

# HSBC Championships

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Queens Club

## Alex de Minaur

Press Conference



# CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Queen's Club

A. de MINAUR/D. Shapovalov

6-4, 6-1

THE MODERATOR: First of all, congrats, Alex. Very quick and straight win today for you. How do you assess your performance on court today?

ALEX de MINAUR: Yeah, I'm very happy with the win today. I thought it was very close to a faultless performance. I felt sharp from the very first point till the last.

I knew I had to bring a very high level today if I wanted to beat someone like Denis. He's extremely dangerous on the grass, and, you know, coming back from yesterday maybe not being my sharpest to today being a sharp version of myself, I'm super happy.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. Do you think there is or has been something in your game or the matchup itself with Denis over the years that has made you so dominant against him?**

ALEX de MINAUR: I think when it comes to our matches, we're both quite clear on the game plan and what we need to do to hurt each other, right?

Denis has got so much firepower from both sides, and, you know, for me, my job is I needed to neutralize that the best way I can and try to make him go for a little bit more whenever I can. That's when maybe some of the unforced errors creep in. If I can sustain that kind of pressure, then it's going to go my way.

But at the same time, I need to be very good and very sharp at, one, understanding that he can go through spells where he can take the racquet out of my hands, and two, if I can fight through my service games and those opportunities that maybe he has, then that's going to help me out in the long run.

Like today, I think I fought off two big breakpoints trying to serve out for the set, and those are the type of critical points that can kind of swing this match completely the other way, and it went my way today, so happy.

**Q. What do you think made the difference from yesterday to today? And also, coming in from 's-Hertogenbosch, yesterday you were saying that things are different. How different is the grass there compared to here?**

ALEX de MINAUR: Well, it's very different. I mean, of course they're both grass courts, but 's-Hertogenbosch is quite slow and proppy, and Queen's is notoriously quick and slick. The grass is always shorter here at Queen's than any other event. That's what normally makes it the quicker of the grass court tournaments.

It was a quick turnaround for me to go from 's-Hertogenbosch to play here, and yesterday, I was still kind of trying to get my feet going and kind of feeling my way on the court.

Today, having a match under my belt I thought was exactly what I need, and I felt comfortable, I felt sharp, and kind of playing the type of tennis that I know I can play on these types of courts, which, you know, can make me dangerous here.

**Q. Another grass court question. People often, especially here, they'll slip, they'll fall, that kind of thing, it's part of the grass experience. How much can you learn and improve about how to fall, I suppose, so that you don't hurt yourself, but also how to pick yourself up after a fall?**

ALEX de MINAUR: Yeah, look, I think as you play more and more on grass, as you have years of experience, you start to understand the different types of grass courts, and as I said, the length of the grass is a big factor on whether you slip or you slide on a grass court, and how easy it to do that.

Queen's is notoriously easy to kind of slip and slide onto your shots. For me, one of the things I try to do whenever I come onto a grass court swing, of course the first couple of days you're very worried about your footwork, and you're quite wary, but as you spend more and more time until that first time that you commit to going out wide and sliding, and then you realize that, okay, this is normal, you start to treat it a little bit more like a hard court, and you kind of end up trying to slide.



You're always going to slip, and that's part of it, and you do your best to kind of hopefully not hurt yourself, but when you're purposely trying to slide to end range of shots, you're doing that with confidence, and that's going to, you know, going to be less chance of you getting injured, I'd say.

**Q. You have fallen on grass courts?**

ALEX de MINAUR: Yeah, I think it's part of it. I mean, everyone slips and slides. You see it every match, right? It's nothing out of the ordinary. You've got slips, slides, dives, the whole works, right? But that's always kind of the fun of a grass court that, you know, some players would be, you know, confident enough to go out there and dive on a hard court or clay. You'll never see me doing that. The only time I will is on a grass court, because I know it's a softer landing, and so you have a little bit of fun with that.

**Q. Can you talk about the conditions today? Because it was quite hot and glary. Do you kind of think that that brings out the best in your game?**

ALEX de MINAUR: Yeah, I think today I dealt with the conditions a lot better than yesterday. Today was still swirly and the ball kind of moves a lot. It was, yeah, a little bit warmer. We had the sun going. At one stage you had to kind of move your ball toss around on one end for me serving, but I think it definitely tends to bring out the best in me.

