



THE WORLD CUP OF TENNIS



BILLIE JEAN KING *Cup*

BY ▶ GAINBRIDGE



AUS vs GBR

10-11 APRIL 2026

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Alex de Minaur and
Ajla Tomljanovic
Tennis Superstars



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HAS A BEGINNING**



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BJK Cup BY GAINBRIDGE
THE WORLD CUP OF TENNIS

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Tennis Australia acknowledges that we work, rest and play on Wurundjeri Woiwurrung Country and we pay our respects to Elders past and present.



INTERNATIONAL TENNIS FEDERATION

► It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to Melbourne Park for this 2026 Billie Jean King Cup by Gainbridge Qualifier tie between Australia and Great Britain. We are excited for two days of exceptional tennis here, with the two nations competing for a place at this year's Finals.

This is one of seven home-or-away Qualifier ties taking place across the world on Friday 10 and Saturday 11 April. Each tie will consist of two singles matches on day one, with the doubles match followed by two reverse singles matches on day two. This marks the first time in the competition's history that live doubles matches will be guaranteed, further aligning the competition's format with the Davis Cup. All live matches in the Qualifiers will be played as best-of-three tiebreak sets.

The Billie Jean King Cup, the women's World Cup of Tennis, had its first edition in 1963. Over more than six decades of history, it has grown to become the largest international team competition in women's sport, with a record 148 nations entered this year.

Renamed in 2020 in honour of all-time tennis great and champion for equality Billie Jean King, it is the first time a major global team competition has been named after a woman – representing a landmark moment for sport.

The Billie Jean King Cup creates a unique atmosphere, unlike any other event that the players experience on tour, and we are confident that the competition will shine even brighter this season.

The teams that win their ties at this week's Billie Jean King Cup Qualifiers will advance to the 2026 Billie Jean King Cup Finals in Shenzhen, China, P.R,

where they will compete to be crowned world champions.

Billie Jean King Cup by Gainbridge is about more than the Finals and the Qualifiers. It is also the story of the 148 nations taking part across six continents in this global tournament that spans three further levels of competition. In every match, players take pride in playing for something greater than themselves, representing their country with the dream of their nation progressing from regional level on to the Qualifiers. The Billie Jean King Cup is a vital tool for developing our sport in all these countries and delivering tennis for future generations.

I would like to pay tribute to all Billie Jean King Cup sponsors and partners, including title sponsor Gainbridge, with whom we began a six-year partnership in 2022. Through the partnership, women and men were paid equivalent prize money for competing at the Billie Jean King Cup and Davis Cup Finals every year starting in 2022. This is an important step towards achieving our ambition of closing the gender pay gap at all levels of the competition and part of the ITF's Advantage All strategy, which supports gender equality throughout the sport.

Finally, I would like to extend my gratitude to Tennis Australia for their collaboration and to acknowledge the work of everyone involved in organising this group event. Thank you also to the players and captains who give so much to making the Billie Jean King Cup such a special competition throughout the year.

Enjoy the tennis!



David Haggerty
President, ITF
IOC Member



TENNIS AUSTRALIA

► Welcome to the Billie Jean King Cup Qualifier, where the competition has returned to Melbourne for the first time in 15 years as Australia faces Great Britain at John Cain Arena.

The action ahead promises a compelling showcase of Australian women's tennis.

Just months after making a proud Billie Jean King Cup debut at world No.137 last November, Talia Gibson returns as a top-60 player, having qualified for back-to-back WTA 1000 events and defeated five top-20 opponents en route to the Indian Wells quarterfinals and Miami fourth round.

Kimberly Birrell also proudly rejoins the team after impressive gains over the past 18 months, while 17-year-old Emerson Jones is set to make her debut, fresh from her first WTA 1000 match win in Miami.

Those players are backed by experienced Billie Jean King Cup stalwarts in Storm Hunter and Ellen Perez, with Sam Stosur providing invaluable leadership and support as the

team captain. A multiple Grand Slam champion and former world No.1 in doubles, Stosur holds the record as the nation's most decorated Billie Jean King Cup singles player.

As they resume an exciting rivalry with Australia, Great Britain is spearheaded by Captain Anne Keathavong.

The British team is led by world No.181 Harriet Dart, who gained a critical point when the teams last met in the 2022 semifinals in Glasgow. Katie Swan, Mika Stojsavljevic and Jodie Burrage round out the visiting team.

This tie shines a light on the growing strength of women's tennis and the pathways inspiring the next generation.

In Melbourne this week, we also see the dedication of those behind the scenes. We extend our thanks to the umpires, ballkids and volunteers who bring the event to life.

We wish both teams all the best for the tennis ahead and warmly thank all the fans for their passionate support.



Chris Harrop
Chair, Tennis Australia



AUSSIE ROLE MODELS

Australia's next crop of Billie Jean King Cup representatives continues a proud tradition of learning from a long line of leading names before them. **By DAN IMHOFF**

On the southern stretch of Perth's Swan River, Talia Gibson savours a rare trip home off the back of a whirlwind and life-altering month Stateside.

