

Fed Cup players praise Glen Iris venue

BY ROY WARD

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FED Cup tennis stars gave Glen Iris Valley Recreation Centre the thumbs up following their visit over the weekend.

Australia's Jarmila Groth, the world No.30, and Olga Savchuk, Ukraine's No.2 player, both praised the venue following their singles match on Saturday morning.

Tennis Australia officials chose the Mount Waverley-based centre because it could be quickly converted to clay and it proved a warm and intimate setting for the tie, which decided which of the two sides would stay in the Fed Cup World Group and which would be relegated to the second tier. The Fed Cup is the women's equivalent of the Davis Cup.

TA laid two clay courts at the centre, one on centre court and one extra court for practices.

The clay was laid over the centre's en-tout-cas courts while a portable grandstand was erected next to centre court.

Groth said the new surface played well and she enjoyed the experience.

"It was cute," Groth said after she beat Savchuk in the opening tie 6-1, 6-1.

"It was like playing on a local court, like a home court with your club members watching. I liked having a good crowd there to cheer me on."

Savchuk said she enjoyed playing at a smaller venue. "It's much different to the Australian Open," she joked. "It played well, there were lots of people watching. It felt like home."

Glen Iris Valley president Peter Gillieron said he was ecstatic with how the event had gone.

"We couldn't have asked for it to have gone any better," he said.

"We just provided the venue and TA has run the whole thing. Some of our members got to test out the practice clay court before the event and were thrilled to play on it.

"We are hopeful we will get to keep the clay court for a few days after the tie finishes so more of our members can get the chance to play on an international court."

The tie went down to the wire yesterday with Ukraine winning the doubles match to claim the tie 3-2.



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Returning star: Australian player Jarmila Groth returns a shot during Fed Cup play last Saturday. Picture: Mal Fairclough/The Age

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