

# Davis Cup Finals

Thursday, 23 November 2023

## Team Great Britain

### Jack Draper

#### Press Conference

M. KECMANOVIC/J. Draper

7-6, 7-6

Team Great Britain - 0

Team Serbia - 1

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Jack.

**Q. Bad luck, Jack. Felt like you didn't manage to get into his service games at all. Was that kind of the problem?**

JACK DRAPER: Yeah. Yeah, he served, I'm not sure what his percentage was, but seemed like he served at a very high percentage.

I wouldn't say I returned amazingly well today, but when I did get the return back on court, seemed like he had the answer most of the time as well. Yeah, he was definitely better behind the serve today than I was, for sure.

**Q. We were a bit surprised to see his name on the team sheet. Were you surprised? How much did your preparation just take in all three possible opponents?**

JACK DRAPER: No, I actually, the team -- and it seemed like you guys thought that Djere would play. I actually thought that he would play, because his tennis level, I have hit with him a lot, played him earlier on this year, had to play an amazingly solid match to beat him. His tennis level at times is, I think, top 10 in the world. He doesn't miss many balls. His ball speed is good off both sides, very consistent.

I think he has just yet to find maybe a season where he's been consistently good. But I know that when he plays well, he's very tough to beat. Not surprised that he was picked to play me.

**Q. Jack, how did you find the whole atmosphere? Probably a bit different even to Manchester, stepping out there. Was it a learning experience, something you**



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**enjoyed, or how do you feel?**

JACK DRAPER: Yeah, actually almost seemed a bit louder here than Manchester. I think the Serbians are obviously quite vocal. Seemed like we had a really, really good crowd of people.

So yeah, like, overall, you know, obviously I'm focused on the match, but again, it's an invaluable experience for me at a young age.

I think also, you know, it's difficult knowing that Cam has to go and play Djokovic after, and that's kind of seemingly a must-win match for me. Who knows. I'll back Cam and let's see how he does, but it's definitely a tough challenge to go out there knowing that there is a lot more almost pressure on me to win the match.

As I said yesterday, that's the kind of pressure that if I want to be a top player, I have to cope with and have to perform under, and yeah, it's tough not to get the win today.

**Q. You seem a little bit sniffy. Have you got a bit of a cold or anything? How are you feeling physically?**

JACK DRAPER: No, I feel good. It's obviously just seemed very, very hot in there. Obviously a lot of pressure on the match. I gave it my all.

Yeah, sometimes after a match, you kind of don't feel great about yourself, so yeah, have to pick myself up. I will go and support Cam after I'm done here. Yeah, it's not easy losing a match like that.

**Q. Whatever happens in the Cam and Novak match, we are coming to the end of the season. What is it that you probably look to work on in the next few weeks before Australia?**

JACK DRAPER: Yeah, I think I'll, regardless of what happens, I'll have some time off. Since I got injured with my shoulder in May, you know, I was kind of staring down the barrel a bit, hadn't played all year. Seemed like my ranking was just dropping all the time.



When I finally got back to playing, I was ranked 130. It was a real tough challenge to sort of get back with the challengers and mentally have to deal with that real drop.

But kind of since May, since Wimbledon, I haven't had a break. Coming here feels a bit tired. I've been going for three, four months nonstop. Not saying that's the reason I lost today, but I'm definitely going to enjoy a little break to reset myself.

I think in terms of gaining perspective, I'm really proud of the improvements I made this year. I think, you know, even today, though I lost the match, I'm trying to play in the right way. I didn't serve great, but I'm trying to look to come forward a lot more.

Definitely tactically is an area that me and my coach have been speaking about, because at this level everyone plays such a high level that you have to work out tactically how to beat them a bit quicker.

But I think in terms of the way I'm playing, I'm proud of the improvements I have made in coming forward and using my size a little bit more.

Yeah, I think it's only exciting with me. I've got so much to improve on. That's an amazing thing. Just reset and look for improvements, and yeah, I think I can be proud of the way I'm going about my business and I'll just keep doing that.

