

Adelaide International

Saturday, 13 January 2024

Adelaide, South Australia, Australia

Jiri Lehecka

Press Conference



J. LEHECKA/J. Draper

4-6, 6-4, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations on your first tour title. Tell me how you're feeling right now.

JIRI LEHECKA: Thank you. Feel amazing. It's a dream come true for me. I always wanted to win a trophy, so it's even better that I won it here in Adelaide, in Australia where I love it. Happy for the win.

Q. Will that fit in your suitcase?

JIRI LEHECKA: Yeah, this one definitely not, but the smaller one, I guess that it will. It's a tricky question. Hopefully we will manage it somehow. Yeah, it's a nice trophy.

Q. Jack Draper was very gracious on court, said you deserved to win it. Could you give us a few words about Jack?

JIRI LEHECKA: Yeah, this is something -- he's a great player. The thing is that we know each other since we were kids. We played a couple of matches when we were like 12, 13, 14 years old, which is kind of fun because we know each other for a long time.

I feel like we are on this journey together, and unfortunately for him, he had some injuries which stopped him from going onwards. He's a great guy, great competitor. I'm happy that he's able to compete again fully healthy because he's such a dangerous player, and today he proved that he will win many titles for sure.

Q. He started very well, and at 4-All in the second set you were Love-30 down and turned it around. Was that the key point of the match do you think?

JIRI LEHECKA: Yeah, I think it was because that was just something which helped me a lot in that situation. In my opinion he was the better player for one and a half sets, almost two sets. First set he was really dominating -- not dominating, but he was just playing better in the key moments. I wasn't playing bad, but I would say I played top 10, he played top 5 sometimes. That was something a bit hard for me to swallow at that moment.

But I just kept believing. I still wanted to win. I never doubt about my game at the moment, and I just knew that the time will come, and 5-4, second set, two mistakes, and two times I played well.

That was the moment where I just showed that the patience helped me a lot, and third set was a battle.

Q. Also in the first set he was quite defensive and you were hitting a lot of shots long, going for it and just missing. In the second and third sets you had the same power but those shots were going in. Was it a gradual change you could see throughout the second and third set?

JIRI LEHECKA: I don't really think I played that bad in the first set. I just played more flat, which helped him to counter these balls, these shots. Then of course as I was trying to push more and more, I was doing these mistakes.

I must say that he was saying really impressive tennis in the first set, and I had almost no answer for that. I wasn't serving that well.

But then in the second set, as you said, I tried to be a bit more patient. I tried to focus on creating chance.

We saw that after winning the second set, it went well, he helped me with a few mistakes and then I was really in the zone where I was hitting all the balls where I wanted to, not doing these kind of mistakes like in the first set, and it was much more easier for me to win the key moments.

Q. And you're up to 23 in the world rankings right now, I think.

JIRI LEHECKA: Yes, it's a nice number. Michael Jordan.

Q. The point that you mentioned before when you were Love-30 down and you hit that drop volley that would have been Love-40 if you hadn't won that one, and he couldn't make it to the net, gave you a high five at the net pretty much, how pivotal was that moment in the match?

JIRI LEHECKA: Honestly I think it was just quick



reaction and big amount of luck at the moment. I don't really think that luck wins you the match, but at this moment, it helped me a lot because even if you try to hit a shot like that, it's so hard to achieve it. Luck helped me at the moment.

Right after that moment, I played well. I hit an ace. I managed to go through that game. I took the chance. That's part of the sport.

Q. How confident do you feel going to Melbourne now? You were quarterfinals there last year, took out a few big guns. You must be feeling more confident this year.

JIRI LEHECKA: Yeah, there's something special about Australia everywhere. Doesn't matter if it's here, Perth or Melbourne. I feel great. It's just the conditions, people, everything, weather. It suits me well here. I feel great, and hopefully I can continue my good form in Melbourne and win a few matches and hopefully depend points for Melbourne.

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