Though only a fleeting few days, it is a chance for the newest star of Australian tennis to reset and reflect after sailing beyond her top-100 goal in less than two months since she and her coach, Jarrad Bunt, set the mark.

That was intended as a target by season's end, but after a quarterfinal and fourth-round showing at Indian Wells and Miami WTA 1000 events - both times as a qualifier - the goal posts had markedly shifted.

Now on the verge of the top 50 following five top-20 victories -

including over four-time major winner Naomi Osaka and world No.7 Jasmine Paolini - in the Sunshine Swing, Gibson is one of the spearheads of Australia's Billie Jean King Cup team to face Great Britain in Melbourne on April 10 and 11.

Though the same grounded 21-year-old she was before her star began to soar, Gibson's world has changed significantly since she last visited her home city before leaving for tournaments in Brisbane, India and the United States.

"I was last home at the end of January for a few days after the AO, so it's so exciting to come home after a couple of months of travelling," Gibson said. "Things have changed quite a bit after my recent achievements with great opportunities for me to now be able to get direct acceptance into

bigger tournaments and the main draw of Slams now. It makes for promising times ahead."

Explosive and clean-striking, Gibson's game was honed growing up in Perth, namely at the Blue Gum Park Tennis Club.

The occasional chance to hit with former world No.8 and ex-Billie Jean King Cup captain Alicia Molik, who calls the West her home, and current players her senior, Storm Hunter and Maddison Inglis, left a firm imprint on a young Gibson.

"These were all special times and valuable experiences for me in my development," she said.

Inspiration was never in short supply from across the country.

"I think growing up when I was watching tennis there were some amazing women - Ash Barty, Sam Stosur, Casey Dellacqua,

'THINGS HAVE CHANGED QUITE A BIT AFTER MY RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS ... IT MAKES FOR PROMISING TIMES AHEAD.'

TALIA GIBSON



GIANT LEAP: Talia Gibson has almost halved her ranking in just two tournaments to stand on the cusp of the top 50.

TEAM AUSTRALIA



'HONESTLY, THIS WAS PROBABLY THE HARDEST TEAM TO PICK, GIVEN HOW WELL EVERYONE'S PLAYING AT THE MOMENT.'

SAM STOSUR

SPIRITED SUCCESS: A dynamic blend of youth and experience drives Australia's Billie Jean King Cup team.



AUSTRALIAN TEAM



TALIA GIBSON

SINGLES RANK No.56
DOUBLES RANK No.109
W-L RECORD 0-0

Part of the team for the BJK Cup Play-offs in Hobart, the 21-year-old has climbed almost 50 ranking places after a breakout Sunshine Swing that included five top-20 wins.



KIMBERLY BIRRELL

SINGLES RANK No.80
DOUBLES RANK No.96
W-L RECORD 4-5 (3-5 singles)

Unbeaten in two singles matches at the Play-offs in Hobart in November, 27-year-old Birrell has already made semifinals this season in Adelaide and two in Austin, USA.



STORM HUNTER

SINGLES RANK No.196
DOUBLES RANK No.18
W-L RECORD 13-4 (6-2 singles)

The 31-year-old was the linchpin of Australia's run to the 2022 final, including over Great Britain in the semifinals. She has claimed the Austin doubles title this season.



ELLEN PEREZ

SINGLES RANK N/A
DOUBLES RANK No.20
W-L RECORD 5-3 doubles

Six of the 30-year-old's BJK Cup doubles matches have been alongside Hunter. The ex-world No.8 in doubles has reached the Brisbane final and Adelaide semifinals this year.



EMERSON JONES

SINGLES RANK No.136
DOUBLES RANK No.1577
W-L RECORD 0-0

Making her BJK Cup debut a year after being an Orange Girl in Brisbane, the 17-year-old could become the youngest since Ash Barty in 2013 to represent Australia.

Alicia Molik - there's so many people I could name," Gibson told *Tennis Channel*. "I think they were all an inspiration really, you know, just being able to watch so many amazing women from Australia be so successful.

"It was really cool for me to be able to grow up - especially a couple from Perth as well [Hunter and Inglis]. I hope to be able to carry that forward. I've spent a little bit of time with all of them, which is really cool."

Queensland's Kimberly Birrell, who teamed up with Gibson to reach the Australian Open doubles quarterfinals this year, returns to the Australian team alongside stalwarts Hunter and Ellen Perez, and 17-year-old debutante Emerson Jones, called into the team for the nation's injured No.1, Maya Joint.

Last year Birrell hit a career-best ranking of world No.60 following her maiden WTA singles final in Osaka and already has reached her first WTA 500 semifinal in Adelaide before two further semifinals at tournaments in Austin in 2026.

Like Gibson, Birrell benefitted from hitting with a star of Australian tennis, former world

No.4 and US Open champion Sam Stosur - now the team captain - on the Gold Coast.

"I don't know the full extent of how valuable those moments were, but I've definitely told Sam how grateful I am for her time and knowledge over the years," Birrell told *Australian Tennis Magazine*.

"I hope that she knows her impact - she's an incredible role

model for everyone, but it's been moments over the years like when I made the Billie Jean King Cup team for the first time where she's really taken me under her wing. I think all of us Aussie girls are so lucky to have Sam in our corners."

