

# Laver Cup

Saturday, 20 September 2025

San Francisco, California, USA

Chase Center

## Team World

## Vice Captain Patrick Rafter

## Alex de Minaur

### Press Conference

A. De MINAUR/A. Zverev

6-1, 6-4

Team Europe - 3

Team World - 3

THE MODERATOR: Alex, well done on the match. It was a great start to Day 2. You've evened the score. Great win for Team World. Do you want to just talk us through it?

ALEX de MINAUR: Yeah, it was a good day at the office (smiling). Good way to start the day. Very happy with the win and happy to get some points for Team World.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. Can you talk about the most important things that both Pat and Andre said to you before going into the match, and did you sense how nervous Andre was, and was that a little bit unnerving for you?**

ALEX de MINAUR: I mean, they gave me a pretty simple game plan. Andre told me not to miss a return. Pat told me --

VICE CAPTAIN PATRICK RAFTER: I said nothing.

ALEX de MINAUR: Pat told me not to miss a volley.

**Q. And you didn't.**

ALEX de MINAUR: I tried my best. No, it was honestly amazing to have both these guys on the bench and the whole week just being able to pick their brains and learn. I think it all kind of came together today, right?

As I said, I've always been an open book in terms of getting information in, and I'm very happy that it all kind of came together and I was able to execute today on a very great game plan.



# LAYER CUP.

**Q. Andre, could you sense his nervousness?**

ALEX de MINAUR: I just sense the energy, right? That's all. It's interesting, because there's a lot of different players in this team, and we all go about our business in different ways.

You know, they show a lot of energy pre-match, and I'm kind of a little bit more in my zone, and I just wait until I step out on court to bring that energy. It was great. It was great to see the team energy, team atmosphere on the bench from the very first point until the last. They were all over it. It got me over the line.

**Q. If I'm not mistaken, your three wins now over Sascha have been in team events at ATP Cup, United Cup, and now Laver Cup. I wonder if there's a correlation, or talk about just what makes that team environment special for you.**

ALEX de MINAUR: Yeah, I mean, next job is to go out and do it on tour, right? My first-ever match against Sascha was my Davis Cup debut, and I lost 7-6 in the fifth. That was a heartbreaker.

Yes, I've been able to get him in a couple of team competitions representing my country, and I'm glad that I was able to get the winner today, but now the mindset is to do my best to get him the next time we play as well.

**Q. There was kind of a lopsided head-to-head with the two of you. What was sort of different about you today or about him? Were the conditions just more favorable to you? No offense to you or anything. You played great. I'm just sort of curious what was your sense coming in about what the challenges were that he presented, and how you were going to overcome them today?**

ALEX de MINAUR: Look, I think ultimately the thing about head-to-heads is that it happens over the course of a career, right? I believe I've been a very different player throughout my career.

When I was first starting on the tour and where I am now, I'm completely two different players. So I don't look into those head-to-heads too much in that sense. I feel like, you know, I am capable of bringing this type of tennis and beating these type of players. I've just got to show it more often.

But, yeah, look, the only thing that these types of conditions or these conditions brought out today is that it



... when all is said, we're done.®

brought out a different game style in me, and I had to come up with different ways of trying to hurt him, because the conditions are so slow, and he's so long. He's content with kind of being a couple of meters behind the baseline and rallying, and he's able to still generate a lot with these heavy conditions, where myself, I struggle to generate probably when it gets a little bit heavier.

So I had to look at different parts of the court to try and expose him. That was where kind of the variety, the slices, the short angles, the coming to the net. It just kind of extended my playbook a little bit today.

**Q. Along those lines, Alex, you came to the net 25 times, which was way more than you did against Auger-Aliassime in a much longer match. Has this unlocked something for you, or was it surface-dependent?**

ALEX de MINAUR: And how many did I win today? Do you know?

**Q. It was, like, 67%.**

ALEX de MINAUR: Well, you are probably still not happy with that, huh?

VICE CAPTAIN PATRICK RAFTER: No, no, I am, because I'm a percentage guy. If you win more than 50%, you win. No, no, no.

ALEX de MINAUR: No, it is a part of my game which I've definitely unlocked over the last two years, and it's been a crucial part of me getting into the top 10 and taking that next step into my career. I've got to do more of it, right, because yeah, these guys, they hit the ball so hard and so big. So I've got to find different ways of trying to hurt them.

That's part of my game style. I've got the ability to use my speed not only to retrieve, but also to sneak into the net. Look, the more I do it, the more comfortable I feel, the more points I win, and the more dangerous I become. So just got to keep on doing that.

**Q. Patrick, you had to re-recruit I guess Alex. You made a call to try and convince him to join. What was your pitch? How did you allay his concerns about travel and schedule and all that kind of stuff to get him to participate?**

VICE CAPTAIN PATRICK RAFTER: I didn't ring him. I didn't call him. We were working hard to get him, but I didn't want to be that person to call him, because I felt like that might have put a bit of maybe extra guilt or something on top of him, which he didn't need.

