

US OPEN

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Jack Draper

Press Conference

J. DRAPER/H. Hurkacz

6-2, 6-4, 7-5

THE MODERATOR: Welcome. Straight sets. Two hours and 12 minutes. Assess your performance this afternoon.

JACK DRAPER: Yeah, I thought I, you know, improved on last match again. Obviously top-20 opponent, someone I have had two battles with in the past. You know, I knew it was going to be a really tough match, someone who's established himself as a top player.

So, you know, really happy with the way I came out today again and with the tennis I played.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. How are you feeling physically after those two matches, straight sets? How close are you serving 100%? How do you feel going on now?

JACK DRAPER: Yeah, I feel physically good. You know, I haven't had match exposure for a long time, so I'm still sort of managing my body. Still getting a little bit sore. Obviously it's a Grand Slam, as well. You have to push your body and know that if you need to go four or five sets, you need to be ready. And I was today. I feel good.

With regards to my shoulder, I'm kind of looking after it each day. It was a bit sore after my last match but when the adrenaline kicks in and obviously playing the US Open, so, you know, just put it out of my mind and go out and try my best to play the tennis I want to.

Q. Did you sense he was a little bit vulnerable today? He had the doctor out there. How did you think he was feeling?

JACK DRAPER: Yeah, I mean, I was sort of in my zone for a couple of sets, and then obviously noticed that he got the trainer on at that point and he didn't look like he was doing too good.



But then, you know, he sort of came out after a little break and he actually I think played his best tennis towards the end. He kind of threw the kitchen sink at me. I knew I had to be ready for each point just in case there was a little dip. Luckily I got that break at 5-All, because you never know what's going to happen in a tiebreak.

To be honest, yeah, I didn't notice that he was maybe not feeling well until that point, because I was just trying to look after my own game, my own serve. Because in those kind of matches against that kind of player who's got a huge serve, you know, if you're not on it on your service games, the match can quickly turn.

If he was ill, then that's tough. But, yeah, I just was focusing on myself, I suppose.

Q. When some players get injured, it can take a lot of time for them to kind of find their feet after matches. You're showing that after some layoffs you can come back quite quickly and find your feet quickly. Curious why you think you are able to do that?

JACK DRAPER: Yeah, I mean, I suppose my tennis has never really felt like it's a problem. I think because of the way I play maybe I can get into matches with my serve and stuff.

I think, you know, credit to myself and my coach and stuff that when I have had time off, when I have had time off for injury, I've not taken any time off. I've gone straight back to the drawing board trying to figure out why I've had the problems I've had, you know, try and work even harder to be better.

I think I said in my last press, I said that, you know, even though last year I was maybe a top-50 player, my rankings dropped a fair bit. I feel like I'm much more complete and a lot better player this year because of the work I've done, and I feel like I'm playing better tennis as a whole.

So, yeah, I'm proud of the way I have come back every time and hopefully I don't have to come back anymore (smiling). I can keep on this trajectory of playing and getting more matches and just getting more confident in my body and in my tennis.

Q. I just wondered how close did you come to not



playing this event? Did the fact that it wasn't necessarily given that you would play, did that take any pressure off you in your own mind in terms of performing here?

JACK DRAPER: Yeah, I mean -- when was it? -- so in Winston, I felt something in my arm again that I hadn't had in a while, and, you know, came here with the intention, oh, we'll take it day by day. I had a scan and I had a very small bit of edema in my arm, which is basically a tear.

I was looking with my coach and physio thinking, you know, just another bit of time off. We were almost in tears. What more can we do?

And, yeah, there was a strong chance I couldn't play this week. But got the scans done and sent it back home and they said that, you know, it's not the same injury as what you had, so it's not that serious. There's a chance you can be able to play if you look after it right, if you maybe deload on it and just try your best to get out there first round and see how it feels.

But, yeah, I mean, there was maybe a 70/30 chance that I wouldn't play this week. So, you know, very, very happy with the fact that I have been able to get out there and play, and actually my shoulder's felt great (smiling).

It's weird how sort of this sport works. Sometimes you can be at your lowest point and then all of a sudden, you know, you get on a bit of form and, you know, you're playing great and body feels good.

Hopefully, touch wood, you know, this is going to be the start of something, you know.

Q. When you were sitting out during Wimbledon, did you imagine you could be in this position now?

JACK DRAPER: Yeah, I mean, I kept on trying to look forward, you know, to the US Open and try and make sure I could maybe get myself back. I knew that I'd have, you know, even though my ranking dropped, I'd still have a main-draw entry for this tournament. That was kind of the goal to, you know, peak at the US Open and try and play.

