

Adelaide International

Friday, 12 January 2024

Adelaide, South Australia, Australia

Jack Draper

Press Conference



J. DRAPER/A. Bublik

7-6, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Through to the final; how are you feeling?

JACK DRAPER: Yeah, I feel great. This is back-to-back finals now. I'm really proud of my tennis this week. Another really tough match today against a really unpredictable player. I'm just glad to get the opportunity to compete again tomorrow.

Q. Bublik is such an unorthodox player. What on earth was your strategy beforehand? How did you think you could come out and beat him?

JACK DRAPER: Yeah, he's one of those players who has a lot of success for being different. He's got a huge serve. Whether it goes in or not, you don't know in that moment.

Obviously from the baseline he sometimes will hit the ball hard, he'll sometimes just roll the ball in, and it's weird because he hits lots of drop shots that doesn't look like he's being very competitive, but in actual fact, he is a good competitor. He's always there. You're not too sure whether he's going to be playing great or not, so you've just got to try and stay on him, and that kind of mental pressure is very difficult to deal with.

Yeah, it was tough conditions out there today. The ball is very lively. It's tough to sort of keep the ball in the court almost.

Credit to him; he's a great player, and that's why he's one of the top guys in the world.

Q. Those drop shots that he was doing, there were so many. Obviously you see that as a serious weapon on his part?

JACK DRAPER: Well, you kind of know it's coming. He's got a good drop shot. What's tough about it is you have to keep almost sprinting forward every point, and that tires you out in a way.

I feel like he's just very unpredictable. It's tough to know

what's coming next, and that maybe gets in a lot of players' heads, and you can start feeling like you want to play a certain way but you're not allowed to because he's kind of dictating his tennis.

Q. Obviously it was your steady play that won the day. Is that what you set out to do, just to be resolute and just get everything back and get on top?

JACK DRAPER: Yeah. I mean, it's tough. Like I wanted to try and play aggressive tennis, but it's not easy when sometimes the points are really short. A lot of the points are out of your control. You're not getting a lot of rhythm. Against someone like him, I knew that it's so important to try and be ready for every point to compete as hard as you can and be there fully for that point to try and win it the best way you can.

Obviously you can't always do that because he's going to do some special things, but I think that's what won the match today is the fact that I stayed mentally calm, and even though I don't think I was playing that great, I tried to just be there on every point and was able to win some big points that mattered.

Q. You thanked the crowd several times at the end of the match. It was a packed stadium, and it's a fairly boutique court. Are you conscious of the crowd being sort of quite upon you, and what do you make of that?

JACK DRAPER: Yeah, it's amazing to have a packed crowd inside such a court like that. It's almost -- it's tough for the crowd, as well. Like I don't feel like some of the tennis actually that's been played on that court has been that great, honestly, because there's a real shade on the court at times. Especially when you're returning a guy who serves at 136 miles per hour and you can't really see the ball, it's pretty tough.

So we just try and compete our hardest and put in some good performances. I love the crowd. That's why I put in all my hard work for is to play in front of a lot of people and entertain. That's what we are at the end of the day, we're entertainers, so it's good to be able to do that.

Q. In one sense does it feel as if Bublik is just playing games and almost like toying with an opponent the way he plays?



JACK DRAPER: Yeah, like I said, very unorthodox player. He gets all his success from almost like disrupting rhythm of the other players. A lot of players, we want to hit the ball nicely and get the ball back at a certain pace and all these things, whereas with him, you can't do that. You have to create all your own pace in a rally. Sometimes you have to defend and block. Oftentimes you're reacting to what he's doing to do next.

He's obviously, like I said, just like very unpredictable, and that's very difficult for any player to deal with.

He's obviously got a lot of talent, and he's going to have still a lot of success. But yeah, I tried my best to be there, be present every point and try and know it's coming, if that makes sense.

Q. I think it's a first-time meeting for you and Lehecka. What are your thoughts going to the final?

JACK DRAPER: Yeah, someone who's an incredible player. I think same year group as me, around 20 in the world.

I think I said in the on-court interview I first played him when I was about 13 in an under-14 tournament in the Czech Republic, and I remember I think he was a wild card, and I was the No. 1 seed, and he came and beat me first round, and I thought, wow, this guy is going to be good one day. So it's great that we're able to play in the final together.

Yeah, a lot of respect for him. I've been watching him play all week, and he's been playing great tennis. He's a really strong player. Not a lot of errors. So yeah, it's going to be a really tough battle tomorrow.

Q. Jack, this tournament obviously is so different to what's coming up, three sets to five sets, conditions, everything. What you've achieved here, irrespective of what happens tomorrow, do you take that into the Australian Open, or do you just put it out of your mind and start afresh because it's so different with it being a major?

JACK DRAPER: I mean, usually with the way these trips go, you go to a bunch of tournaments when you're away, and it's not always easy to sort of process wins and losses and all these things. Like you kind of just crack on each day trying to win or get better, and usually there's a match coming up.

I was thinking earlier about the match today, and I had my doubts and my worries, and then you've got to do it all over again tomorrow.

In terms of whatever happens tomorrow, I'll be on a flight tomorrow night. When we touch down in Melbourne I'll

maybe have a day off and then I think I play Tuesday I've heard.

Usually I try and do the best I can every day until the end of the trip almost and then reflect on good achievements when I get home almost because that's the time I have to reflect. The life of a tennis player is relentlessly busy, and obviously next week's tournament, although this week is a real priority for me, next week is also an even bigger priority being a Grand Slam.

I'm obviously proud of my efforts this week, but obviously there is a big focus on trying to peak and play my best tennis next week, also.

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