He's traveled. He's been on the road since before the French Open. He plays the US Open, goes back to

Australia, plays Davis Cup. He may as well stay there, because the Asian swing is coming on. He has another six weeks on the road in Asia and Europe. He doesn't need to come all the way back to America, as much as he loves this event, as we know.

We can see him in team environments. It's massive on him. It's tough on his body. It's tough on his mind, but he put that aside to come and answer the call. I wasn't that person. I would not do that.

When he did say, yes, and I know he hadn't signed the contract, I was texting him saying, Well done, mate, can't wait to see you. I was just expecting he was going to sign it. And let's have some fun over here and whatever you need. If you need to do nothing and just relax and chill, you know, that's the environment we can do this year and just get a feel of the court, and you'll be right. You've played enough tennis. Let's enjoy the moment.

I was trying to get him on the padel court personally, because I heard he's pretty good. No, he wanted to play tennis, so here he is.

ALEX de MINAUR: Just to add to that, it's part of the reason why it's been so easy for me to come here, right? Both Pat and Andre, they've made my life super easy. They haven't put any sort of pressure.

They've just been a blast to be around, and I've enjoyed every second of it. As Pat said, you know, in his message, he said, Whatever you want, you don't have to hit balls. Whether it's a round of golf or a padel match, I'm in for anything.

It's just been a great team environment, and it's been a very fun week for me.

**Q. You have two matches in one day.**

ALEX de MINAUR: Yeah, I know. So I better get back. I better recover and hopefully come out with some good doubles later on tonight.

**Q. Not to embarrass Patrick, but I don't know, he's known for his positive, his good-nature approach to life, feel-good style. Andre is said to be one of the great minds in tennis. Could you just take a moment and talk about what your two coaches, just exactly what they bring and just what is Agassi's genius, if I could put it that way?**

ALEX de MINAUR: For me, I had never met Andre before this whole event, right, so it was quite exciting for me to be around him. I wanted to just pick his brain, right, and see how he saw the game, because when he played, he was able to dominate the baseline exchange. He held that baseline so well and found, you know, different angles very easily when he was playing.

So I've been able to ask him a couple of things, what he kind of tries to do. He's been quite vocal with me, which I've really enjoyed.

I thought it was very positive to not only use my speed to retrieve balls, but also cut some corners and take some time away inside the court and look at the court instead of as a small court, look at all the different spots on the court, because there's a lot of different places that you can hit the tennis ball off groundstrokes. They have different effects and have that sort of variety.

Then with Pat, I'm playing what is very much a stressful match, and he's bringing such a calm energy to me. A big, big reason of today was literally us talking about the game plan, how we were going to come up with ways of hurting him. You know, the whole week we've been talking about the slice, right?

Even yesterday I hit in the morning, and just after at the very end, I had five minutes of Pat just hitting slices with me and us working on exactly the shots that came today, whether it was the deep slice, the short slice, the short-line one, and ultimately, also helping on my transition game, because I am known for coming into the net.

I'm not afraid of coming into the net, but at times I need to work a little bit more on my position and my balance when I get to the net and kind of where I cover, because you know, even today I thought I let him get away with a couple of passing shots that maybe I should be ready for since I've got that speed that I can kind of cover the net.

So it's been a work in progress, but I've enjoyed it.

**Q. You broke three times today. Sascha is one of the biggest servers in the world. He served north of 80% today. What are you relying on most when you're returning like that? What are you most focused on to put yourself in position to break like that?**

ALEX de MINAUR: Well, I back my returns. Ultimately, I've got some pretty good stats on return myself, right? What I don't have on serve, I make up for on return.

In these type of conditions I know he's going to serve a very high first-serve percentage, but the biggest thing for me is to focus on getting good contact on the return and doing my best to kind of have big targets, right?

That's the biggest thing, make him play. Every single point on his serve, keep on applying pressure. Whether I don't break him early stages or early in the match, I know it's coming.

Every game he's having to play a million balls. He's

having to think about them, and all of a sudden if I can get myself into positions where 30-Alls, deuce, these types of positions, that's when those unforced errors kind of leak. That's just kind of constant pressure.

So the mindset for me is it's always on return no matter what the score is in the game. I'm always trying to win the next point. I never give up on Love-40 games, because they all add up.

Yeah, I had a good returning day today, and it was a very big reason why I was able to play well today.

VICE CAPTAIN PATRICK RAFTER: Quickly, one thing. I saw Yannick after the match, and he looked at me and goes, This is how you play tennis. This is how you can play tennis. You see the big hitters -- I mean, you just saw a guy who had the hands and the ability to manipulate the ball in different areas of the court. A little bit old-school.

We were just sort of shaking our heads going, These guys just don't get it that there are different ways of making things happen, and we saw that today.

Well done to Alex executing. He has the ability to do it, and I hope he can transition and use this further in his game.

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