

Edinburgh will be represented at Wimbledon

The last Edinburgh tennis player to feature in a main singles draw at Wimbledon has backed successor, Jacob Fearnley, to take the occasion in his stride when he lines up for an SW19 debut against Spanish qualifier Alejandro Moro Canas in the men's event on Tuesday.

And Suzi Mair, who played in the women's singles in 1984 and who, coincidentally, has connections to the same Colinton club as Wimbledon wildcard Jacob insists that not even the prospect of facing seven times champion Novak Djokovic should both win their first round ties will faze him.

"Jacob did play doubles at Wimbledon last year so things won't be quite the shock to his system. Nevertheless my advice to him take the whole experience in and embrace it.

"Preparing for Wimbledon is a bit like preparing for a wedding. You plan for months even years and then – suddenly – it is over in a flash. Gone.

"Whatever court he plays on the British fans will turn out in their numbers to lend support. He should draw on that and enjoy it.

“I really wish I could have had my time again because I didn’t make the most of it probably because I was too young (16) to take it all in.”

If Jacob, 22, finds himself lining up against Djokovic that would mean another parallel with Suzi.

“I played an American girl called Amy Holton” she says “and actually had a set point but the prize would have been a meeting with Martina Navratilova and being a British player against the top seed that would have been on Centre Court and maybe a bit overwhelming.

“At 16-years-old I just wouldn’t have been ready for that.”

The implication is that Suzi felt she may have backed off, albeit subconsciously, but contrast that with a memory she has of a Jacob practice session.

“A few years ago Jacob was practicing at Colinton tennis club and as he came off court I told him that Jack Draper (now British No 1) had drawn Djokovic in the first round of Wimbledon.

“Whereas I was apprehensive about the prospect of playing Navratilova Jacob is of a different mindset largely because of how Andy Murray has shown in the intervening years that anything is possible for Scottish players now.

“Jacob replied: ‘good for Jack. This will be the best time to play Djokovic on grass – in the first round.’”

Jacob Fearnley has flown under the radar in the sense that he has spent five years at Texas Christian University having honed his skills at the Merchiston Castle tennis academy returning last month to notch a sensational win at a Nottingham grass court tournament won the previous year by ... Andy Murray.

Suzi added: “The really was huge and don’t under-estimate the

standard Jacob has been playing at in the States where the pressure (to produce) is huge.”

Whisper it. There are other reasons to be optimistic that as Andy Murray prepares to bow out Scottish tennis could soon have a new superstar, one door opening as another closes and all that!

Drill down into the modest and unassuming Jacob Fearnley's junior record and you find that in 2018, in Spain's International de Sanxenxo tournament, he won a 6-2, 4-6, 7-6 final against Carlos Alcatraz. Check out the Youtube video.

Yes, that Carlos Alcatraz, defending Wimbledon champion.

Not only that but Jacob also has a junior win on his c.v. against Italian Jannik Sinner, current world No 1.

Little wonder that the great Roger Federer, as part of his policy of encouraging juniors, four times invited Jacob to be his practice partner at the All England Club.

Last word to Suzi Mair:

“All the time I have known Jacob he has worked so hard. He really WANTS to succeed and importantly when he is on court he LOVES every second there. That's important.

“And if he does get to play Djokovic he will relish that.”



Jacob Fearnley – pride of Edinburgh tennis.