Australia's 60th representative, Jones, became the youngest Australian to win a main-draw

DREAM DEBUT: An Orange Girl at the same time last year, Emerson Jones, with Kimberly Birrell, is now the newest member of the Australian team.



match at a WTA 1000 since Jelena Dokic in 1999 in Miami last month.

She too was a beneficiary of the trickle-down effect, having hit with Coomera Anglican College alumnus Birrell while still at primary school.

"Emo and I went to the same school. I remember the visit after AO in 2019, hitting with her and thinking how amazing of a player she would be one day," Birrell said. "It's been great seeing how far she's come and how much further she can go."

Their captain, Stosur, returns following maternity leave after leaving the team in coach Nicole Pratt's capable hands for Australia's successful campaign against Portugal and Brazil in Hobart last November.

Victory over the Brits would lift the team back into the Billie Jean King Cup Finals, in Shenzhen, for the first time since 2024.

Such was the close-knit bond between the nation's players, Stosur said the Aussie women backed whoever took the court.

"Honestly, this was probably the hardest team to pick, given how well everyone's playing at the moment," Stosur said. "It's a great problem to have when you've got

that depth and the form and the desire for everyone to want to be there."

Stosur, who reached two Fed Cup/Billie Jean King Cup finals for Australia in 2019 and 2022, hailed Hunter for having stepped up as the leader of the playing group.

In Hobart, the 31-year-old presented fellow West Australian Gibson with her jacket as the 59th player to represent Australia in the competition.

It was an honour not lost on the former world No.1 doubles player, especially having been sidelined for 10 months due to a ruptured Achilles tendon.

"It was really special because for me, I always remember it was always the senior leader of the team who would do that, and I just never thought that I would get the opportunity to do it," said Hunter, who won the Austin WTA 250 title alongside Taylor Townsend in February en route to a top-20 doubles return.

"I was actually quite nervous because it is a really big moment. I remember the time when Sam gave me my jacket and it's something that sticks with me for the rest of my life, and I wanted Talia to have that moment too."

THE Aussie EFFECT

Powered by a culture of collective pride in each other's successes, Australian women's strong start to season 2026 could deliver greater gains yet.
By JACKSON MANSELL

LEADING BY EXAMPLE: Australia team captain Sam Stosur is a firm believer in success breeding success.



TIGHT-KNIT BUNCH: (Clockwise) Talia Gibson; Storm Hunter and Maya Joint; Kimberly Birrell with Hunter, Gibson, Ellen Perez, Joint and team coach Nicole Pratt.



It is no secret that the Australians have excelled on the WTA Tour in early 2026. Led by a breakout season from Talia Gibson, as well as some record-breaking achievements from the wider cohort, the Australian players are brimming with confidence.

The Australian summer of tennis helped build this 'success breeds success' momentum. Respective semifinal appearances from Kimberly Birrell and Taylah Preston in Adelaide and Hobart led to strong local performances at the Australian Open, with six Australian women progressing to the second round for the first time in 34 years.

No player enjoyed a more successful campaign in the women's draw than Maddison Inglis.

The West Australian returned to the main draw of her home major after last competing in 2022 and quickly made up for lost time. Advancing to the round of 16, Inglis became the first Australian qualifier to accomplish the feat at the Australian Open since Amanda Tobin Dingwall in 1985.

Her Australian Open campaign has helped inspire her compatriots for the first portion of the WTA Tour, garnering

'IT'S EXTREMELY UPLIFTING WHEN YOU SEE YOUR CLOSE FRIENDS AND EVEN THE OTHER AUSSIE GIRLS HAVING SOME GREAT SUCCESS.'

TALIA GIBSON

that winning culture within the Australian contingent, one which Culture Amp Australian BJK Cup team captain Sam Stosur could not endorse higher.

"I've always been a believer in success breeding success and no matter where you're from, if you've got players at the top of the sport or on their way up, it makes everyone think that they want to get to that spot," said Stosur, who was in Inglis' player box for most of her AO campaign.

"If you can see it, you can strive for it, and I think we definitely are starting to see that reward for some individual successes now filtering through.

"Maddie had that great run at AO and there's no way you can tell me that a lot of the other girls didn't think, 'hang on, Maddie's just done this. I want to do that. I want to be a part of that.' It was unbelievable."

Storm Hunter and Gibson

have been two exponents of this mantra. Hunter has had an inspirational singles rise of her own in 2026. Fearing her singles career would be halted after rupturing her Achilles tendon in April 2024, Hunter is now on the verge of returning to the WTA singles top 200.

The 31-year-old qualified for the Australian Open and Indian Wells, while also making her United Cup singles debut, achievements she did not think were again possible.

"Coming back from an Achilles rupture is really tough mentally and physically [with] all the training," Hunter said following her AO 2026 first-round victory against Jessica Bouzas Maneiro.

"To be back here playing really good tennis... I didn't think I could be back playing at this level again."

The team-like environment fostered by the Australian players has spurred Hunter on, leading to progress in both singles and

doubles competition. Most recently, Hunter was one of five Australian women that reached the second round of Indian Wells, a tournament record.

