# Clare Balding warns Jack Draper faces unique pressures as Britain’s top seed at Wimbledon



BBC presenter Clare Balding has cautioned that Jack Draper faces unique pressures as he prepares to compete at Wimbledon, where he is seeded fourth. At just 23 years old, Draper has emerged as Britain’s leading tennis hope following Andy Murray’s retirement, buoyed by his recent success including an Indian Wells Masters 1000 title and a US Open semi-final appearance last year. However, Balding highlights that the prestige of playing at home for Wimbledon can bring psychological challenges that other Grand Slams do not, given the intense media scrutiny and the weight of national expectation. She noted that while the support of the home crowd is invaluable, the added pressure to perform can profoundly influence a player’s mental and physical game. Balding described Andy Murray’s Wimbledon achievements as particularly remarkable precisely because of his ability to manage these conflicting emotions.

Draper’s potential to win Grand Slam titles is recognised widely, and he has already recorded victories against top contenders such as Carlos Alcaraz and Jannik Sinner, who have dominated recent Grand Slams between them. Despite their formidable presence on the ATP tour—with Alcaraz aiming for a historic third consecutive Wimbledon title and Sinner, the current world number one, seeking to solidify his grass-court form—Draper has proven he can compete at the highest level. Analysts underline his physical development, powerful left-handed serve, and aggressive forehand reminiscent of Rafael Nadal’s style as key factors in his rise. Draper’s seeding at Wimbledon reflects his ascendance; he has recently climbed to world No. 4 following a quarter-final win at the Queen’s Club Championships, surpassing players such as Novak Djokovic and Taylor Fritz in the rankings.

The draw for Wimbledon presents Draper with a challenging path, starting with Argentine Sebastian Baez and potentially facing elite players like Djokovic, Sinner, and Alcaraz in later rounds. These matchups imply that Draper’s route to the trophy will demand peak performance from the outset. The tournament also showcases a broad spectrum of talent, including Djokovic chasing a record 25th Grand Slam and rising contenders like Alexander Zverev, Taylor Fritz, and Daniil Medvedev aiming to disrupt the established order. Meanwhile, Alcaraz's dominance on grass, highlighted by his recent Queen’s Club title, places him as a strong favourite to continue his Wimbledon success.

Beyond individual achievements, initiatives like Barclays’ Free Park Tennis scheme, celebrated by Balding at a recent London event, aim to democratise access to tennis and cultivate future British talent. By offering free coaching and equipment at more than a hundred courts nationwide, the programme addresses financial and logistical barriers that have historically limited participation in tennis within certain communities. Balding referenced the Murray brothers’ journey, underscoring the importance of accessible opportunities rather than privileged backgrounds in nurturing sporting success. The scheme’s early impact is promising, having engaged 35,000 children since its inception, encouraging not only physical fitness but also the concentration and discipline tennis fosters.

In sum, while Draper represents a beacon of hope for British tennis ahead of Wimbledon, the multifaceted pressures of competing on home soil compound the already formidable challenges posed by world-class adversaries. His recent form and ranking trajectory, combined with grassroots efforts to expand tennis participation, offer an encouraging outlook for both this tournament and the future of the sport in the UK.

