

cinch Championships

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London, England, UK

Queens Club

Andy Murray

Press Conference

A. MURRAY/A. Popov

6-3, 3-6, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Andy.

Q. Congrats, Andy. How do you feel you played and managed that match, particularly at the beginning of the third set when you took control of it?

ANDY MURRAY: I mean, I did okay. It was not the best match I have played here, but, you know, I took my chances when they came. I was clinical when the opportunities were there.

You know, I obviously lost a bit of momentum at the end of the first set, beginning of the second. Then, yeah, played pretty well in the important moments in the third set, because there was a few tight moments on my service game, and I missed a few balls leading into those close moments.

You know, timed my serve well, and a few times hit the ball better from the back of the court. So, yeah, did well to get through.

Q. Did you enjoy the kind of enthusiasm of the reception you got on the occasion of it all? I know you have played here so many times, but it still feels like a big day.

ANDY MURRAY: Yeah, they always get amazing crowds here in terms of, for Tuesday afternoon, you know, it's brilliant. I mean, I don't know how big the stadium is. It's obviously got bigger over the last few years from when I started playing here, but it was pretty amazing, the turnout they get every single year.

Yeah, it was brilliant. Yeah, a brilliant crowd. You know, I tried to engage them as much as I could. I have always enjoyed that and create a bit more of an atmosphere on the court and tried to do that today, and the crowd supported really well.

Q. I appreciate you have not been off court long, but I don't know if you heard Dan sustained a knee injury this afternoon. He came in here and said how



heartbroken he was. Have you had the chance to speak to him and appreciate how he's feeling right now? He's your potential doubles partner.

ANDY MURRAY: Yeah, I mean, I just heard when I got to the locker room. I haven't spoken to him. But, yeah, one of the doubles players I think was maybe on the court next to him at the time, he said he didn't see it but said he heard him. You know, it sounded pretty bad. Hopefully, you know, the damage isn't too significant.

But, yeah, it's been a tough week in that sense. I think that's the third player on that court that's, you know, injured their knee. You know, that's disappointing. It's tough on all those players. Hopefully, you know, hopefully none of them have done too much damage and it's something they can all recover from quickly. Yeah, disappointing.

Q. Congratulations on your thousandth win.

ANDY MURRAY: Thousandth match. I wish it was my thousandth win. (Laughter.)

Q. By my reckoning, that's the first match you've won with your new racquet. Did you have any doubts that it might not happen?

ANDY MURRAY: No, I mean, I think obviously the clay was kind of always going to be a challenge. You know, opportunities to win matches on the hard courts and the grass would be more likely for me. I did win a match in a challenger the first match that I played with the new racquet.

Yeah, nice to get one on the tour against a good player on the surface that, yeah, on the surface that I think he can play well on. The racquet helped me in certain situations today. You know, these things take time to adjust to. It's not something that takes one or two weeks. It takes a period of time. Each week, you know, I hopefully will feel more comfortable with it.

Q. Just on that 1000th tour-level-match milestone, how much does that mean to you? When you played your first-ever match on the tour, did you ever actually think you'd reach a thousandth match as a milestone?

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ANDY MURRAY: I mean, it's not something I have ever thought about. I didn't know until my mum told me today. Genuinely didn't know that was how many I had played.

Yeah, it's obviously a lot of matches. There won't be I guess in recent years too many players that have played that many, and considering the amount of tennis that I missed over a period of years with the injuries and stuff, yes, a good effort to get there. But it was not something that I ever thought about. When I started on the tour, I was not thinking about how many matches I was going to play or win or whatever.

But, yeah, had a very long career, and it's been really, really good to me (smiling). But, yeah, it's been tough on the body, as well.

Q. Another player who has had a long career and tough on his body is Rafa. Can I just ask you what it's been like playing him over the years, how he kind of evolved as a player over all the times you played him from start to finish?

ANDY MURRAY: Yeah, it's a little bit tricky for me to answer. I have not played him for such a long time. Really, obviously I practiced with him a bit at the beginning of this year, and there were certain things he was definitely doing differently than when I played him, you know, between 2008 and 2015/16.