"When we're winning, success breeds success and everyone really believes that if one person is winning, that they can too so it's been really awesome. I know everyone's pumped for each other, it's so good to see," she said after her first-round win over Magdalena Frech at Indian Wells.

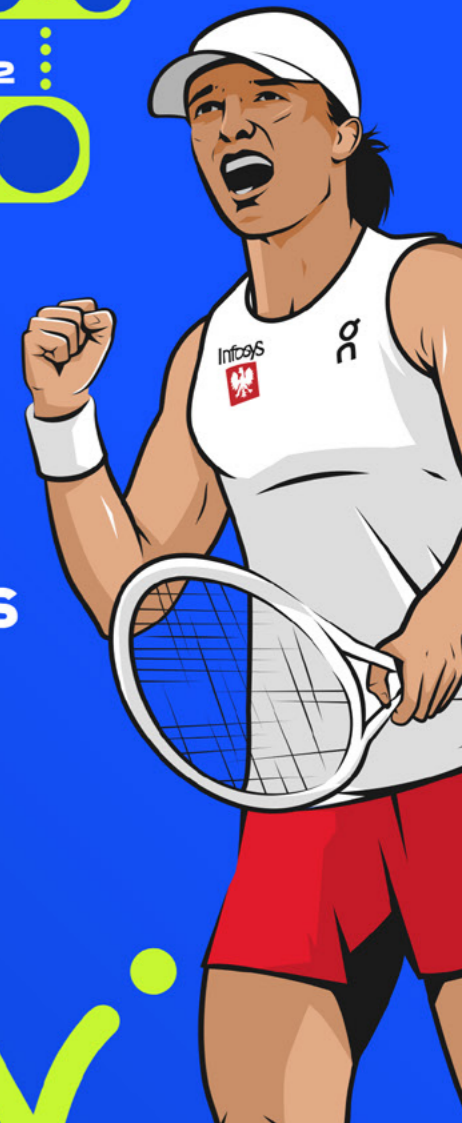
"I think this is just the beginning. The more we can get some wins under our belt, the more confidence we can [generate] as a team."

The encouragement and positivity among the group have helped cement Gibson as a mainstay on the WTA Tour over the past month, during which she won 11 of 13 matches in the Sunshine Swing.

"It's extremely uplifting when you see your close friends and even the other Aussie girls having some great success. We're all so extremely supportive of each other and we have a great little Aussie tennis community," she said.

"I think that really helps and is really positive for us to see when everyone else does well."

FORMAT EXPLAINER



PLAY-OFFS

14-16 NOVEMBER 2025

7 ROUND ROBIN EVENTS (21 NATIONS)

GROUP A WINNERS CANADA	GROUP B WINNERS POLAND
GROUP C WINNERS SWITZERLAND	GROUP D WINNERS CZECHIA
GROUP E WINNERS AUSTRALIA	GROUP F WINNERS BELGIUM
GROUP G WINNERS SLOVENIA	

- > 7 GROUPS OF 3 NATIONS, WITH WINNING TEAMS FROM 2025 REGIONAL GROUP I AND LOSING TEAMS FROM 2025 QUALIFIERS
- > GROUP WINNERS ADVANCE TO 2026 QUALIFIERS
- > REMAINING NATIONS TO COMPETE IN REGIONAL GROUP I IN 2026

QUALIFIERS

10-11 APRIL 2026

7 HOME-OR-AWAY TIES (14 NATIONS)

ITA ¹ (H)	vs	JPN
BEL (H)	vs	USA
AUS (H)	vs	GBR
KAZ (H)	vs	CAN
SLO (H)	vs	ESP
SUI (H)	vs	CZE
POL ⁷ (H)	vs	UKR

- > (H) = HOME NATION
- > CHINA (FINALS HOST NATION) QUALIFY AUTOMATICALLY FOR 2026 FINALS
- > 7 WINNING NATIONS QUALIFY FOR 2026 FINALS
- > ¹²³⁴⁵⁶⁷ DENOTES SEED NUMBER

FINALS

22-27 SEPTEMBER 2026

1 KNOCKOUT TOURNAMENT (8 NATIONS)

> HOST NATION (CHINA) JOINED BY 7 WINNING NATIONS FROM QUALIFIERS



TITLE PARTNER

GLOBAL PARTNERS



TEAM GB

target silverware

A semifinalist at three of the last four editions of the Billie Jean King Cup, Great Britain heads to Melbourne more motivated than ever to face rivals Australia in their quest for an elusive trophy. **By MATT TROLLOPE**



STEPPING UP: Harriet Dart is preparing to compete as Britain's No.1.

Among the nations to compete in the inaugural Billie Jean King Cup competition of 1963, Great Britain's story in the international teams event is one of near misses - and one with which Australia is intertwined. Team GB has reached four finals without hoisting the champions' trophy, but coming enticingly close to the silverware has only steeled the team further in 2026.