But, yeah, it was tough taking all that time off, watching the grass court tournaments and, you know, losing so many points from Montreal last year and maybe I'd have to start again with the challengers and all that sort of stuff.

I think it was good for me, though. I think maybe last year I took for granted how well I was doing. And this year, you know, at the start I felt like I had the weight of the world on my shoulders, you know, and I wasn't appreciating the

position I was in and how well I had done. I wasn't really taking that in my stride. So maybe taking that time off, you know, was good for me and kind of a bit of a reality check, I suppose.

But, yeah, no, it's definitely made me stronger having all these injuries and, you know, it's made me a better person, better player. Maybe this stuff happens for a reason.

Q. Just to expand on that, some players have said in the past that before they suffer a big injury they kind of take it for granted playing week in, week out on the tour. What sort of emotions were swirling around for you this summer as you fell away from it all?

JACK DRAPER: Yeah, exactly that. I kind of felt that at the end of last year, you know, things happened so quickly for me that I didn't really acknowledge how well I was doing. You know, earlier this year I was in Adelaide, Australian Open, and I was playing against Rafa on the main court there. I was thinking, I was stressing out, This is tough, you know, and I've just come from Adelaide where I made the semifinal, I've only got one day to prepare. But I was 38 in the world and I was 20 years old and I was doing amazingly well. I just didn't see that at all.

Obviously all these injuries started to hit. Not playing and not being able to compete, which is kind of what I do best, I suppose, in terms of my tennis.

And, yeah, just a real reality check that, you know, seeing people play week in, week out, doing great, and I just sat on the couch doing zero, you know, (smiling). So I tried to really work out these injuries and put that into working even harder.

So like I said, it was tough sitting out, but at the same time, I've used that as fuel to come back stronger. Obviously seeing Alcaraz win Wimbledon and all these young players doing well, that's definitely helped me a lot to think, oh, I can hopefully be there with them in the next couple of years.

Q. Your next-round opponent, they're still on court in the fifth set, you're guaranteed to play a American. How much do you relish that? If it is Isner, how do you feel about playing him here this year? Do you have any recollection of 2010 Wimbledon?

JACK DRAPER: 2010 Wimbledon?

Q. Longest match.

JACK DRAPER: Oh, sorry, yeah, I think against Mahut, yeah. I think he lost in five to Rafa in the French Open that

year as well. That's completely out of context.

No, I obviously remember him playing Mahut, unbelievably long match. How many days did it last? Three days. That's ridiculous.

But, yeah, I mean, really, really nice guy. Always see him in the changing rooms, he's always been good to me as a young player. You know, hopefully, you know, he beats Mmoh and gets to carry on playing this week. But if he plays me hopefully I'll win.

No, I mean, unbelievable career. You know, wish him all the best for after this week, whatever happens. Yeah, hopefully I get to play him.

Q. Were you actually there in Wimbledon 2010?

JACK DRAPER: I don't think I was there that year, no. I watched that on TV though, for sure. It was, like, everyone was glued to that match. It was on Court 12, was it? 18, sorry, yeah. It's famous for them two together. Ridiculous.

Q. If it's him you'll probably be on a show court. I remember when we watched you in Paris, playing a hometown. It was quite raucous. Would you relish that?

JACK DRAPER: Yeah, massively. That ties into the sort of taking for granted. I played a challenger a couple weeks in Winnipeg and there was no one watching really.

I'm enjoying being back on tour and being at these big tournaments. That's something I play for, which is in front of a lot of people and those sort of atmospheres and stuff. I really love playing it whether they're for me or against me. That's what tennis is all about, in my opinion.

Q. You were able to make your third round of a slam for a second straight year at the US Open. That's still such a big moment for you at age 21. How you played against Radu and now against Hubi, you just feel you're back to playing tactically at the level you were playing last year and how dangerous you are to anybody here?

JACK DRAPER: Yeah, definitely. Like I said, I was talking to my coach yesterday, and we were saying I think this year I am a much more complete player than I was even last year. I'm trying to play the right way, which is to be more aggressive and come forward more. You know, I think that's a credit to the work we have done.

It is good, even though I'm relatively early in after my injuries, to be competing more. It's nice to be able to come

here for the second straight year and be in the third round. I can use last year's experiences to hopefully improve on my run from last year.

I have had two good matches against really good players. Hopefully whoever I play next I'll be ready to improve on my performances and keep going this week, because, you know, that's what I want to do. I want to keep going in these big tournaments and do really well. Hopefully that's the case.

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