

# cinch Championships

Friday, 23 June 2023

London, England, UK

Queens Club

## Alex de Minaur

Press Conference



A. de MINAUR/A. Mannarino

6-4, 4-6, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Well done, Alex. That was a tough match, especially the end. Can you tell us a little bit about the end of the match?

ALEX de MINAUR: Yeah, look, it's never easy playing Adrian. I think everyone on tour knows that. It's always going to be a chess match till the end.

Yeah, I'm extremely proud that I was able to get on top today against a very high-quality grass court player.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. Alex, up a set and a break, and then the break again in the third, what happened at those situations? How concerned did you get at those moments?**

ALEX de MINAUR: Look, to be honest, I wasn't too concerned. Ultimately I would have loved to just serve it out and not have to deal with all the stress of playing a third set and so on (smiling).

But I know going in playing against Adrian that there's times where he can just light it up on return. Look, probably particularly today I didn't have my best serving performance, which I would have loved in certain points of that match to get a couple free points and make a couple more first serves.

You know, he's a great returner. There's times where he just picks them and laces returns and applies a lot of pressure. So what I'm most happy about was the way that I just bounced back.

I didn't let it affect me. I just kind of told myself, well, if I've already broken him, why not do it again? That was kind of the mindset.

Yeah, I had lots of chances to lose my head today and I stayed calm. Essentially that's why I got the win today.

**Q. The more you play on grass, the more**

**comfortable you look. Do you feel as though you're set for a big run at Wimbledon potentially this year? How much would it mean to you to actually win this prestigious tournament?**

ALEX de MINAUR: Yeah, look, this is the part of the year which I thoroughly love. Yeah, ever since the first time I stepped on a grass court, I told myself that this was going to be my favorite surface. Now I'm fortunate to play in these prestigious events, best grass courts in the world.

Yeah, I haven't thought that far (smiling). Obviously would be pretty surreal. But the whole plan is to take advantage of this kind of part of the year and hopefully gather some points and really set myself up in the rankings to finish the year strong.

That's the ultimate goal, and I'm playing some great tennis. You know, hopefully I can keep it going. I played very well last year at Wimby, so, you know, that's obviously the main goal.

**Q. Adrian is an excellent counterpuncher, much like yourself in your game. How did you look to use the slice today to slow down the play and the pace and have him generate his own pace from the back with groundstrokes?**

ALEX de MINAUR: Yeah, look, I think you explained it pretty well yourself. Whenever you play Adrian, there's probably no other player like that on tour. He's got one of, for me, one of the best backhands.

His ball is so flat. It stays so low on the grass. You know, ultimately he wants you to lift the ball up so he can hit down and be aggressive. I tried to implement a couple of slices so he had to try to probably spin it a little bit more which I know he doesn't like to generate as much.

Yeah, it was a very tactical match, because at times, you know, you want to play your patterns. Obviously I don't want to get into his backhand into my forehand battle, and I want to get into my backhand into his forehand battles (smiling).

So we're pretty similar players, and on the grass I think we bring out pretty much a chess match. Today I got out



on top, but you never know. They're always battles.

**Q. You mentioned when you first got on grass you felt it was your surface. When would that have been? How old would you have been? Where would it have been? Presumably quite soon after that you'd be aware of Cash and Rafter and all the greats, Australian heritage on grass?**

ALEX de MINAUR: Yeah, well, actually I was probably around nine years old, and I had my first hit on the grass. Obviously had watched it on the telly, but, you know, yeah, ever since, I was like, you know, this is going to be my surface.

It's a shame that there isn't more tournaments on the grass, but I have always kind of played well on the grass. I have had success. I think my game suits it quite well. And, yeah, ultimately if I can get some results on the grass, it would mean the world to me.

**Q. We don't know who you've got next at this point. Your thoughts on Musetti, who's got a beautiful game to watch, maybe not always the strongest mentally, and then Rune who is a dogged fighter out there. So what are your thoughts on each of those guys?**

ALEX de MINAUR: Look, I think they're two players that in previous years probably they hadn't found their footing on the grass, and this year they seem to have. So they've got a little bit of confidence under their belt. They're obviously playing some great tennis. They're both very dangerous players.

I would say Rune has probably a bigger game, better serve, more firepower. Musetti, he's tricky with his slice. He's got a great slice. Backhand line on this surface.

Look, ultimately I'm happy to be where I am, giving myself an opportunity to go even deeper in these events, and that's been the goal for me to keep putting myself in these positions, and ultimately I'll take advantage of it. I'm looking forward to it.

**Q. You have spoken about the tactics today and how you clearly planned in advance what was going to happen. He famously has this superstition about not knowing until 15 minutes or so before he walks on court who he's going to play next and almost work it out while the match is going on. Could you imagine playing tennis like that in that kind of almost free way?**

ALEX de MINAUR: Look, I think, you know, I'm not too sure how he manages to do it, with the fact that so much of the media will always let you know your draw in advance. I'm probably one of those guys that doesn't look at draws either, but I just like to know my first-round

opponent and then go from there (smiling).

But, yeah, I think it's a great way to kind of look at the match. You don't have to worry about it until you step out there on the court. If you've got that much talent to basically make everyone have to change their game to play against you, then you're looking pretty good.

So I wish I could do that (smiling). I need at least a day of knowing who I'm playing so I can kind of tactically visualize what I want to do.

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