The last time Great Britain reached the final of the Billie Jean King Cup - then known as Fed Cup - was in 1981, when a team led by Virginia Wade and

Sue Barker upstaged Australia in the semifinals. The Brits very nearly returned to the final in 2022, only for Australia to reverse that 1981 result in a thrilling match tiebreak in the decisive doubles rubber.

Those are the two most recent times these nations, and fierce sporting rivals, have clashed. It sets the stage beautifully for when they resume their rivalry on 10-11 April at Melbourne's John Cain Arena, with a place in the Final 8 at stake.

Great Britain enters as the form team, ranked third internationally after reaching the semifinals in three of the past four years of BJK Cup competition.

Just six months ago, Team GB again came agonisingly close to the final. Singles spearheads Sonay Kartal and Katie Boulter won the first set of their respective singles rubbers against Emma Navarro and Jessica Pegula, only for the American stars to rebound in three sets, sending Team USA into the final.

It's a result fuelling the fire in the belly of the British team members when they recommence their quest for an elusive trophy. "We've shown how consistent we've been in recent years in this competition," said long-serving captain Anne Keothavong. "This is a competition that means a lot to us. I think as a team we have found our rhythm. Everyone's roles and responsibilities are clear. The ambition is still very much the same.

"It's a collective goal for all of us. We won't rest until we get there."

Keothavong's team in Melbourne features Harriet Dart, Katie Swan and Jodie Burrage - all former top-120 players - and junior phenom Mika Stojsavljevic, the 2024 US Open girls' singles champion.

Despite the late withdrawal of

SEIZING OPPORTUNITY: Mika Stojsavljevic, at age 17, will make her team debut.



world No.56 Sonay Kartal due to a back injury, Boulter notes there's growing strength in numbers within British women's tennis. She shared her thoughts on a recent episode of *The Sit-Down* podcast.

"British tennis in general, I feel like we've been improving for a while... it's so great to see the girls doing so well," said Boulter, who despite missing this tie against Australia owns an impressive 17-7 Billie Jean King Cup record.

"I love seeing Sonay, she is so fun to watch. I saw her win her

first title [WTA Monastir in 2024]. I'm so happy for her, she's a great person, let alone great tennis player. I'm never going to put pressure on her, but I genuinely think she's going to be a really, really good tennis player. She's already a great one, but I think she's got a lot of miles to go, and I think she's going to get better and better.

"So I'm very pleased to see her doing well."

Kartal's 2025 season was a revelation. The then 23-year-old took advantage of a lucky

loser entry into the Indian Wells main draw, reaching the fourth round. A few months later, she advanced to the same stage on home soil at Wimbledon, her best Grand Slam result vaulting her to a career-high ranking of world No.44. More success came in Beijing, where she upset 14th seed Daria Kasatkina and world No.5 Mirra Andreeva to reach the China Open quarterfinals, her best WTA 1000 tournament performance.

Her athleticism, power and creative shotmaking have made her an extremely watchable addition to the WTA Tour.

"I didn't expect to be in this position when I started the year," Kartal revealed.

"Obviously it's been pretty much a year of new experiences for me, new calendar, playing new opponents, better opponents.

"But I wanted to start the year and put myself in uncomfortable positions to get used to it. I finally feel like I'm starting to kind of find my feet. I'm feeling really happy on the court, really happy with my game, and happy with what I've achieved so far."

Her success at Billie Jean King Cup - where playing for

GREAT BRITAIN TEAM



HARRIET DART

SINGLES RANK No.181
DOUBLES RANK No.128
W-L RECORD 6-8

The former world No.70 first represented Great Britain in 2019, and in 2022 scored her biggest win in the competition over 13th-ranked Paula Badosa in Glasgow to help her team into the semifinals.



KATIE SWAN

SINGLES RANK No.262
DOUBLES RANK No.1073
W-L RECORD 4-2

On the comeback from an injury that saw the 27-year-old considering retirement, Swan will aim to build on strong results at ITF level - including recent titles in Wagga Wagga and Brisbane - in her return to the BJK Cup team.



MIKA STOJSAVLJEVIC

SINGLES RANK No.276
DOUBLES RANK No.338
W-L RECORD 0-0

The 17-year-old rising star, the US Open girls' singles champion in 2024, is making her team debut and has risen to world No.281 after being ranked outside the top 750 less than six months ago.



JODIE BURRAGE

SINGLES RANK No.495
DOUBLES RANK No.288
W-L RECORD 1-1

Burrage, who peaked at world No.85 in 2023, broke through for her first BJK Cup tie win last year, a crucial doubles victory with Katie Boulter that helped Team GB in its journey to a third semifinal in the past four years.

Rankings as of 30 March 2026

TEAM GREAT BRITAIN



TEAM HIGHS: Harriet Dart (front) and teammates celebrated success over the Netherlands last April; Jodie Burrage (below).

teammates and representing your country creates unique pressure - was especially pleasing for Kartal.

"It's these weeks that I've always said that there are a few I think highlights in people's careers," she said.

"For me, playing these events is top three. It's a huge honour to represent your country. I think these are the most enjoyable weeks, the toughest weeks."

Great Britain arrives in Melbourne having won six of its

A win over Australia would propel Team GB back into the Final 8 stage, and within striking distance of a trophy they covet.

