

Australian Open

Friday, 12 January 2024
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Alex de Minaur

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Congrats to come into the top 10 for your first time, getting such a good result at the United Cup. How do you feel about your preparation for AO so far?

ALEX de MINAUR: Yeah, I'm feeling great. It's been a great start to the year. So far 2024 has been very nice to me. Hopefully I can keep it going and play some more good tennis at the Australian Open.

THE MODERATOR: Questions on the floor, please.

Q. You've done so much media it seems this week, can I ask firstly how you sort of managed that rolling up to another press conference, questions? The match is still to come. How do you manage that?

ALEX de MINAUR: Well, I'm getting very good at answering the same type of questions, I'll tell you that (laughter). I've learnt my answers basically by heart right now.

But, no, it is something that comes with I guess winning matches. It's a good problem to have.

Again, it's been a big lead-up. There's been a lot of focus. At the same time I'm still putting my head down and I'm still getting all the work that I need to on the court and off the court.

Yeah, I'm getting ready for the tournament to start.

Q. Do you feel distracted by all of the hype around how well you're playing at all?

ALEX de MINAUR: I think I'm a person that's not easily distracted. When it comes to all these things, it doesn't really change too much for me. I mean, my goals are plain and simple, and that's to win tennis matches and do my best on the court.

All the preparations, they all stay the same. My focus stays the same. I still have that drive and motivation to go out there on the tennis court and do my best.

If anything, it just probably makes me more eager for the tournament to start.

Q. We saw you out there with Lleyton earlier today. He's so intrinsic in what you've been able to cultivate at the moment. What is it like having him in your corner?

ALEX de MINAUR: Yeah, he's been great. He's been my Davis Cup captain for a while. He's been a great mentor. I've learnt a lot from him. It's great to have his support.

He's obviously been through a lot of the similar situations that I'm going through at the moment. Yeah, it's been great. We've tried to kind of keep everything the same with my team, just enjoy the moment.

Q. What went through your mind when you saw Raonic first up?

ALEX de MINAUR: What went through my mind? Ultimately I had a feeling it was going to be a tough match coming up. When I drew Milos, it was basically that. He's a very tricky opponent, the type of person that can take the racquet out of your hand. Obviously has an unbelievable serve and is very aggressive.

It's a tough match, but yet again, I'm excited to play. I'm playing some good tennis. I'll be ready for the challenge.

Q. Have you got some ideas how to counter that serve in particular?

ALEX de MINAUR: Well, guess the right way (smiling).

Ultimately he's got one of the best serves on tour, so it's going to be very difficult to kind of get a read on that serve. Ultimately I've got to try and focus on my side of the court again, do what I've been doing really well, make a lot of balls, stay patient. If the opportunity is there, just go for it.

Q. You mentioned that you're doing a lot of interviews, getting all this attention. At any point has the increased attention sort of transferred in your head at all to feeling more pressure?

ALEX de MINAUR: Every year I come into the Australian summer, the Australian Open, I get asked the same question.

Q. Sorry.

ALEX de MINAUR: No, no, it's not a bad thing.

Ever since the first time I stepped out here on court, it's always been a privilege because I get to play in front of my home crowd, right? For me, there's no better feeling.

I'm lucky enough that I know as soon as I step out there on court, everyone in the crowd has got my back, and I'm going to give 150%.

It is a great feeling. Instead of nerves, I take it as excitement. It's something that I'm very fortunate to have. I'm definitely looking forward to getting started.

Q. Last year at the US Open you played Nicolas Jarry. Similar opponent to Raonic, a big serve, big forehand. Will you go back and analyze that game? What did you do well in that game to neutralize his power?

ALEX de MINAUR: Yeah, look, ultimately against these types of opponents, if you can get the serve back, you're putting yourself in a decent position. More importantly, you got to look after your own serve, right? That means stay focused at all times. You can't give a cheap game at any stage 'cause that could almost mean the set, right?

I'll probably look at the match we played a while ago and see if I can get something. Probably more his recent matches. See if I can find something, some sort of patterns. Ultimately, I'll go out there on court and I'll problem solve once I get there.

Q. On Milos, he's been out for a fair period of time. You got to win best-of-five-set matches. Do you feel it's an advantage for you with the fitness, wear him out in some ways?

ALEX de MINAUR: Well, if it gets to the physicality point of the match, then yeah, I do back myself. I back myself against the majority of the players. I know the amount of work I put off the court to be in this shape, feeling confident in that matter.

If it does become a physical battle, I think I back myself. But he's got the game style to take the racquet out of my hand, make sure the rallies are nice and short, then we might not get to that point.

We'll have to wait and see.

Q. How do you compare yourself as a player compared to the same time last year? What sort of changes can fans expect to see from your game?

ALEX de MINAUR: Yeah, I think my whole career has

been a gradual improvement. I've always tried to be a better player every year I come into the Australian Open. I think this has been another chance and another opportunity for me to get better.

I'm playing with a lot of confidence at the moment, a lot of belief, a very positive mindset. Ultimately, I'm trying to be more aggressive and bring a lot more variety to my game.

I think a lot of people have watched me run side to side endlessly. I do have other layers to my game, which I've been able to kind of show at the start of the year. That's the plan moving forward.

Q. As an Aussie guy, what is your opinion of the tournament now being played over 15 days?

ALEX de MINAUR: Well, you definitely see it at Roland Garros, as well. It's something that is not entirely new.

I mean, it depends on the players that have been in Australia for a while, are keen to start, or the players that have gone deep in the weeks before, it gives them a little bit more time to rest. Ultimately I think for the fans and for the public, it gives them an extra day of tennis. I don't think they'll mind too much.

Yeah, I guess that's what I think (smiling).

Q. Do you think it will save any late-night matches? Will it have any impact?

ALEX de MINAUR: Yeah, I think it will help out, get some matches out of the way. Then again, we all depend on the men not having five-hour battles out there on court to screw up the schedule.

It's probably more on us than anyone else (smiling).

Q. Given that some of the repeat questions can be a little tedious, what is the best thing about where you are now?

ALEX de MINAUR: What is the best thing? Honestly, if anything, it's that I'm living my dream, right? I can wake up in the morning and know that I've achieved a massive milestone, which was very tough to get to. I didn't know if I was going to achieve it. Now I can look at myself and say that I've done it, that I'm a completely different player to what I was last year.

It's exciting 'cause I've got bigger and better things to come hopefully.

Q. Why do you think kids play tennis?

ALEX de MINAUR: Oh, that's a great question.

I think kids play tennis because they enjoy being outside.
I think it's a great sport. You get to run around a tennis court chasing yellow tennis balls. I think that's a lot of fun. You can also use your frustration and try to hit the ball as hard as you can over the fence maybe.

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