

Australian Open

Friday, 26 January 2024

Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Alfie Hewett

Gordon Reid

Press Conference

HEWETT-REID/Miki-Oda

6-3, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Just want to say congratulations. Just tell us what it's like to have that trophy in your hands now.

GORDON REID: Yeah, thanks very much. Obviously it's a great feeling. It's five in a row for myself and Alfie here. Obviously we absolutely love playing here at the Australian Open.

Yeah, thought today was a really strong performance from both teams. Obviously we're really happy with the way we came through the match. Yeah, hopefully it's the start of a big year for us.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Congratulations to both of you. Alfie, you said on Sunday that you thought doubles was the best spectacle, and match point in particular was a really, really good rally. Is that enigmatic of what you were talking about?

ALFIE HEWETT: Yeah, precisely. We've spoken about it quite a bit actually already after the match. Some of the points in that match really displayed the best of wheelchair tennis. The best bit about it is you feel the love and the excitement from the crowd as well. Like, you can tell they're getting into the match. They're not just there because they're passing by. They're really get into it. Obviously we play a massive role in that.

That's what men's wheelchair doubles can produce, and when it's played at the very best by all four players, those are the sorts of matches that you can get.

Q. Obviously it wasn't quite the massive Wimbledon final support in terms of numbers but it was seriously good. What about your own personal support, Gordon? There were some people in the corner, a little crew you had there.

GORDON REID: Yeah, some relative Scots there.



Some of them have just flown over yesterday I think for this match. Yeah, obviously it was great to have them there. My parents are out here as well. It was my dad's first time at the Australian Open. Hopefully he enjoyed himself today and enjoyed that match.

Yeah, I think we discussed it earlier as well that we've seen big crowds here before when Dylan has been playing here, obviously as a home player, and we've had some great crowds at Wimbledon over the last few years.

But it's just great to see people coming out and enjoying and getting involved in matches where there's not necessarily a home player involved.

I think, you know, obviously a lot of credit to the Australian Open and Craig for getting us on the show courts this year and the last few years, and hopefully going forward we can get them more and more filled with people.

Q. What do you make of Kia Arena? It's an imposing stadium, isn't it?

ALFIE HEWETT: Yeah, yeah, we love it. You know, that's sort of what we play for and train for. We want to be on those stadium courts. Sort of relish the moment. And the court itself, it can be quite intimidating if you haven't been on it beforehand, but we've played on Kia quite a few times now.

Having experiences at Wimbledon and all the other slams, to be honest, I've been fortunate to play on Chatrier in Roland Garros and Arthur Ashe we've played on together. We've been playing on all these massive stadiums that are so iconic, and you watch some of the most amazing tennis matches on it, and there we are with our sport playing on them too.

It really is a special feeling, and especially when you push off, I think it's taking it in and recognizing just how far wheelchair tennis has come. Because I know 20-plus years ago wheelchair tennis at the Aussie Open was not even included in the two-week schedule. To be out there on Kia Arena and Margaret Court Arena, and obviously Dylan has been on Rod Laver as well, it just shows the progression of wheelchair tennis.

Q. Gordon, you mentioned before five AOs in a row,



and I think together the two of you have won 19 major doubles titles together. When you hear that, how motivating are numbers to you, and when you hear those huge numbers, how does it make you feel?

GORDON REID: Yeah, obviously it makes us pretty happy, to be honest. You know, really proud as well, because, you know, it's not been easy, it never is easy to win any of them, because there is always strong teams that we're coming up against. Obviously we've got a big target on our back as the guys who've been dominating recently. We've always got teams gunning for us.

To be honest, I think the numbers are sort of secondary to us. We enjoy them when we hear them afterwards, but for us really I think the key the last few years has been trying to push ourselves as a team, trying to progress the style of play that we bring to the court, and the way that we approach matches.

I think that's the main thing that's kept us motivated and kept us working hard to try and improve the team, and then if we've managed to produce those performances, then usually the results follow.

Q. Alfie, does it take on an extra significance winning a major and the confidence boosting in a Paralympic year?

ALFIE HEWETT: Yeah, for sure, obviously the Paralympics is a massive goal of ours because we've not won the gold medal there. Taking confidence along the way at any given moment is what you need, especially in these major events, having crowds, they're playing on bigger courts, it's not something that, you know, we have regularly on tour.

So when these opportunities come about, I do feel, like, yes, we're playing in the moment but we're also learning for the future as well. That's something that's been on, yeah, on topic for a lot of the recent finals that we've played on bigger courts.

Yeah, it's a big year. We're gonna take a lot of confidence from the way we played today. It's not necessarily all about the outcome but about how we go about it. Today I think our level was super high, and especially in a Grand Slam final you want to be able to produce that sort of performance when it really counts. We can take confidence from how we did that today into our future, yeah, future tournaments.

Q. Congratulations. A question for Alfie. You're going to have one more match tomorrow, which is singles final. You are going to play against Tokito, same as last year's final here, and you guys played three out of four singles finals, major finals last year. Do you see tomorrow's final as a kind of like for you

defending champ title or more like sort of revenge for Wimbledon or Roland Garros?

ALFIE HEWETT: No, I've drawn a line under those matches. You know, I feel like Tokito, especially, he's developing so quickly. I can't really take anything from last year's final into this year's because he's adapted and evolved so much, and so have I as a player. I think the style and the intensity that all the men's players are playing at compared to last year is so different.

Yeah, of course you don't forget the ones you lose and also the ones you win. But going into the year, it's a completely clean slate for everyone, and obviously preseason is an opportunity for a lot of the players to train and practice and welcome things.

So the way I see it is, yeah, it's a completely open match tomorrow. Whatever has happened previously has happened. Yeah, it won't influence the way I approach the match or my mindset going into it.

Q. In the men's game with Novak and Jannik and so forth, they've obviously got a larger number of very, very top-class players competing. With a smaller pool in the wheelchair events, what are the benefits of having a smaller pool of players in terms of growing the game and improving your game? How do you deal with that?

GORDON REID: Yeah, I mean, it's interesting. I think the depth is growing year over year. Obviously having bigger draws at the Grand Slams is a big part of that, because this is where the most money is for us, prize money. Obviously the expenses for the wheelchair players through the year are the same as the main draws here, but the prize money is a lot lower everywhere else. This is important for us, and it's important to be able to share that with more players.

But yeah, I think, you know, I think the good thing about having a small group of players is that most of them know where the sport's come from, as well. So they have that understanding and that drive to try and increase the profile and push forward together while at the same time obviously competing hard against each other at the same time.

So I think that close-knit thing is where we're all kind of driving for the same achievement, and, you know, we all have the same vision for the end game of the sport. I think it's kind of a nice combination.

Q. So you've got those parallel objectives. Your own improving yourself but then growing the game whereas arguably in the main draw they're thinking about themselves, aren't they, as opposed to...

GORDON REID: Yeah, obviously we're all trying to win

as well, but I think the best way we can drive the sport forward is to push each other to improve. You have seen that obviously with Alfie's coming through years ago and now Tokito is coming through.

Everybody brings a different style and different level. That pushes the rest of the players to change, adapt, and try and improve. I think that's the way that the sport's going to move forward. Yeah, hopefully in a few years' time we're sitting here with more players again, and the level will be higher and higher.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports