so we can relate a bit on this as French players.

I've always watched him on TV. So yeah, such a big champion. It's already a great pleasure to play against him and to be able to, yeah, play a little part of my time on tour with him.

Q. Just about France in general, Hopman Cups, Davis Cups, Billie Jean King Cups as well, France has always been super competitive. What is it about France and tennis and Roland Garros -- what is it about French tennis that makes you guys so competitive? Captain or Arthur or...

LUCAS POUILLE: Good question. Good question. I don't know if I have the right answer. I think still The Federation and the clubs, the coaches in France are doing a great job, and that's also the reason why we have so many players, male and female, in the top 100, top 200.

We always had, yeah, a lot of players to compete in this competition. We were able to win the Davis Cup a couple of times. We are always present in this kind of competition, team competition, and I really hope that we can make France proud this year at the United Cup.

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