

Roland Garros

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Paris, France

Alfie Hewett

Press Conference

A. HEWETT/G. Fernandez

1-6, 7-5, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. I know you're not a stranger to comebacks like that. Talk us through it from 5-1 down in the third set.

ALFIE HEWETT: I don't know if I can right now. It's still very fresh and raw. A little bit in disbelief even. Didn't think it was going my way. The match was heavily in his favor. He's very much a confident sort of player, and when the momentum is going his way, it's very tough to stop that.

So I don't really know what I did. I think I just tried to make a few more balls and be a bit more brave in my approach. I got myself back into the match at 5-All and from there it was fairly even. Just a couple of points, innit.

Q. When you're three match points down in the final-set tiebreak after the launch of that kind of comeback to get to that stage, what's going through your mind?

ALFIE HEWETT: I'll tell you exactly what's going through my mind is the US Open final last year, when I was 6-3 down in the match tiebreak in the final against Shingo.

I had nothing else on my mind apart from making sure that I made balls in the court and just tried to be as aggressive as possible and hope that maybe Gustavo would miss a few. I think he double-faulted, and to be honest, maybe was a bit tight on some of the points afterwards.

It's very cliché of me to say this but tennis is never over until it's over. You have to really believe that down to the core. I think for me I have had so many matches where I have done that from positions where they probably write me off, and I have that confidence that whatever the scoreline is in the match that it can turn around so easily.

Q. I remember talking to you after your first singles title here in Paris, I think the whole thing was a bit of



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a surprise to you then. Do you now consider yourself a bit of a clay-courter?

ALFIE HEWETT: I don't think we have enough tournaments to be able to have that at the moment. I love playing on it, and obviously results kind of speak for themselves with how well I do on the clay.

I do enjoy getting out there and ripping the ball, and I'm very much a top-spinny sort of player that can cause a bit of damage from the baseline.

I think that's what gives me the edge at times. Gustavo probably does that better than me. With the muscle he has behind the ball it's very difficult to actually get your chair behind it and really try and put it back in his side of the court.

Q. I just want to talk to you about being 5-1 down. Watching your match today it seemed as though like you at 5-1 down you kind of relaxed a bit more, as well. Like you were ripping your balls, you were seeing the spaces, hitting the balls that you wanted to hit basically for the previous two sets. Is that how it felt out on court?

ALFIE HEWETT: Yeah. It was a really difficult match because you look at the first set, I think it was 6-1, but how many of those games went to deuce, deuce advantage, deuce advantage, probably a majority of that first set. So even though it looks a bit of a pumping, I knew that I was in the match, and it felt like it went the exact same way in the third set.

So I was a bit frustrated. I think the racquet got launched at one point, and that was just signs of my frustration of not being able to take those chances. In a match against Gusti, you do have to take your chances. It's not like they keep coming.

I think at 5-1 or maybe even 4-1 I just tried to take my emotion out of the game, because as you know, I'm an emotional player, something that I work on, trying to manage that and control it a bit better. In that moment I had got hyped up from winning the second set, came out, missed a few key shots.

And then at 5-1 it was, like, Right, you can either carry on being a bit of a lunatic and lose this match or try and calm down and just think logically about what you're doing. So it paid off.

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Q. I did tweet about it when you did your second-set comeback. I want to know the truth: What do you love more, a comeback like you had today or a bit of pizza?

ALFIE HEWETT: Nah, definitely this victory. I'll never forget this. I think for me this was the match of my life. So far (smiling).

Q. You say it's possibly the match of your life. Do you mean that, after all the various comebacks at different tournaments?

ALFIE HEWETT: Yeah, absolutely. Don't know. It's still very raw, and emotion is bottled up I think a little bit. But to play No. 2 seed who is in form, you know, you can tell he's playing a lot better than maybe previously. Lost to him quite convincingly last week in the warmup tournament. To come here and the expectation to get past him and the way I did it, as well.

Mentally probably the strongest performance. And that, for me, is -- I mean, I know there is still many more matches hopefully to play, but for me right now that's the best comeback, best victory, and just to show what I'm about as a player, and to be fair, who I am as a person. Really shown today.

Q. I had a couple people asking me on social media where you are in terms of your battle to stay on the tour next season. Haven't had a chance to speak to you since Melbourne. Where are things at at the moment?

ALFIE HEWETT: So there's been an independent research that's been going on in the background that the ITF have conducted. So there's still a lot of decisions being made, and I think it's right in the process of basically developing a criteria that is sports-specific. Previous criteria was based on para athletics.

So they've basically conducted this research to try and make the classification as sports-specific relatable to tennis. Then I'm guessing that there will be, if it gets approved by ITF, IPC, whatever boards and committees it needs to be, go through another process of assessment. So that will probably be later in the year. That's what I know.

Q. So is there a genuine chance that the original decision could be overturned now do you think and you still could be playing next year?

ALFIE HEWETT: Yeah, there's some hope. I always bet that the ITF would look at the criteria and the methods used to base our classification on, and they've done that and they've changed or conducted, like I say, a group of researchers that have evidence, facts, and science,

sports, whatever evidence you need, to develop a more specific criteria that's based on our sport, (indiscernible) sport.

Of course that gives me a bit of hope for the future that it can be overturned. I've tried to put it to the back of my mind like I've done for the last 18 months. But to have that news is really promising and gives me a lot more hope that I can still be here in the future.

Q. What's actually on your Grand Slam pizza that's been named after you, do you know?

ALFIE HEWETT: I think it's a barbecue base with chicken, bacon, pepperoni, sweet corn, pepper. It's a bit of everything. A little bit of veg just to keep the veggies happy. I love a barbecue. Barbecue ranch, that's my go-to. It was basically a spinoff of that.

Q. Can you comment on your next match?

ALFIE HEWETT: Yeah, another tough round. Can't get much tougher than the World No. 1. He's a legend in the sport, and I remember joking around at the start of the week with my coach, because we always have these predictions for draws, and I said, I bet I have to play the one before -- 2 and 1 to win, because it always just seems to be my luck that I don't get to the easier side of the draw, wildcards and stuff like that.

I have had to do it the hard way, but it kind of brings out the best tennis because you don't really have a choice when you play against these guys. He's someone I love playing against. We've had some great battles.

The last one was, my last major one was in US Open -- no, it wasn't actually, it was in Australia, and I got the better of him there. So I'm sure he'll be gunning for a little bit of revenge, but I'm excited. I've got doubles later. Hopefully me and G can be in the final tomorrow.

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