

BNP Paribas Open

Saturday, March 8, 2025

Jack Draper

Press Conference



J. DRAPER/J. Fonseca

6-4, 6-0

THE MODERATOR: Congrats, Jack. Impeccable performance from you today on court. How did you withstand Joao's attack and get the win under your belt?

JACK DRAPER: Yeah. I mean, obviously Joao's got a lot of eyeballs on him, obviously young player coming through, causing a lot of noise. You know, I was expecting a really tough match, and it was. Like, the scoreline would suggest potentially otherwise. But I felt like the first set we were both playing some really good tennis. He was hitting some really powerful shots.

It was tough to sort of get a feel of the match, but then I felt like towards the end of the first set my energy picked up. I started to feel like, you know, tactically I was aware of a few more things. You know, I just was able to get on top of him in the second set and run away with it a little bit.

Just very proud of my performance and happy with the way I dealt with the situation and the occasion, and the crowd and everything.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. After what happened with the preseason and then after Australia, are you surprised at how well you have been able to play in Qatar and then here?

JACK DRAPER: I mean, not particularly. I was surprised at my result in Australia, because, you know, I wasn't able to do any preseason, wasn't able to train. I was on a really good trajectory at the end of last year obviously, building a lot of confidence, winning a lot of matches. You know, finally feeling like I had found my blueprint of my game and the way I want to keep on improving everything. Just by being injured in that period, I wasn't able to keep going. I was, you know, stopped still.

Went to Australia, and my tennis was really, really poor there, and I felt awful about my game. But one thing it gave me by coming through those matches was a lot of

mental resilience and a lot of newfound sort of what I was physically capable of putting my body through. That was so good for me.

I knew all I needed to do then was just go back and get my training underway, get physically in the gym, do all my conditioning, but get my quality right on court, get my consistency better day in, day out. What I need then is to play matches and hopefully win matches. Doha gave me that.

So I've been back on that trajectory that I want to be again.

Q. Are you managing your schedule a little bit differently this year to sort of stay level throughout the season?

JACK DRAPER: No. Like, I hoped that I would have played more than I have done, so far. I've obviously played, this is my third tournament, but the decision not to play Dubai and obviously before Australia and just after Australia, not playing Davis Cup, they were decisions based on my injury in late December. You know, it was a pretty serious injury that, you know, I have to look after for the rest of my career.

It's important that I get my scheduling right. Obviously I know tennis is a relentless sport, and especially with what's coming up now with Indian Wells, Miami, and then hopefully for the rest of the year, there are so many options, so many tournaments.

It just didn't seem right to start the season to put my body through, risk it. Because the main thing I want to do is when I am playing I want to go out there and get it right and compete harder, and hopefully go deep in these tournaments now.

Q. Wanted to go back to Australia and the three consecutive five-setters, how important they are to you. Really what I want to know is, how do you think moving forward they will help you? Did you surprise yourself? Did you feel like you broke through some barrier that maybe you were wondering if you ever could break through by winning those matches?

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JACK DRAPER: Yeah, 100%. I think, you know, I've put my body and mind through a lot since I've come on to the tour. One thing for me that always scared me was the thought of playing long matches and the thought of, you know, pushing my body long, through long matches, you know, deep into tournaments and all that sort of stuff. Naturally, I'm human. I don't like to feel uncomfortable.

That's something that I know if I want to be a top player, had to get used to feeling uncomfortable and going through pain and feeling like, you know, I'd have to come through a lot of adversity in matches and all those types of things.

It's something that, you know, has got better and better, but I still, there was a question mark a little bit around, you know, I'd see other players go four hours, five hours, and not cramp and all that sort of stuff and come through the matches. The longest matches I had played was kind of two-and-a-half hours and that sort of thing.

By going out to Australia and playing those matches four hours, four hours, four hours, that was so good for me mentally, emotionally, physically. You know, it just gave me the confidence now and moving forward that I can do that. I'm strong.

And I think also just, you know, hopefully starting to build a reputation as someone who's not going to get injured and not unfit and not going to fade away. I want to be someone who's really strong, and to be competitive and to have no weakness in my game. That was an area I felt other players would look at me and think, oh, he can get tired.

I want just to keep on improving that area and keep on going. Yeah, gave me a lot of confidence.

Q. With your age, mostly you have played against older opponents the last few years. Just wonder what it's like to play someone five years younger than you. Does the dynamic change a bit or is it something you don't really notice on the court?

JACK DRAPER: It's weird, as a junior when you're playing under-18s and stuff, you kind of think about it a lot, is he younger than me, is someone older than me. Like, what does that mean. I think when it gets to the tour level and when you see a top-100 player in front of you and you're playing these events, all that goes out the window. It doesn't really matter. They're here on their merit, they're here on their right. They can play tennis to beat you.

So in terms of that, like, I actually didn't think about that once, in all honesty. I know he's a young player coming up, but I have respect for him in the way that I have respect

for everyone else in this draw.

I know they're a great player, and age goes out the window, you know. I just focus on who I'm playing in front of me, what they're bringing to the court, and how I can beat them.

Q. Bear with me, I'm old, I forget things. Which hip is it?

JACK DRAPER: My right hip.

Q. You said it was something you have to manage for the rest of your career. Is it something you could have surgery or something that would fix it full time or is it just something that you are going to have to put up with?

JACK DRAPER: Yeah, I mean, I think every athlete has areas of their body which they naturally have to work on more than others. You know, that all links to how someone moves, you know, how their body function is.

You know, with my hip, I've naturally over time had a few more injuries in that area, and that's purely because it's just been an area of weakness maybe since I was younger, I've had to work on it a lot.

So obviously it's broken down a few times. But, you know, all those things for the future I think is a question mark in terms of surgery or something. It's just how I manage it best moving forward and making decisions like not playing Dubai, you know, when my body has been weak and when I haven't had that big load through me.

You know, I think if I can get things right and if I can focus on my health and focus on getting stronger in those areas, hopefully it doesn't hinder me moving forward.

Then again, we never know what's going to happen in sport and in tennis on what's around the corner. So I'll just do my best to keep on protecting that area, making it strong, and we'll see in the future how it goes.

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