Boulter will be watching from afar, cheering on her teammates as they continue to thrive on the biggest stage.

"I feel like we're in a great place, and we are starting to push people and get more people in the top 100," she said.

"We've obviously got a great group of girls coming through - Hannah [Klugman], Mika

"BRITISH TENNIS IN GENERAL, I FEEL LIKE WE'VE BEEN IMPROVING FOR A WHILE ... IT'S SO GREAT TO SEE THE GIRLS DOING SO WELL."

KATIE BOULTER

past eight ties, notching back-to-back semifinals.

As well as Kartal's success, Burrage combined with Boulter to win a crucial doubles tie during the 2025 Qualifiers stage, while Dart is an experienced player having featured in 10 Billie Jean King Cup ties and accruing six wins across singles and doubles.

[Stojsavljevic], Mimi [Xu] ... the list is pretty long. Great to see that we are really coming through and getting what we deserve.

"It's going to be a super fun tie. We always love playing Australia, we have battles with them. No matter what happens, it'll be a good one, it'll be a show, for sure."



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HITS DIFFERENT

TEAM Spirit

The vibes were all positive as the Culture Amp Australian Billie Jean King Cup team swept past Brazil and Portugal at last November's Play-off in Hobart.

PROUD TO REPRESENT: (L-R) Nicole Pratt was acting captain for a team comprising Kimberly Birrell, Storm Hunter, Maya Joint, Talia Gibson and Ellen Perez.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Ellen Perez and Storm Hunter, who hold a 5-1 record while teamed for their nation, form a formidable doubles duo; enthusiastic fans supported the home favourites at Hobart's Domain Tennis Centre; Talia Gibson, with Aussie No.1 Maya Joint, was warmly welcomed to the Australian team; Joint and Kimberly Birrell each won two singles rubbers in Hobart, with Joint saving a match point over Brazil's Laura Pigossi to secure Australia's win.



THE LAST TIME THEY MET

As Australia prepares to play Great Britain in the 2026 Billie Jean King Cup Qualifiers in Melbourne, we look back at the last time the two nations met in the international women's team competition. By **JACKSON MANSELL**

DOWN TO THE WIRE: Sam Stosur and Storm Hunter celebrate sending Australia through to the 2022 final after winning the deciding doubles rubber against Great Britain.

'THAT MATCH WITH STORM WAS CERTAINLY A HIGHLIGHT AND MAKING TWO FINALS IN RECENT YEARS.'

SAM STOSUR

As Sam Stosur was approaching her 60th and final Billie Jean King Cup rubber as a player, the opportunity to send the Culture Amp Australian Billie Jean King Cup team to its second final in three years beckoned.

Competing as the No.1 seed in the 2022 edition of the world team competition, Australia's first Billie Jean King Cup title in 48 years was tantalisingly within reach. However, they needed to overcome their semifinal hurdle in host nation Great Britain, who had not lost to Australia since 1977.

Two days after Stosur paired with Storm Hunter to defeat Belgians Ysaline Bonaventure and Kirsten Flipkens 6-3 6-4 in the round-robin stage, she was summoned to play doubles again. This time, it was to send Australia into the final against Switzerland, who had swept Czechia in the other semifinal.

History was on the side of Stosur, who had amassed a 9-1 doubles win-loss record throughout her 16-year career in the green and gold. Along with four Grand Slam doubles crowns, it was evident the 38-year-old was equipped to tackle the challenge.

Hunter, who again partnered with Stosur, helped Australia to an early lead following her singles rubber when she overcame a leg injury to claim a straight-sets victory over Heather Watson.

In a tense three-set battle, Stosur and Hunter's experience proved crucial in the key moments, as they held firm to triumph 7-6(1) 6-7(5) [10-6] against British pair Alicia Barnett and Olivia Nicholls.

After securing her 39th BJK Cup victory across singles and doubles - only second behind Wendy Turnbull (46) for the Australian player with the most total wins in the competition - Stosur could look back fondly on that rubber.

"I loved every minute of playing in that match against the Brits. Stormy and I actually played really well together, considering we'd never played together before [the BJK Cup Finals]," she told *tennis.com.au*.

"That match with Storm was certainly a highlight and making two finals in recent years."

Apart from sending Australia back to the final for the first time since 2019, Stosur also left the door ajar for a fairytale ending to her representative career.

'YOU DEFINITELY DREAM THAT YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE THAT FAIRYTALE FINISH. I GUESS THAT'S WHAT EVERYONE WANTS.' SAM STOSUR

"You definitely dream that you're going to have that fairytale finish. I guess that's what everyone wants, but I think very few players actually end up getting that," she said. "Even some of the greatest, Roger [Federer] and Serena [Williams], I'm sure they wish they had a bit more of a fairytale ending, but didn't quite win the last tournament they played in."

"It was a really great way, albeit not winning the final, to finish my BJK Cup playing career."

Despite falling to Switzerland in the final, Stosur uses the loss as an added incentive to rewrite history as team captain, a role she took up in December 2023.

