

Australian Open

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Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Grigor Dimitrov

Press Conference



G. DIMITROV/M. Fucsovics

4-6, 6-3, 7-6, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Grigor, a great start 10 days ago in Brisbane, but how are you feeling after your first match here in Melbourne?

GRIGOR DIMITROV: I feel good, good, all the circumstances. I think today was one of the hottest days we have played out there.

Overall it was a good match. You know, I think for sure I could have done a lot of things better, but it's always tricky when you start a slam. I mean, I have been doing a lot of, I think a lot of work prior to the tournament as well. I was kind of hoping that, you know, I would have, like, a better, in a way, better-playing first match, but it is how it is. You need to go through those matches.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Marton is a difficult opponent, very streaky and stuff. How do you stay patient in a match like that?

GRIGOR DIMITROV: I mean, yeah, we have known each other for such a long time. I mean, I think we have quite a bit of respect for each other on and off the court. We always talk about fitness and what do we do and how much we lift and all that. That makes it no secrets there.

I think we manage to -- for me personally it was a tough start of the match, because I was serving against the sun, so right away I had to kind of change my toss a little bit, which took me some time to get it back in the right place. So that was something I was definitely not happy with. But it was the same both ways.

Then he's a very tricky player. I think he always finds a way to put you in a difficult position, I think, throughout the set. I mean, during the much, he doesn't really have, like, patterns of games. That makes it a little bit more difficult.

I mean, he likes also to hit the slice, so he can stay with me on the slice and tries to, you know, tries to put me off balance there.

I had to, like, really pick and choose my moments where I could really press and where I could hurt him the most.

Q. In your capacity as a member of the players council, you might be aware last night in Germany it was reported that Alexander Zverev will face a trial over these domestic violence charges in Berlin. He denies that obviously, but is it appropriate for him to continue serving on the players council -- I know he was just elected -- while that matter is resolved?

GRIGOR DIMITROV: First I hear this. I definitely won't comment more on that, because I don't know what the situation is.

Q. Well, it's new that he's going to face a trial but the charges aren't new. I think everyone is aware of that.

GRIGOR DIMITROV: I think, in general, I always stay away from press in general. I really don't read much. Of course there are things swirling around, of course I understand that part.

On the other side, on the council, I think I didn't -- I mean, honestly, I don't know what to say. It's not only up to me who is in there, right? I mean...

Q. Sure, but you may have a view of whether or not it's appropriate.

GRIGOR DIMITROV: I think this is a matter that I think everyone needs to sit down together and discuss all of that. That's my message on that end.

Of course now these things coming through, personally, I didn't know. So I'm sure if you ask all the other guys, it's something that if it's needed, I guess we are all going to sit down and talk about it.

Q. They are letting the fans move around more, it seems this year, down lower. Did you notice it much today? How did you find it?

GRIGOR DIMITROV: Yeah, luckily I was aware before the match, so that was nice. Eh, (smiling).

I personally don't -- the only thing I care is, like, nobody to move behind the players. That's the only thing. The rest, in a way, honestly I'm fine with it. I get it sometimes

the games can be long and people are queuing and all this, but you need to adapt.

I think the only message I can send on that is, like, whatever new rules we are having, whether it's a slam or any other tournament, is just to know a little bit in advance. I think it's going to be better if it's communicated to the players first. Maybe let the players decide on things like that, because after all, you're performing out there. You want to do well, not only for yourself, for the crowd, you know, for the family, for the team and so on.

That is my take on that. It would have been nice to know earlier, for sure.

Q. So you only found out today?

GRIGOR DIMITROV: I heard last night. Actually, no, this morning. My coach said, Hey, just so you know...

I'm, like, Really?

Q. So they didn't let the players know properly?

GRIGOR DIMITROV: I personally was not aware. I think a lot of players didn't know, from what I heard. Maybe I'm wrong. I don't know. But I think that was actually a little bit of a topic in the locker room, Here's a little insight.

But, yeah, I think especially things like that should be known way before that, definitely, yeah.

Q. Reflecting on the title in Brisbane and how much that meant to you, did you give yourself an explanation, how is it possible that a player of such a caliber had to wait more than six years to lift another trophy? In hindsight, given how much it meant for you, did you wish you did things differently, that you give yourself more chances to win maybe less prestigious trophies?

