

cinch Championships

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Queens Club

Jack Draper

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Congrats, Jack. As the new British No. 1 with your maiden title, how does it feel to come back to Queen's?

JACK DRAPER: Yeah, it feels amazing. You know, last year I was watching from home, doing my rehab at the NTC, and I knew I'd be out for a long time. So to come here this year and be in the position I'm in, feeling like I have made so many improvements and grown so much as a player and just experiences and perseverance through the tough times, I'm really proud of, you know, the way things have gone and I'm very happy to be back here. It's great to be back on home soil.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Congrats. After such a big breakthrough, what's it like then just having to jump on a flight, come here, think about the next thing straightaway and not having time to even, I guess, let it sink in?

JACK DRAPER: Yeah, I mean, tennis is a relentless sport. There is not much time to, I suppose, sort of celebrate or reflect on achievements or, you know, have a good time.

You know, I feel immensely proud of last week. Like I said, there has been lots of tough moments, and so, you know, I know all the hard work I have been putting in for many, many months now, and it's nice that me and my team can celebrate and get a reward for it. You know, it was tough, two finals and then obviously, you know, yesterday was going to be a tough match. But, yeah, I'm extremely proud of the way I came through.

But then it's reality, really. It's get on a flight, get to the hotel at Queen's, you know, train today, and I've got a match on Tuesday.

To be honest, I wouldn't want it any other way. I want to keep on progressing, I want to keep on bettering myself and improving, and having the chance to play in these amazing events.

So, yeah, I will reflect on it at some point, but for now it's just full focus on being here and hopefully doing well.

Q. Well done. You were telling us in Paris how you have been making a few changes to your game and also your approach and trying to be more aggressive. I got the impression that you're a man in transition and it might take a little bit longer for this title run to happen the way it did. Has it surprised you? How did it all come together so quickly?

JACK DRAPER: Yeah, I mean, I suppose it's difficult. I didn't know it was going to come together like it did last week. You know, all I knew is that every day I was trying to focus on doing the right things on and off the court. I was making lots of errors in practice. I was trying to do things that I had never done before in a tennis court.

That kind of showed when I was in Geneva and the French Open. You know, I was all over the place. I was very lost on the court, because I had a lot of information going from my head around how I need to play, and what have you, but it was kind of a reluctance to do it. I was sort of trying, but I wasn't doing it with full commitment.

So when I got home, you know, I really thought to myself, you know, I need to just fully commit to this. I think obviously the grass helps to sort of let that come a bit quicker, as well.

I didn't know it was going to come together like it has, but I feel incredibly confident. Yeah, I'm happy with the approach I'm taking. I think that kind of showed last week.

Q. How did it feel playing with this more aggressive mindset? You hit, was it 31 aces, was that in the semifinal? In terms of your feelings on court, how different does it feel going from, like you said in Paris, feeling like you're more of a grinder to now looking to dominate and pull people off the court?

JACK DRAPER: Yeah, I think it's been tough, because the way I have won matches historically is by outgrinding players and by, you know, being tough to beat. That's got me to 40 in the world.

But I have kept on playing these really top players, whether it's Alcaraz I played a couple of times, you know, Hurkacz, Fritz, you know, I have lost a lot of tough matches, and it's all because they have beat me in the end and I have been too defensive, I haven't taken it to

them.

You know, good players, they don't miss those short balls. So when you do get a bit tentative and stuff, you're going to get punished. Ultimately I want to play the tennis where I'm able to beat these players by being aggressive and being the one to dominate them.

So, yeah, I think, you know, it was just a moment where I was, like, I need to change, and I really, really have the mindset of wanting to play like a 6'4" big-serving player. And whether that is taking more risks and maybe missing a few more shots than I would usually do, then that's okay, because hopefully I'm doing the right things and it will come together and get more and more consistent.

Q. In the last 24 hours, have you received any particular messages, congratulations, or anything that surprised or pleased you? Anything in particular you can tell us about?

JACK DRAPER: No. No, I don't have many contacts on my phone. Not too many, to be honest (smiling).

You know, I have got a pretty close circle, pretty small group of really good friends. Obviously, you know, social media and stuff, you know, lose first round Paris, you're awful. Win last week, you're amazing. That's just the way sport works.

Yeah, it feels great and I've got a lot of pride, but like I said, that's last week. Now we're here, so it's a new challenge and a new event. Hopefully I'll be ready to go.

Q. Carlos and Andy both spoke about you yesterday. One thing Andy said, I think he's got bigger goals than just being British No. 1. In my opinion, he can get to the top of the game, top of the world rankings. How do you feel to hear that, and do you agree?

