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An interview with:

THE GERMAN FED CUP TEAM

THE MODERATOR: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to this morning's press conference with the German team. Introducing the team, we have Tatjana Malek, Julia Goerges, Barbara Rittner, Anna-Lena Groenefeld, Sabine Lisicki.

Questions for the German team, please.

Q. Do you consider yourselves underdogs for the match?

CAPTAIN RITTNER: Well, of course we are underdogs. You have a great No. 1 player with Lindsay Davenport. She has won everything you possibly could. She came back strong again last year, and she's already won a tournament this year.

Well, any point we can make or any match we can win is a good win. But we give our best and we see how it goes at the end.

Q. To any of the five of you. Are you surprised at Lindsay's comeback, how well she's done so far?

ANNA-LENA GROENEFELD: Well, I think it's great that she's coming back because she is such a great champion. She has won so much.

Now after she's having her baby, I think it's great to see her be back like this and be strong like that. I think it's amazing.

You can see she's really having fun out on the court so it's great to have her back on the tour.

Q. Could one of the players address the first question about Germany's chances in the match?

TATJANA MALEK: Yes, I think we are practicing this week a lot. We have fun this week.

We will try our best in the weekend. Yeah, then we will see how it goes.

So I think there is a chance and we will try our best, yeah.

Q. Are you at all disappointed in this rather chilly Southern California weather that you're having?

CAPTAIN RITTNER: We didn't really expect it to be that cold. Actually, it has two sides. The bad side is that it is pretty cold, but the good side is we have to go shopping and buy some warm stuff. We already started yesterday (laughter).

There's a pretty nice Abercrombie shop around here. We're going there again. We didn't expect it, but it's okay. Yesterday was okay. As long as it doesn't rain too much, as long as it stays dry during the weekend, we will be fine.

Q. How much did you spend at Abercrombie?

BARBARA MALEK: That's my secret (laughter).

Q. Just a general question on the Fed Cup. Who do you see as the overall favorite in this year's tournament?

CAPTAIN RITTNER: Well, obviously it's always up to whom of the top players are participating for their country. Obviously the Russians are very, very strong.

But if you take the U.S. the Williams sisters, and Lindsay would be playing on one team, then they are very strong.

Two, it could be a really nice -- I don't hope it's gonna be the final, but it could be a very nice match, the U.S. for example, against the Russians with Sharapova and all the top 10 players playing.

But, unfortunately, they are not always playing, then erring can change quickly. Italy was the underdog last year and the year before, and they could even win it one year.

It's different. It's not a normal tournament.



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The team spirit counts. That's what we hope for during this weekend.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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