He's definitely hitting his second serve significantly harder than he was at the beginning of his career. When I played him at the Australian Open, I think that was the first time I played against him in 2007 or 2008. '07? Yeah, he improved his serve a lot since then.

His serve, at the beginning of his career, he sort of used it to kind of start the point. He had a very high first-serve percentage. I think that's probably the shot that I noticed the biggest change in during his career. He improved his serve a lot.

You know, and then, yeah, I would say that he certainly tried to shorten points more as his career progressed, but I didn't necessarily play against him when he was kind of doing that, because I think that happened at more the latter stages of his career.

Unfortunately, I haven't had the chance to play him for, I don't know, I don't know that I played him in 2016, 2015. It will be 8, 9 years ago.

Q. Players are traveling with more people around them, coaches, fitness trainers. You have obviously seen the difference over the years compared to when you started on the tour compared to now in terms of how many people are in the player areas and around the player. How important is it to invest in yourself?

ANDY MURRAY: Yeah, I think it's really important to do that when you can. I mean, obviously there is a lot more prize money on the tour now, and certainly more players are able to afford, you know, having more than just maybe a coach with them.

You know, the ATP also did a brilliant job, I think, anyway, in terms of the physios that they have on the tour work unbelievably hard and do a brilliant job with the players. They also provide psychologists and things like that.

But obviously I think a lot of players, it's preferable to have your own consistent team with you. Yeah, definitely more players are, I think, trying to do that now, and I think, you know, hopefully that should, you know, help the product on the court if players are able to be in better physical shape and hopefully sustain less injuries, because they've got constant kind of medical support with them on the tour.

You know, that's a positive thing. So, yeah, I'm all for that.

Q. I know your mind is on this tournament right now and we don't know what's happening with Dan, but if worse case he can't play the Olympics, would you be up for playing with someone else, maybe Jack, Cam?

ANDY MURRAY: I have no idea how that works. I genuinely don't know. Yeah, I mean, I would. I mean, hopefully, yeah, Evo will, you know, hopefully he's not too bad.

I don't know exactly what the situation is with that, and I'm sure he doesn't know exactly either until he gets some scans and is a bit more clear.

You know, Dan's obviously a brilliant doubles player, so that would be unfortunate. But it's not to say that, you know, Jack and Cam also have the potential to play great doubles. I have no idea how that works, if we're able to change teams now or if it's set in stone. I really don't know.

Q. 1000 matches is incredible physicality-wise and mentality-wise, mental health-wise. How do you keep going with that side of things, and how important is that side of the game as well with the physical side?

ANDY MURRAY: The mental side? Yeah, it's really important. I guess it's sort of two separate things. There's the kind of mental side of things on the court, you know, mentality, the way that you're dealing with, you know, stressful situations, you know, in the matches and everything.

I don't think it's necessarily the same thing as your sort of . . . when all is said, we're done.[®]

mental health away from the match court. There's sort of like a performance state you want to get into, and then also how you deal with the highs and lows of the wins and losses, and also the day-in, day-out kind of training and traveling and being away from friends and family and things that, yeah, you obviously need to take care of as well.

You know, certainly for me I think away from the court, like, throughout my career I have always been, you know, pretty good. You know, I've obviously at times been very, very disappointed and stuff, but definitely when I had my hip issues, yeah, I was in a pretty bad place for a while. Maybe didn't really realize it at the time.

But, yeah, it's important for all of the players to take care of themselves, yeah.

Q. We saw you practicing with Carlos yesterday. Wanted to get your thoughts on how that was? Was that kind of a barometer for where your game is on the grass at the moment? We saw the score that you won as well in the practice set.

ANDY MURRAY: Yeah, I mean, I was really excited to practice with him, well, because I love watching him play. He's for sure one of my favorite players to watch.

Yeah, and he's obviously one of the best players in the world, so I was really pumped to go and practice with him and see, yeah, a little bit where my game was at and, yeah, see how he's playing as well. It's interesting for me, having played against Roger, Rafa, Novak, getting the chance, like, I practiced with Sinner before the Australian Open, practiced with Carlos and stuff, yeah, it's cool for me to get a chance to play for this newer generation and see what do they do better or worse or differently to, you know, the guys that I competed against my whole career.

Yeah, I really enjoyed it. And, yeah, I played very well.

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