

# Australian Open

Thursday, 18 January 2024

Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

## Jack Draper

Press Conference



T. PAUL/J. Draper

6-2, 3-6, 6-3, 7-5

JACK DRAPER: Condolences to Mike, guys. I'm not going to pretend to say that I knew him too well, but obviously he was a great friend to you guys, a husband, father. Sad day. Obviously found out this morning. Yeah, thoughts are honestly with all you guys, honestly.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Jack, just on the match, last week in Adelaide you beat him pretty comfortably. It's a Grand Slam, so the stakes are different. But in terms of the actual match, what did you feel wasn't right for you today?**

JACK DRAPER: I mean, he definitely came out playing really well. I think he knew what he was up against. Like, I've played him twice before, and both times I think I won all four sets against him that I played.

I definitely feel like I haven't really got used to conditions this week at all, to be honest. My first round I was struggling quite a lot - not with the conditions physically, but with my tennis. It's obviously quite a lot faster here than Adelaide. I played under a canopy last week, so I didn't really get much wind or anything.

I just have been struggling to find my level. Obviously when you are playing a top player like that, if they're playing well, there are very small margins in it.

I think maybe I was a little bit off how I can play, and he played a really good level. I think he was the better player today. He deserved to win.

**Q. Just wondered how you did pull up physically? Everything looked okay. If you had managed to take it to a fifth, you know, do you feel in a good position there?**

JACK DRAPER: Yeah, I felt really good, to be honest. Very different to my first round. Physically, if it had gone to five sets, I would be feeling great, ready to play. That's one big positive I can take from obviously the first slam of the year.

I've really worked hard in the off-season to build up my physicality. After having so many struggles last year, it's been an area of real focus for me. Forget the tennis for a minute; that's probably the most important thing for me right now.

I'm proud of the way I am physically to come through a five-set match, and obviously to feel like I'm three hours in against a top opponent. I feel like I could have played four, five more sets. I feel good on that aspect.

**Q. Going forward would you maybe not play a tournament the week before a slam and try and practice on the site more maybe so you're used to it?**

JACK DRAPER: Yeah, ideally it seems like every tournament I've played before a slam I've gone pretty deep. So I feel like I've come into the slam a bit cooked, a little bit like I've played a lot of tennis. That can sometimes be a good thing, but I think probably this week it hasn't helped too much because obviously getting used to the conditions is different here.

I think it's also a difficult one with my ranking where it's been at. Obviously I dropped outside of the top 100 last year. I was back playing challengers. I tried to grind back to a good ranking at the end of last year. I did that.

You don't really have much of a choice when you are 60-odd in the world, but the more I'm playing obviously my ranking is going up. I'll get back inside the top 50 after the last two weeks. And obviously last week, even though it's playing before a slam, I still made a final at a 250, and that helps my ranking big-time.

I'm hoping by the grass that I'm going to be in a position where I can start to prioritize the slams. I feel confident that my body is going to keep on progressing and I'm moving in the right direction.

So, yeah, that's the answer to that.

**Q. What are your plans going forward? You talked about the summer. A chance to get a seed for Wimbledon, if you have the chance to do that in the next few months...**

JACK DRAPER: 100%. I am going to keep playing. I think I'm planning to play Montpellier, which is sort of in

the next ten days. Then I'm going to play Los Cabos and Acapulco. My ranking will guarantee me a main draw in all those events. Obviously Indian Wells, Miami, and then on to the clay.

There's a lot of events there, a lot of opportunity to play and do well. I feel fit. I'm ready to keep going. I'm very motivated to keep getting better.

So hopefully by grass, if I keep my form up, if I stay fit, keep giving myself the opportunities to compete, then I'm going to be hopefully seeded for Wimbledon. And that's kind of my goal now.

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