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* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/tennis/jack-draper-wimbledon-clare-balding-grand-slam-argentine-b2778423.html)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/tennis/jack-draper-wimbledon-clare-balding-grand-slam-argentine-b2778423.html), [[2]](https://www.reuters.com/sports/tennis/draper-ready-wimbledon-spotlight-great-british-hope-2025-06-26/), [[3]](https://www.reuters.com/sports/tennis/alcaraz-seeks-wimbledon-hat-trick-sinner-djokovic-plot-dethroning-2025-06-27/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/tennis/jack-draper-wimbledon-clare-balding-grand-slam-argentine-b2778423.html), [[3]](https://www.reuters.com/sports/tennis/alcaraz-seeks-wimbledon-hat-trick-sinner-djokovic-plot-dethroning-2025-06-27/), [[4]](https://www.reuters.com/sports/tennis/top-seed-sabalenka-draws-qualifier-branstine-wimbledon-first-round-2025-06-27/), [[5]](https://www.tennis365.com/tennis-news/jack-draper-rankings-jump-queens-club-wimbledon-seeding), [[7]](https://www.tennis365.com/tennis-news/jack-draper-rankings-jump-queens-club-wimbledon-seeding)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/tennis/jack-draper-wimbledon-clare-balding-grand-slam-argentine-b2778423.html)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/tennis/jack-draper-wimbledon-clare-balding-grand-slam-argentine-b2778423.html), [[6]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/tennis/articles/c75l0qyny5eo)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/tennis/jack-draper-wimbledon-clare-balding-grand-slam-argentine-b2778423.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.reuters.com/sports/tennis/draper-ready-wimbledon-spotlight-great-british-hope-2025-06-26/> - Jack Draper enters Wimbledon 2025 as Britain's new tennis hope, taking centre stage following Andy Murray's retirement. Previously winning only two matches at Wimbledon, the 23-year-old has transformed dramatically over the past year. Draper ended last season ranked 15th after a notable U.S. Open semi-final run and has since won at Indian Wells and reached the Madrid final. Now the tournament's fourth seed, he is lauded for his improved physical strength, a strong left-handed serve, and a powerful forehand comparable to Rafael Nadal's.
3. <https://www.reuters.com/sports/tennis/alcaraz-seeks-wimbledon-hat-trick-sinner-djokovic-plot-dethroning-2025-06-27/> - Carlos Alcaraz is aiming for a third consecutive Wimbledon title, seeking to cement his position as men's tennis' new dominant force after a thrilling French Open win against top rival Jannik Sinner. Alcaraz has impressed with his adaptation to grass, boasting a 29-3 win-loss record and recently securing the Queen's Club title. Should he succeed at Wimbledon, 22-year-old Alcaraz would become only the fifth man in the Open Era to win three straight titles at the tournament. Meanwhile, Sinner, the current world number one recovering from a tough loss in Paris and a shaky grass season, arrives under pressure but motivated. Novak Djokovic, aged 38, eyes a record 25th Grand Slam and hopes to equal Roger Federer's eight Wimbledon titles despite a subdued 2025 and no warm-up events. British hopes rest on Jack Draper during his home slam post-Andy Murray's retirement. Contenders like Alexander Zverev, Taylor Fritz, Daniil Medvedev, and Alexander Bublik aim to break the Alcaraz-Sinner stronghold. With several major players vying for glory, the upcoming Wimbledon tournament promises high-stakes rivalries and potential historic milestones.
4. <https://www.reuters.com/sports/tennis/top-seed-sabalenka-draws-qualifier-branstine-wimbledon-first-round-2025-06-27/> - Carlos Alcaraz begins his pursuit of a third consecutive Wimbledon title against experienced Italian Fabio Fognini, while women's top seed Aryna Sabalenka faces Canadian qualifier Carson Branstine. The tournament draw revealed several intriguing matchups. Men's top seed Jannik Sinner plays compatriot Luca Nardi, and Novak Djokovic, aiming to tie Roger Federer's eight-title record, opens against France’s Alexandre Muller. Women's defending champion Barbora Krejcikova, returning from a thigh strain, faces Alexandra Eala. Notable women's matchups include Coco Gauff vs. Dayana Yastremska and Jessica Pegula against Elisabetta Cocciaretto. Fourth seed Jasmine Paolini meets Anastasija Sevastova and could face Sabalenka in the semifinals. For Britain, 23 players are in singles competition, the highest since 1984. Jack Draper, Britain's top male hope, has a challenging path with potential matchups including Marin Cilic, Alexander Bublik, Djokovic, Sinner, and Alcaraz. Emma Raducanu faces British teen Mimi Xu and might meet Marketa Vondrousova or McCartney Kessler in round two. Olympic champion Zheng Qinwen could face Naomi Osaka in round two. Alcaraz, fresh from a Queen's Club win, could see Alexander Zverev in the semifinals. Alcaraz opens Centre Court play Monday; Krejcikova starts Tuesday.
5. <https://www.tennis365.com/tennis-news/jack-draper-rankings-jump-queens-club-wimbledon-seeding> - Jack Draper clinched a potentially significant rankings jump with a hard-fought three-set victory against world No 32 Brandon Nakashima at the 2025 Queen’s Club Championships. The British star prevailed 6-4, 5-7, 6-4 in an entertaining quarter-final contest played in the heat on the Andy Murray Arena. With his victory, Draper has leapfrogged Taylor Fritz into the world No 4 position in the Live ATP Rankings, moving 15 points clear of the American onto 4,650 points. Draper was ranked sixth heading into Queen’s, but he will return to his career-high spot of fourth when the rankings update next week. He is also set to move above Novak Djokovic. This means Draper is guaranteed to be seeded fourth at the 2025 Wimbledon Championships, with Fritz having lost in the opening round at the Queen’s ATP 500.
6. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/tennis/articles/c75l0qyny5eo> - British number one Jack Draper will join two-time Wimbledon champion Carlos Alcaraz at Queen's in 2025. Draper, 22, won his first two ATP titles in 2024, while he also reached the US Open semi-finals and achieved a career-high ranking of world number 15. World number three Alcaraz lifted the title at Queen's Club on his tournament debut in 2023, but lost to Draper in the second round last year. However, the 21-year-old Spaniard went on to win the Wimbledon title on both occasions after playing at Queen's. Draper said: "Playing at Queen's, in front of the British crowd - there's nothing like it. I used to watch this tournament every summer as a kid and made my Tour debut here, so it holds a lot of special memories for me. This year has been amazing in a lot of ways - but next season I'm excited to build on the success of this year." The men's tournament takes place from 16-22 June. American Tommy Paul beat Italy's Lorenzo Musetti in the final of last year's event. Alcaraz said: "Lifting the title two years ago is what gave me the belief to go on and win Wimbledon for the first time, so it always means a lot to compete there. I love playing in front of the fans in London and I hope I can have another successful summer in the UK." Queen's will also host a women's tournament in 2025 for the first time in more than 50 years.
7. <https://www.tennis365.com/tennis-news/jack-draper-rankings-jump-queens-club-wimbledon-seeding> - Jack Draper clinched a potentially significant rankings jump with a hard-fought three-set victory against world No 32 Brandon Nakashima at the 2025 Queen’s Club Championships. The British star prevailed 6-4, 5-7, 6-4 in an entertaining quarter-final contest played in the heat on the Andy Murray Arena. With his victory, Draper has leapfrogged Taylor Fritz into the world No 4 position in the Live ATP Rankings, moving 15 points clear of the American onto 4,650 points. Draper was ranked sixth heading into Queen’s, but he will return to his career-high spot of fourth when the rankings update next week. He is also set to move above Novak Djokovic. This means Draper is guaranteed to be seeded fourth at the 2025 Wimbledon Championships, with Fritz having lost in the opening round at the Queen’s ATP 500.