JACK DRAPER: Yes, of course, it's amazing to hear that from someone like Andy. I think I said a couple days ago when you asked me about being No. 1 Brit, it's a huge honor and it's a huge privilege, I know, but I hadn't thought about that at all. My goal is to honestly be one of the top players in the world. That's sort of been what I have wanted.

I think by winning a title last week, it kind of helps me to sort of believe more and more, because it's been tough and I have been close a few times and not quite getting it over the line. I think it really changes my belief system a little bit as well as to what I can achieve.

So, yeah, obviously anyone who is like Andy or Carlos or Cam Norrie or Dan Evans saying positive things about myself and my tennis, that's a huge positive and something to be proud of.

Q. You might be too young to remember, but sort of around 2007 and 2008, there was a time in British tennis where basically tour events and Grand Slams, it was like Andy was the only British player, wasn't much interest, and people were quite scathing about the future and whatever else. Do you feel now, you won at Stuttgart, Katie won in Nottingham, there's been some good challenger wins recently, as well, the vibe in British tennis is quite positive and there is just basically more people doing well and getting wins all over the place?

JACK DRAPER: Yeah. I mean, I think for the people who maybe are following just kind of the tour tennis, they don't know about, say, the Brits coming out of uni, you know, there is a lot of boys my age or a couple years below me who went to uni, like Jacob Fearnley, Jack Pinnington Jones. George Loffhagen didn't go to uni, but he had a bit of a break as well.

So on the men's side, I think there is a lot of younger players who are going to be really, really good. They're just going to take a bit of time. Obviously on the women's side you've got Katie Boulter, obviously backed up her title, which is amazing, and Emma, we all know how good she is, and a lot of people in there.

One thing I would say, though, it is on a grass court, these wins. So the hopes can go up a little too much. But I would say that British tennis is in a good place and there is a lot of good players around and we're going to keep on pushing each other to be better. That's it.

Q. You said that thing about playing like a 6'4" player a couple of times over the last day or two. Is that someone else has said to you, or something you've come up by yourself or something you have talked about with someone?

JACK DRAPER: No, I just feel it. When I play someone like Taylor Fritz or Hurkacz or someone who is a similar height to me, I feel like I'm 5'6" sometimes when I play them, because I'm just running on the baseline and they are dictating every ball and it's quite uncomfortable, you know.

So I think, yeah, it's basically just me now. I was very small when I was younger. That's the thing, I was grinding through matches, trying to outmaneuver players and stuff, whereas I don't need to do that anymore.

I think if I can keep on improving my serve and just my overall mentality into being a more aggressive player, it's going to definitely change a lot of things for me.

Q. You mentioned your ambitions there, which are pretty lofty and something you have talked about a lot already. How do you stay grounded, make sure

you achieve those?

JACK DRAPER: Yeah, I don't know what it is. Maybe it's just being a tennis player, but, you know, my mindset is, you know, I'm never too satisfied with most things. You know, I always want to do more, want to achieve more.

I think tennis does generally keep you pretty grounded, because you might win one week and you might be on an all-time high, and then you might lose the next day or something. That brings you down to earth.

It's important to stay level regardless of wins and losses. I know that, say, if I won Stuttgart last week and I got way over the top and stuff, then there is a chance to take my eye off the ball this week. That's not something you want to do.

So I think the way tennis works, it does keep you very grounded, but also, you know, I know the way I am and I'm, yeah, I'm not easily satisfied. I've just got to keep on going. Yeah, had a good hit today, worked hard. I'm ready to go tomorrow.

Q. You said yesterday that you took a good look at yourself after the French Open. Are you someone who is, like, open with the people around you when you're going through a difficult period, or is this more like self-reflective, like, you're talking to yourself?

JACK DRAPER: Yeah, I mean, of course, you know, tennis is an individual sport, but we have teams of people trying to help us stand out, listening to our insecurities, the things that, you know, we feel are difficult in our lives on the court or off the court.

So obviously having those discussions with the team and seeing how they can help you to understand things better, and just ultimately just make things easier for you is important.

But I think, you know, it's also important, as well, to have an edge about you. I know that sort of those last two matches on the clay, even though I was trying to do things different, I don't want to be in that position. I don't want to be losing first round. You know, it angers me.

I was really, really upset after the French Open, because like I said, I knew I had been putting in so much hard work, I just wasn't fully committing to what I knew I had to do. So it was important just to let go and to, yeah, get on the training court and really accept that things need to change.

You know, I'm going to fully commit to this and it doesn't matter if I'm missing. Just we spoke about recently, just keeping a positive mindset in whatever I'm doing,

whether it's bad bounces on the court or slippy or missed second-serve return by an inch or something, trying just to remain positive all the time. Because at this level, there is very small margins.

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