**Q. I wonder how you felt physically in the second set? There was a couple of points where it looked a little bit labored or you felt a little bit physically pushed? I might be seeing that wrong.**

JACK DRAPER: Yeah, I mean, sometimes in a lot of these matches, like, we work hard, it's not often physical. It's more mental. There was obviously a lot of pressure on the match. There's nerves. Second Davis Cup tie. Playing against a really good player, difficult match, you know, there's a lot of nervous energy.

So I felt like at times I was a bit flat and I had to pick myself up for the match. That's what nerves do. They make you a bit flat, make you a bit slow at times. I was trying to get myself up for it and trying to get the guys to get behind me a bit more.

There was definitely a few ups-and-downs in the way I was feeling physically, because that's what nerves do. They just take over sometimes.

Again, like, I gave myself the best opportunity to stay in the match. Gave myself chances. I think I got beaten by a

better player today, to be honest.

**Q. Always very tough to absorb a defeat like that, especially when you're hearing your opponents and Serbs celebrating. What did Leon say to you on the chair and what reassurance did he give you?**

JACK DRAPER: After the match?

Yeah, from a certain perspective, I can't give any more. I prepared the best I can for this week. I went straight from Sofia, played a lot of matches there, and I got straight back to training, knowing that obviously Dan was injured. Wasn't sure about Andy.

But I have been preparing excellently well. My training every day has been great. Yeah, today I just came up short. I think I gave it all I had mentally. I didn't do a few things as well as I wanted to, but he played a great match and I think that was Leon's message.

It was a positive one. Look, you gave it your all. These things happen. That's the sport. I've just got to keep working. That's it, really.

**Q. If Britain were to go out this evening, I'm sure the LTA would do a postmortem into the Davis Cup campaign. Looking ahead, do you think Leon is the right man to go forward? Do you want to see a change, or do you think continuity and stability is important?**

JACK DRAPER: Obviously I'm new to the team. I haven't been here in the past. Obviously there was some stuff that Dan said around the Davis Cup and stuff, but in my opinion, Leon is excellent. Like, he does an amazing job keeping all the players happy. He's extremely professional.

The whole support staff is amazing. He gets the best out of the players. Obviously if it wasn't for the injuries, Cam and Andy would be here. That's our top four players.

Other nations don't often get all their best players because maybe there is something wrong with the team, but he creates an amazing environment. We all want to play for him, all want to work hard. He only is positive around us in my opinion.

It's up to him if he wants to step down or not, but I'd be very happy if he stayed on and we can keep playing, because he's, like I said, he's a great captain, a good guy. He gives us a lot.

**Q. Between now and Australia, are you going to train**

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**in the UK? Who do you think you will take with you on the plane to Australia?**

JACK DRAPER: Yeah, I'll be in the UK. I was potentially going to go away to train, but at the last minute the UTS in London called me up and said someone has withdrawn so if I could participate. Seemed like a good opportunity to play some matches against top players as a bit of a breakup in my training.

So, yeah, I've got four, five weeks to work really hard. Then on the flight to Australia. I'll just go with my coach, James. I'll have a physio out there with me.

You know, I've got a great team around me, and I will just keep on improving, stay injury-free and, like, I'm in a really good place in general.

**Q. You talked about just trying to play in the right way. Seems like part of that is that you're incorporating more dropshots. You played quite a few today. Wondering what it's been like incorporating that into your game and backing yourself to do it in a big match under pressure?**

JACK DRAPER: Not so much the dropshots. I mean, today actually, like, a few of my dropshots were executed really poorly at tough times. Usually I use them in the right way, actually.

But playing the right way, you know, I have always been someone, especially last year, I have came up short against very good players because I have not been brave enough to come forward and use my power and my ball speed and all these things.

So that's been a real shift. At the back end of this year, I've started to really back myself and come forward a lot more. I thought he passed really well today. Sometimes just didn't get quite on the volley.

But, yeah, I think again I did that pretty well today. I came forward a fair bit. I just didn't execute at times. If I keep on playing that way, I can only get better and hopefully against better players it starts to pay off.

So, yeah, just keep on working to come forward and be more aggressive, because that's ultimately where the game's going.

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