

BNP Paribas Open

Saturday, March 15, 2025

Jack Draper

Press Conference



J. DRAPER/C. Alcaraz

6-1, 0-6, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: First of all, congrats, Jack. Your first ATP Masters 1000 final. Also, next week, you will be in top 10 for the first time in PIF ATP rankings. What are the emotions running through you right now?

JACK DRAPER: Yeah, I feel incredible obviously to beat Carlos in this sort of stage in the tournament on that court. You know, I have watched the top players in the world play on that court for many, many years now, and it feels amazing, honestly, both those things.

Yeah, obviously I've got one more to go tomorrow, so all my sort of feelings and emotions on that, but obviously very proud of myself and the achievement.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Congrats. In his press conference, Carlos said he partly at least attributes his loss to the fact that before the match he was worried about playing you. Do you take that as a huge compliment?

JACK DRAPER: Yeah, of course. You know, before I play Carlos, there is always doubts, as well. For every player, every player I play at this level I'm always fearful I'm going to lose, and I think that gives me a big competitive edge that I feel on edge all the time, because I know how well these guys play. Especially when you're playing top players in the world, you know, belief is a big thing.

You know, a lot of the times I'm sure players go on court and believe they can't win against top players. You know, I have played Carlos a few times now, and, you know, I have watched him on the TV the whole of this week, and I thought that he's playing incredible tennis, but I did believe that I could at least cause him some problems today with the way I have been playing.

Then obviously start of the match I was a bit -- I was expecting him to come out playing incredible, but obviously there was a few errors here and there, and his energy was

a bit low. It was just a crazy match.

Yeah, it's a big compliment. Obviously that and testament and obviously to the way I have been playing.

Q. Given how strange the match was in terms of the scoreline, how did you manage to keep your focus so controlled to be able to come back from losing the second set? And what did you say to yourself in between the second and third set?

JACK DRAPER: Yeah, like I said, obviously the first set, came out, I think his energy was a bit low, couple of errors here and there. Obviously that carried on to the first game of the second, as well, and I didn't get that game.

I did feel like, you know, all of a sudden the occasion, I feel like obviously had a lot of different experiences. This is a new one for me. Obviously big match for myself. I knew that if I won I would be top 10, and playing a semifinal against Carlos, sometimes that makes you feel certain things. I definitely felt like my energy really dropped. I kind of felt a bit lethargic and my legs stopped working, and obviously that's not ideal when you want to really go for it and stuff. Like I said, all new experiences for me.

Then, yeah, obviously after that set went away, I went to the toilet and just, yeah, kind of looked at myself in the mirror and was like, You need to really, you need to really get my stuff together (smiling).

Q. Well put.

JACK DRAPER: Yeah, there's no time to be tired, there's no time to be sort of thinking about being down here. There is lots of tennis still to be played. He's obviously feeling stuff himself. You know, I just had to really knuckle down and make sure I brought lots of energy to the third.

Yeah, that was it, really.

Q. A little bit of coming of age?

JACK DRAPER: Maybe (smiling).

Q. Jack, you'll put a lefty back in the top 10 when you get in there. Are you surprised there aren't more? How much do you think your leftiness is an advantage for you as you play these big players?

JACK DRAPER: Yeah, I'm sure Shelton will be in the top 10 soon. I think he's an incredible player. Obviously Shapovalov has been there. He's back playing some really high-level stuff. And Humbert, as well. Still some really good left-handers about.

I think, weirdly enough, my leftiness is a big plus, but I think the fact I'm actually a right-hander, so I think that really helps me, because my forehand has been improving all the time. My forehand is naturally the shot where, you know, I'm not as comfortable. It's always been my backhand which has been the shot, like, I can hit with my eyes closed, you know.

I really have no problem against any player with their forehand into my backhand. Usually that's something where players struggle.

But with myself, that's a big strength of mine. So I think the mix of that is a big advantage.

Q. In the third set, after you did knuckle down, there has been instances, like every tennis player has, where in those moments you don't feel it. What got you over the line even as he was surging again? You wobbled there trying to serve it out the first time. Did you have another talk with yourself?

JACK DRAPER: I mean, I felt like I put so much energy into just trying to get myself back to mentally, you know, going about things the right way. It's always tough in tennis matches when you have a big momentum shift against you to then come back and find a way to sort of get yourself back to operating on a good standard again.

Yeah, I mean, the game at 4-2, I kind of put a lot of energy into trying to break that game. Obviously we got to deuce and then he played some really good points to go ad-up a few times.

