

TIM HENMAN:

Q: Tim, would you say that was the ideal final preparation for you?

A: Absolutely. Everything about it and the result, I guess, was a nice finishing touch but to be out there for a good couple of hours and really work on some important aspects of my game and feel like I was executing it pretty well most of the time is ideal, so I'm really pleased with the way things went.

Q: And all despite some funny looking line calls at times?

A: Yeah, it was getting pretty interesting. They were missing a few by quite a stretch but, you know, that happens from time to time. I missed a few by a long, long way but it was okay.

Q: There was one wide signal at one point?

A: Yeah, I changed my mind. Fatal. Thought about going to the open court and Andre probably wouldn't have run for it anyway but I tried to go back behind him and missed it by a long, long way.

Q: You have obviously made a big decision in your tennis career. You've explained it in web site terms, would you mind just perhaps elaborating on why you think the time is right to step away from Davis Cup?

A: First and foremost it isn't a decision I've taken lightly, I've really thought about it for a long, long time and I was able to discuss it with Jeremy before Christmas and then we had dinner again out here and I felt like it was a difficult decision because I think you guys know how much I've enjoyed representing my country - I've done it for a long, long time, I think a decade - but I just felt with the rigours of the tour, as I said, the demands, the scheduling and, in all honesty, how my body doesn't quite recover as quickly as I would have liked, or as it did in the past, I felt that something probably had to give and I feel very, very motivated and determined about the next few years for my own game and I feel like I've got a lot more to achieve and from that point of view I've perhaps had to make a selfish decision but I will always look back on the Davis Cup with a lot of fond memories.

Q: Having seen you over the years, the demeanour during and after Austria was pretty low, was that the straw that broke the camel's back?

A: I don't know. When Jeremy and I discussed it and we were able to reflect on different situations over the last couple of years, I perhaps didn't realise it at the time but even Morocco I felt like I was really struggling and I think I probably had to dig deeper than I have ever been to play as well as I did against El Aynaoui but I can reflect back to the effort that it took in mentally, physically and emotionally to prepare for that. I think in hindsight that was perhaps where I was beginning to struggle a little bit and I'm not going to hide behind the fact. I think it was difficult circumstances in Austria after my exploits in New York and certainly after that tie, I think it did it, it made me think

about these things and how I felt about it. As I said, it was a long, long time from, I can't remember the dates exactly but to really making a final decision a few days ago, there's been a lot of thought that's gone into it.

Q: We have had many press conferences after Davis Cup ties where you've said it is about time someone else moved in or moved up or challenged. Now you've kind of opened the door for someone who is going to have to step up - - -

A: Again, if I'm honest that had no bearing on my decision, it was what I felt was best for me and I think the result, the outcome of my decision, is that now it should be a good opportunity for somebody to step up and take advantage because they're going to need that.

Q: Hypothetically, if you look from afar and see them beaten 4-1 or 5-1 in Israel, what would your reaction be?

A: I'd be disappointed for the guys, I would be disappointed for Jeremy but I know the way that Davis Cup has changed since Jeremy took over and I think the structure, the preparation, the way the team works, has been the best that I've been a part of so, again, it's going to be a building process. As I said, they will go there and prepare as well as they have ever done and I've got every confidence that they can beat them.

Q: You said on your web site statement that you would be prepared to help and do whatever you can. What sort of things do you mean by that?

A: I was talking with Jeremy the other night and they're really trying to put in place a very, very good structure for the whole country and for the coaches and the players and I've always been keen to try and pass down my advice, my experiences of the tour. My situation has changed, I'm no longer really practicing at Queens, I've been at Bischam Abbey and Jeremy and 'Petch' have been able to get some of the guys to come over there and I love hitting with the youngsters and seeing the raw talent they've got and try and pass on some of that information and I will always be very keen to continue that.

Q: But you don't expect to get on a mission and support them but if there's a hope with the tie and you are not anywhere that week, would you go along?

A: Sure, if I'm around, I will always be watching, I'm always watching everyone's results - I'm watching Bogo and Arv and Jamie and when they're playing here I know what's going on and, likewise, Davis Cup has been a big part of my career. As I said, I've had some fantastic memories some unbelievable experiences, some incredible atmospheres to play in, probably some of my best, and I've had some pretty tough ones to sort of get over as well. It's not going to be banished from my mind.

Q: Even Andre hasn't played Davis Cup for a while, you played every chance you have had when you have been fit. Did you talk to Andre about it or any influence from others?