"It was obviously disappointing not to hold the trophy up in one of those finals, especially the one in Perth [in 2019, when Australia lost to France] but that's the way it goes," she said.

"It gives me a little extra bit of motivation now as captain to try and get that done for our players."

2022 BILLIE JEAN KING CUP SEMIFINALS

AUSTRALIA D GREAT BRITAIN 2-1 GLASGOW, UNITED KINGDOM, 12 NOVEMBER 2022

Storm Hunter (AUS) d Heather Watson (GBR) 6-4 7-6(3)

Harriet Dart (GBR) d Ajla Tomljanovic (AUS) 7-6(3) 6-2

Storm Hunter (AUS)/Sam Stosur (AUS) d

Alicia Barnett (GBR)/Olivia Nicholls (GBR) 7-6(1) 6-7(5) [10-6]

TEAM EUPHORIA: Sam Stosur and Storm Hunter celebrate with teammates after their doubles win over Great Britain's Alicia Barnett and Britain's Olivia Nicholls in the BJK Cup semifinals in 2022.

ITALY'S GOLDEN AGE

After defending its 2024 title in last year's Billie Jean King Cup Final, Italy has shown the nation has levelled up in world tennis. By FELICIA ARHONTISSAS

Team Italy's calibre of tennis has truly stepped up in the last 20 years.

The nation has secured six Billie Jean King Cup titles since the event's 1963 inauguration. And those six titles? All won since 2006. That includes the back-to-back victories in 2024 and 2025.

At last year's Finals in Shenzhen, China, the Italian team - headed by world No.8 Jasmine Paolini with Sara Errani, Lucia Bronzetti, Elisabetta Cocciaretto and Tyra Caterina Grant in tow - successfully defended the nation's 2024 title.

The team hoisted a second successive trophy when Paolini beat Jessica Pegula 6-4 6-2 to take an unassailable 2-0 lead over the United States.

This was not the first meeting between Paolini and Pegula, the American having won all five of their previous battles. But the spirited Italian brought added passion at BJK Cup.

Pegula was just one of the three opponents who Paolini triumphed over in the singles matches, and she also proved a

force in doubles, pairing up with Sara Errani to eliminate Ukraine from the semifinals.

Italy's BJK Cup win capped off a strong 2025 season for Paolini, who claimed a second WTA 1000 singles title at home in Rome, and the doubles title alongside Errani. The Italian pair added to their doubles record by teaming up to claim the 2025 Roland Garros title.

Italy's successful finish in Shenzhen was boosted by Elisabetta Cocciaretto's straight-sets upset over world No.18 Emma Navarro.

"I was so happy with the win of Elisabetta," Paolini told the press of her 24-year-old teammate. "She did an amazing job, amazing match. Yeah, honestly it's better to step on court when you are 1-0 up."

The team was all smiles at the post-victory press conference.

"I'm really proud of my player[s]," said Italian captain Tathiana Garbin. "They play with passion, a lot of personality. All of them, they are a big part of the history."

Garbin competed on the pro tour from 1996 until her 2011 retirement, and reached a career-high world No.22 ranking in 2007. Following her retirement, Garbin traded the court for courtside and began her coaching journey before she was appointed Italy's BJK Cup captain.

Under Garbin's leadership, Italy was also BJK Cup finalist in 2023. Italy has also won the past three Davis Cup titles, led by powerhouse Jannik Sinner.

"It's a historical moment for Italian tennis, not just the men," said Garbin. "They showed how strong they are when they have a dream and are running for the same dream. I'm just lucky to be here with these magnificent girls."

With a legacy well and truly set to inspire the next generation of Italian players, Paolini and her teammates recognise the significance of their achievements.

"It's amazing to show how we fight on court," said Paolini. "We try to do our best. I think to play for the national team, it's something that I was watching, I was dreaming to do [when I was younger]."

"Hopefully many, many girls are going to start to play tennis. I think tennis in Italy is growing a lot. Hopefully we are going to inspire some little girls."

Garbin echoes this sentiment, noting the value of grit and teamwork.

"The girls show how it is to fight, how it is to give your heart for your country, to give a lot of [pride] to be here in the final," she said. "They show the unity."

MODERN GREATS: Six of Italy's Billie Jean King Cup triumphs have occurred this century, starting with the first celebration in 2006 and the most recent victory in 2025.



CHAMPIONS

Eleven nations have won the Billie Jean King Cup title - formerly known as Fed Cup - since the United States won the first competition in 1963.