GRIGOR DIMITROV: Yeah, it's a fair point overall, but I think I'm going to go a bit off topic on that.

You know, there is so much that happens in life, and there is so much that is on and off the court that some things take time, I guess. I had to make a lot of changes in my life overall. I'm not going to hide that. I'm not going to lie on it.

I had to build up a new team. I had to find a way how to work more smarter. I mean, after all, I have been on tour for so many years, so I cannot just play every single week and be at my absolute best. That's just impossible.

Today proves that, that I played a very, an okay match. I mean, of course, I'm not made out of steel. Of course I'm fit and I pride myself on being in a good physical

condition but also had to find a way how to work smarter, what else I could improve, not only for the game but especially having to compete with all that sort of younger guys, younger generation and all that. I had to find a different way to prime myself up to get to this point again, and it takes time. It takes time.

Overall, I'm a fairly emotional guy, as well. I think when certain things come around and things are not going the right way, I mean, you let yourself down a little. You feel like you have let yourself down a little bit.

This is where all, like, everybody from my team and my family and very close friends have been there for me, and I'm not afraid to say that they believed in me way more than I believed in myself in those moments and those times, and they carried me through those times as well.

The best things, this is the one thing I always believed in was the bigger picture. I knew eventually things might come around for me on a better end. I knew I just had to keep on believing in the process.

So there was, like, little small steps I felt like I had to do every single time that I was getting out on the court or in fitness and all that. I had to go through the small beliefs every single day.

I think that sort of propelled me to put myself in a better mental state, in a better physical state. Then the game, I know I have the game, so that's something that I know I'm not going to sugar-coat on it. I know I have the game, but how I'm going to put my game in order to do it not once, not twice, but over a period of time. It took time.

I don't know. I think that win in Brisbane, of course it means a lot to me and I think team and everybody around me. It was more like my own personal quest. I have nothing to prove to anybody, or for any -- I mean, I'm only proving things to myself that I have known, but I had to be reminded, and of course I'm so grateful and so thankful that I get the opportunity to do that.

Honestly, like, I feel so much more humble than I have ever felt, and I think it feels like I'm starting to be more comfortable in my own skin whether I win or lose, and I think this is where a lot of good things can come from.

Q. When you're a top junior, won junior Wimbledon, you come on tour, you think you can win those, No. 1, win lots of Grand Slams, et cetera. Everyone thinks it even if they know it's going to be difficult. There must come a point where you think that actually it's not as easy as I thought it might be. When did that come for you? Obviously you could still win a Grand Slam, but when did that happen for you? How difficult is that moment?

GRIGOR DIMITROV: It happened very fast for me. My first professional match was against Berdych, and my second professional match was against Rafa. Like, if you think about it, Berdych I think was 8 in the world, and I beat him in three sets. I lost three sets to Rafa the following day, and he just came off from winning Australian Open.

I mean, so that was a reality check at its best. Honestly, if I would have beaten him that day, I think it would have done me a big disservice, because the following week I had to play Gilles Simon. I was 5-3 up in the third and 30-15. I lost that match, because I think top 10 again in the world.

If you think about it, I had so many of those moments, aha moments, that are right there, and the reality struck very quick for me, for which I think I'm more grateful, because I've grown, like, immensely, not only as a player, not only the experience that I have built throughout the years, but I think life itself -- I often compare life and tennis for some reason. Maybe it's just me.

I don't know. But, like, I often compare that, and I had to grow fast. Back then I had to play against, for me, one of the best guys I have ever played on tour. I mean, the first top-10 guys, and from 10 to 20 were -- I mean, it was scandalous tennis. You had to play amazing tennis at times to beat them, and to be able to sustain that you had to be three times fitter.

So I had the game but I didn't have the body. Then at some point I had the, you know, I had the body and the legs but my game was a little bit off. It was just always that constant adjustment for me.

And again, I'm not complaining I played in that era. I loved it. I would never give it up for anything. If someone says, Oh, you get more titles, whatever, no, no, no. I'm very, very happy, because the experience that I gathered throughout the years and playing against these guys, my God, honestly, after that, nothing can scare you. (Laughter.)

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