A: No, not at all, it's been purely my decision. The reality of it is that our schedule is so busy and even having a break and perhaps I didn't handle the off-season quite as well as I could have done but it seems like the season comes on us pretty quickly and to a certain extent I feel good about everything now but I'm working pretty hard to stay healthy. Again, with the demands of the Davis Cup on top of that it was becoming harder and harder for me.

Q: Having spent some time with him in Austria as part of the squad, clearly Andy Murray is a confident lad of 17 years old, everything to play for. Do you think he is capable of moving in and moving into the side to play in this tie?

A: Absolutely, yes, I really do. I would like to see him play a few more matches. I had great fun, great pleasure, spending some time with him in Austria and seeing what an accomplished player he is already and seeing how well he plays. Whether it's him or Bogu has made some improvements but it is, there's going to be an opportunity there for them to come on a big stage and they've got to learn from that because it's good in all aspects, it will be good for them in Davis Cup but very good in their development of their own careers.

Q: You have always appreciated the travelling support of the Britain Davis Cup, not least your mother and father. Would you understand everyone's disappointment that perhaps the team won't be as strong as it might be?

A: Absolutely. As I've said, I've had incredible support and we've always had amazing support whenever we've gone and my family have been a part of that. I ended up calling my parents from here and telling them and, in all honesty, it was news to them; I think they were ready to be booking tickets for Israel to come and support. But as I said, I'm not going to hide from the fact that it has been a really difficult decision but again I've had to make a few of those over the years and this is one I feel is right for me. I can see with what I've given to Davis Cup in the last 10 years that I've been a big part of the team but it's time to start afresh.

Q: You also stressed the format of the cup. Do you get a feeling, Tim, that amongst the players there is a groundswell of feeling that Davis Cup should take on a new shape, perhaps it's time that people looked at it and said: can't we do it some other way, it's huge, but no one understand how it actually operates?

A: In what respect they don't understand how it operates?

Q: What a Euro zone is, who plays where when it come on the calendar?

A: Sure, that is an incredible event with a number of teams that are participating and, sure, you've got different divisions but it's just the format of potentially several ties throughout the year and, with all due respect, we've never done particularly well so we've never had the problem of getting through to the semis and the finals and there is this situation which I just don't think is quite right that you're playing the final and you already know who you are going to play in the first round next year. Whether they were

to play every two years, or whether they would change the format to try and limit the number of weeks, I don't know, but that's for somebody else to come up with.

Q: But there is a sense that players are talking about this, are they?

A: I think so. I'm certainly not the first person to be making this decision and I certainly won't be the last, and it is, it's just the demands of playing professional tennis when you are trying to encompass so much in a calendar year that at my age it's not getting any easier.

Q: Will it be a major regret when we had two of the top two players in the top 10, and obviously you formed a very good doubles partnership, that we didn't manage to challenge it or win a world group tie?

A: That's something I've thought about and, again, I can reflect on so many great moments but disappointments and, again, I don't think you can second guess yourself because when Greg and I played some of those matches I felt like we prepared absolutely as best we could, we were out there giving everything we had and at times we were able to come through at times we didn't. That's where if we felt like we could have given more then you would second guess yourself but that's where we were at. As I said, some of those atmospheres, those matches we played in Birmingham, the atmosphere we had playing away on a few occasions, it was really, really special and I will always enjoy looking back on that.

Q: Just a very quick hypothetical. If this team was to get back into the world group next year, is that you done for good, no matter what?

A: If they can accomplish that, which there is no reason why they can't if they can keep developing, I think it's right that they're the ones that have got there, they deserve to be playing. But, as you say, it's difficult, I don't really want to get into too many hypothetical situations. I've thought long and hard about it and I'm comfortable with the decision I made.

Q: Was the fact that this upcoming Israel tie is so close before the big American spring -
- -

A: No, it's not. It's obviously what I've experienced over a long, long period of time and the schedule of the matches has changed from different times, it's been straight after Australia, it's now here, we've played after Miami, we've played just after Wimbledon, there's been lots of different permutations when it's come to the schedule. So not the date of this tie, I don't that's had an influences, it's really I feel an accumulation of the years.

Q: If you had been sure that you would be only a singles player, might have that lengthened - - -

A: No, Jeremy and I talked about different situations and, again, as you guys know, the way I've approached things it's kind of all or nothing. I felt that to be a part of the team

you have got to be there to play everything if required and, as I said, that's not how I felt it would be right.