Whenever it's a little bit hotter, a little bit quicker, that's when I feel like my ball kind of penetrates through the court. It kind of is a more effective shot. Today it allowed my kind of -- my normal groundstrokes just have a little bit more on them, which made it more difficult for my opponent.

**Q. With your serve, both of you seemed to struggle with your first serves early on. I know you said you're very, very happy with your game, but is that something that you'd really like to work on for the next game?**

ALEX de MINAUR: Yeah, I mean, today I think the last couple of days with the wind it's been extremely difficult to get any sort of rhythm on your serve, right? Because it feels like it's quite swirly on that center court, and it doesn't feel like you've always got the wind from the same side, so you go back and forth. The wind is kind of swirling in every direction, so it's very hard to kind of feel comfortable.

So, you know, after the kind of first couple games where I just struggled to make first serves, I just told myself, look, let's just scale it back, let's just go for big targets, try and make a higher percentage of first serve. I was playing well off the baseline, and just go to your safety serves,

and it definitely ended up helping me out.

**Q. Well played. When they changed the courts at Wimbledon about the time that Lleyton Hewitt won the title, the bounce went higher. How does the bounce here compare with Wimbledon now? Is it similar? Is there a difference?**

ALEX de MINAUR: I do think it probably -- it's a little bit, since it's shorter, it props up and bounces a little bit higher here. I think, yeah, Wimbledon, every year it's a little bit different, so I won't know until I step out on those courts in a couple weeks' time.

But they are normally a little bit slower, and the bounce is a little bit lower. Sometimes, you know, the ball kind of gets stuck, right. Maybe here, if you hit a good slice, it kind of slips through and really kind of penetrates through the court.

I feel like sometimes at Wimbledon, in the previous years, it's a little bit longer, so it doesn't go through the court as much and it checks up sometimes.

Look, it makes for different styles of tennis, right, which is kind of week to week, and you just gotta do your best to kind of adapt. But, yeah, I'm looking forward to it. That's for sure.

**Q. Two things. Next match, Nakashima, what are your thoughts there? And just going back to the thoughts on sliding, would you say that there is an art to sliding, an art to sliding on clay and an art to sliding on grass?**

ALEX de MINAUR: I think on grass, you know, we're seeing more and more, right? In the past, you never used to see anyone slide on a grass court, right? It was kind of taboo. You just think, oh, he just slipped, right?

More and more you're seeing these incredible athletes go out on a grass court as if it's a hard court, right, and sliding end range from both sides, feeling completely comfortable, right.

So I do think that now you're at a stage that if you don't commit to sliding on a grass court, you're at a disadvantage, especially in the end-range balls, so this sport is already fine margins, you don't want to give that edge to your opponents.

Yeah, for me, you've just got to commit. Obviously, because of a slide a couple years ago, I had a pretty bad injury, so that's still kind of in the back of my mind always when I'm going out for a slide, so I'm still probably a little bit more tentative than I was a couple years ago, yeah.

And then, with Brandon, we've played a couple of times. He's an extremely consistent player. I'm expecting long

rallies. I'm expecting, you know, a battle. Probably a physical one, as well. It's going to be a lot more of me trying to find different ways to try and hurt him, right.

I feel like the first two matches I haven't had too much rhythm to kind of play with, and this next one, there will be a lot of rallies, so it will kind of be up to either one of us to just dictate or try to do something and find different ways to hurt each other.

**Q. A quick one about last week, when you and Katie are having deep runs at the same time, what's that experience like? How nice is it, I guess, to be spurring each other on at the same time?**

ALEX de MINAUR: Oh, it's amazing. I think it brings out the best in each other. We kind of have a little bit of that competitive nature in us where we both want to do better than each other, and it just kind of, yeah, brings out a healthy competition, right, the same way that now that I'm playing here at Queen's, I've got to do my best to kind of try and at least match her performance, because if not, I'll never hear the end of it (smiling).

So that's my drive and motivation. Let's say that.

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