YEAR	WINNER	SCORE	FINALIST	VENUE
2025	Italy	2-0	USA	Shenzhen Bay Sports Centre Arena, Shenzhen, China
2024	Italy	2-0	Slovakia	Martin Carpena Arena, Malaga, Spain
2023	Canada	2-0	Italy	Estadio de La Cartuja, Seville, Spain
2022	Switzerland	2-0	Australia	Emirates Arena, Glasgow, United Kingdom
2021	Russian Tennis Federation	2-0	Switzerland	O2 Arena, Prague, Czechia
2020	No competition			
2019	France	3-2	Australia	RAC Arena, Perth, Australia
2018	Czech Republic	3-0	USA	O2 Arena, Prague, Czechia
2017	USA	3-2	Belarus	Chizhovka Arena, Minsk, Belarus
2016	Czech Republic	3-2	France	Rhenus Sport, Strasbourg, France
2015	Czech Republic	3-2	Russia	O2 Arena, Prague, Czech Republic
2014	Czech Republic	3-1	Germany	O2 Arena, Prague, Czech Republic
2013	Italy	4-0	Russia	Tennis Club Cagliari, Cagliari, Italy
2012	Czech Republic	3-1	Serbia	O2 Arena, Prague, Czech Republic
2011	Czech Republic	3-2	Russia	Olympic Stadium, Moscow, Russia
2010	Italy	3-1	USA	San Diego Sports Arena, San Diego, CA, USA
2009	Italy	4-0	USA	Circolo del Tennis "Rocco Polimeni", Reggio Calabria, Italy
2008	Russia	4-0	Spain	Club de Campo - Villa de Madrid, Madrid, Spain
2007	Russia	4-0	Italy	Small Sports Arena "Luzhniki", Moscow, Russia
2006	Italy	3-2	Belgium	Spioudome, Charleroi, Belgium
2005	Russia	3-2	France	Roland Garros, Paris, France
2004	Russia	3-2	France	Ice Stadium Krylatskoe, Moscow, Russia
2003	France	4-1	USA	Olympic Stadium, Moscow, Russia
2002	Slovakia	3-1	Spain	Palacio de Congresos de Maspalomas, Gran Canaria, Spain
2001	Belgium	2-1	Russia	Parque Ferial Juan Carlos 1, Madrid, Spain
2000	USA	5-0	Spain	Mandalay Bay Resort, Las Vegas, NV, USA
1999	USA	4-1	Russia	Taube Tennis Stadium, Stanford, CA, USA
1998	Spain	3-2	Switzerland	Palexpo Hall, Geneva, Switzerland
1997	France	4-1	Netherlands	Brabant Hall, 's-Hertogenbosch, Netherlands
1996	USA	5-0	Spain	Convention Centre, Atlantic City, USA
1995	Spain	3-2	USA	Valencia T.C., Valencia, Spain
1994	Spain	3-0	USA	Waldstadion T.C., Frankfurt, Germany
1993	Spain	3-0	Australia	Waldstadion T.C., Frankfurt, Germany
1992	Germany	2-1	Spain	Waldstadion T.C., Frankfurt, Germany
1991	Spain	2-1	USA	City of Nottingham T.C., Great Britain
1990	USA	2-1	USSR	Peachtree W.O.T., Atlanta, GA, USA
1989	USA	3-0	Spain	Ariake Forest Park Centre, Tokyo, Japan
1988	Czechoslovakia	2-1	USSR	Flinders Park, Melbourne, Australia
1987	West Germany	2-1	USA	Hollyburn C.C., Vancouver, Canada
1986	USA	3-0	Czechoslovakia	Stvanice Stadium, Prague, Czechoslovakia
1985	Czechoslovakia	2-1	USA	Nagoya Green T.C., Nagoya, Japan
1984	Czechoslovakia	2-1	Australia	Pinheiros Sports Club, Sao Paulo, Brazil
1983	Czechoslovakia	2-1	Germany F.R.	Albisguetli T.C., Zurich, Switzerland
1982	USA	3-0	Germany F.R.	Decathlon Club, Santa Clara, CA, USA
1981	USA	3-0	Great Britain	Tamagawa-en Racquet Club, Tokyo, Japan
1980	USA	3-0	Australia	Rot-Weiss T.C., Berlin, West Germany
1979	USA	3-0	Australia	RSHE Club Campo, Madrid, Spain
1978	USA	2-1	Australia	Kooyong Club, Melbourne, Australia
1977	USA	2-1	Australia	Devonshire Park, Eastbourne, Great Britain
1976	USA	2-1	Australia	Spectrum Stadium, Philadelphia, PA, USA
1975	Czechoslovakia	3-0	Australia	Aixoise C.C., Aix-en-Provence, France
1974	Australia	2-1	USA	Naples T.C., Naples, Italy
1973	Australia	3-0	South Africa	Bad Homburg T.C., West Germany
1972	South Africa	2-1	Great Britain	Ellis Park, Johannesburg, South Africa
1971	Australia	3-0	Great Britain	Royal King's Park T.C., Perth, Australia
1970	Australia	3-0	Germany F.R.	Freiburg T.C., Freiburg, West Germany
1969	USA	2-1	Australia	Athens T.C., Athens, Greece
1968	Australia	3-0	Netherlands	Stade Roland Garros, Paris, France
1967	USA	2-0	Great Britain	Blau-Weiss T.C., Berlin, West Germany
1966	USA	3-0	Germany F.R.	Turin Press Sporting Club, Turin, Italy
1965	Australia	2-1	USA	Kooyong Club, Melbourne, Australia
1964	Australia	2-1	USA	Germantown Cricket Club, Philadelphia, PA, USA
1963	USA	2-1	Australia	The Queen's Club, London, Great Britain

THE WORLD CUP OF TENNIS

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JEAN
KING** *Cup.*

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