Then I obviously got over the line on that game. I think that push kind of took a lot out of myself, so even at the change of ends I was kind of, like, you know, I just felt quite tired when I went out for 5-3, just on an emotional level, just because I tried so hard to get that break.

Then he's obviously come out with some good shots and that game went. I knew that come 5-4, I'd be feeling better, and I think from the first point of 5-4, I lost the point but I played a really -- I had a lot of energy. I missed a forehand

but it was with good intent. Yeah, I felt good that I was going to be able to close it out at 5-4.

Q. Jack, can you describe what it felt like when that match point was completed? You were obviously ecstatic. What was the feeling like? Then transferring that and that sort of emotion and the mental state into the next match against Rune?

JACK DRAPER: Yeah, lots of things. Relief, joy, you know, just a huge feeling of big emotion. I have been through a lot in my few years with playing and especially the last ones with some injuries, and, you know, a lot of hard work to sort of always try and get back to a decent level.

You know, it was my goal at the end of last year that I obviously had some good results, but I want to really achieve some consistency and get to the point where I'm pushing these top players in the world, you know, in the biggest tournaments.

That's the goal of mine. So to obviously come through the match today, that means so much to me, especially obviously against a player of Carlos' caliber.

And then, yeah, I'm looking forward to tomorrow already. I'll make sure I look after my recovery, not thinking about too much of -- that's the thing with tennis. You've got to get over wins like today, and all my focus and energy is on making sure that I do all the right things to give myself the best chance to win the tournament tomorrow.

Q. Obviously you have had some great runs, including in New York, but this is something else. Can you just talk about how you have come to this point? Mostly physical, some techniques, mental side? Secondly, could you tell us the story of how a right-handed player become a lefty?

JACK DRAPER: Yeah, I mean, I think at the back end of last year, after I won my first title in Stuttgart, I started to feel more confident in myself. I think a big part of being a young player is feeling like you belong. Obviously you go in the changing rooms and you're seeing all the players you have watched on TV and all the players you admire. You know, you kind of feel like, am I good enough to be here?

So winning a couple of titles last year and making the semis of the U.S., that really helped me to, you know, believe that I could be right up there at the top of the game as well, and making top 20 at the end of last year.

Then carrying on into this year, building confidence in

Melbourne in my body, winning those five-setters, making a final in Doha, I feel like the consistency of what I'm trying to do on the tennis court is improving all the time at the highest level. That's given me so much confidence.

I'd say it's just kind of experience at the highest level against the top players and the confidence I'm getting from that, which has helped me to get to this point.

In terms of the right-handed stuff, yeah, I don't know. I think I write right-handed, I kick a ball right-footed, I do everything right-handed. I think when I was younger, I used to hit on a wall, you know, and I just picked up with the left hand, and that's the way I have always done it. I could never throw with my left hand until I was about 15. I had to really work on it, which is weird because of my serve, but I don't know. Just a weird guy (smiling).

Q. Early in the third set, situation with the double bounce, that was a big break for you. It took a lot of presence of mind to kind of stick with it and get the full process in terms of the two reviews and everything.

JACK DRAPER: Yeah.

Q. How do you see? Are you happy with what the rule is? You had a tough one with the double bounce in the past.

JACK DRAPER: Yeah, obviously I felt like, you know, obviously we do have the review here, and that's a really good thing.

It was a tough situation, because obviously felt like I got the ball up, and then also, I know that Carlos had only just got to it and he missed it wide. So I asked Mohamed to look at the video review and was it clear that I got it up? But then it was the fact that I don't think Carlos really had a good play on the ball and he missed it.

So I asked him to review that, to see what he thought of that, and then the only other thing after that was, I asked Carlos at the net whether he felt like Mohamed, when he interrupted, whenever that was during the point, affected Carlos' shot, because he missed it, but he might have missed it because someone might have said Mohamed might have called it and that put him off.

But he said it didn't, so I think the call was right. Yeah, like, I think it's really good for tennis that we've got the video reviews.

Obviously I went through it at the end of last year with Felix, and yeah, it was a tough decision and tough to not have the video review to see in that moment. So I think it

was good that we had it here.

Yeah, I think it was the right call.

Q. But it was important for your sense of fair play to check with Carlos to see if he was cool with it?

JACK DRAPER: No, of course. Of course it was. Obviously at the end of the last year with the whole Felix stuff, getting called a cheat and all this sort of stuff, but there was no review. There was no stuff.

So yeah, of course, like, it is something I try and do and try and be fair and try and make the right calls.

Yeah, if Carlos would have said to me that it would have affected his shot, and what have you, then of course I would have replayed the point.

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