

# Rolex Paris Masters

Friday, 5 November 2021

Paris, France

## James Duckworth

Press Conference



H. HURKACZ/J. Duckworth

6-2, 6-7, 7-5

THE MODERATOR: Questions in English.

**Q. Obviously quite devastated, but could you maybe just go back and talk about this match and how close it really was.**

JAMES DUCKWORTH: Yeah. 5-All, deuce, he came up with a good pass there. Yeah, obviously that last game wasn't much in it. Yeah, it was a tough way to lose. It was, yeah, really close match after the first set. Yeah.

**Q. What were you saying to yourself to encourage yourself to stay in after the first set and turn it around in such a tremendous manner? I mean, there was some fantastic stuff from you.**

JAMES DUCKWORTH: Yeah, look, basically after the first set, all my energy was just focusing on holding serve. That was just my main goal.

You know, at the very least, just get it to a tiebreaker, and, yeah, let's just try and build pressure by holding. I played decent game to break to go up 4-2. Actually don't think I played too bad of a game at 4-2. Missed a smash where I just completely lost vision in the lights. 30-All. Played a good first point. Got a bit stiff to lose that one.

Yeah, just really focused on holding my serve and I was able to do that and accumulate pressure that way. Yeah, got up a break, but then played a pretty decent tiebreaker.

**Q. As far as your feeling is concerned, when you're in a situation of a final set like today and your opponent is serving first, does that have any bearing on you? Do you feel any additional pressure, or you just got to play it as it is?**

JAMES DUCKWORTH: I mean, at the start when I win the toss, I always choose to serve. I always like to be in front. I think most people like to be in front. But, yeah

(indiscernible) sort of thing. Obviously there are plenty of sets where you're not serving first. That's just the way it is.

In that set my focus was holding serve. That was the big thing. He was serving well in that third set and, yeah, there were plenty of games where I didn't get many looks.

Got that little half chance at 5-All, and, you know, I wouldn't change anything. I think I did the right thing. Second serve, come in, make him come up with a pass, which he did. Yeah, look, maybe two cheap points at 6-5 sort of hurt me. Probably a little bit unlucky on that match point.

**Q. Were there any nerves at that stage?**

JAMES DUCKWORTH: Look, I would say probably more at the start of the match. Yeah, there is sort of always a few. Yeah, 6-5 in the third set.

**Q. Looking at your whole week, what are you going to take out of this? You'll be in the top 50 for the first time next week. Another step forward, isn't it, in what's been a remarkable year?**

JAMES DUCKWORTH: Yeah, look, obviously, tough to sort of be super positive right now, straight after 7-5 in the third loss, for the chance to make a semi in a Masters Series. I don't know who is winning, but probably to play Novak would have been pretty cool.

But, yeah, look, in a couple of days, I'll definitely take a lot of positives from this week. And, yeah, the last, since sort of playing Miami I feel like I have been playing some good tennis and improving. There's still a few areas I need to get better at to get higher up the rankings. Yeah, looking forward to working on that and getting a good sort of block in before the Aussie summer.

**Q. Clearly you're the No. 1 Aussie on tour at the moment the way you're playing. Why aren't you in the Davis Cup team? How frustrating is it?**

JAMES DUCKWORTH: Look, yeah, I don't pick the team. You'd have to ask Lleyton the reasons why.

I love representing my country. I got the chance to play Davis Cup just before the pandemic hit in March 2020. That was an awesome experience, getting my gold jacket and my number. And then got the chance to play the Olympics this year. That was also really cool, something that I'll never ever forget. I'd love to do again.

Yeah, so representing Australia is something that I have always wanted to do. When I was young, the big events where I would watch would be all the Grand Slams and Davis Cup. Any chance that I could get to representing my country, I would grab it with both hands. But yeah, that was just the decision Lleyton made.

I think I should be able to get a run in ATP Cup, so that would be good. Looking forward to that. If we have to play another tie in March next year, I'll see what I can do, try my best to get selected then.

**Q. Now that you have had this injury-free year, have made this incredible progress, you're a top-50 player, where do you think you can go now? You'll be 30 next season. Do you think your best tennis is still to come? You'll get even higher in the rankings?**

JAMES DUCKWORTH: Yeah, I hope so. You know, I still feel like there is quite a few areas in my game that I can get better at. I'll be trying to do that in this offseason.

I've got my two weeks' hotel quarantine now, but then I will sort of get five weeks to prepare for the Aussie summer. I'll work really hard with my coach, Wayne Arthurs. Yeah, the goal is just to keep improving my game. That's been the focus my whole year, and I think if I can continue improving my game, the ranking will continue to go up.

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