

Jacob Fearnley – by his East of Scotland team captain

Jacob Fearnley's second round Australian Open tennis tie against Frenchman Arthur Cazaux has been rated "50-50" by a local coach and East County captain who knows the Scot better than most.

Alan Macdonald is well placed to share insight into the meteoric rise of the former Colinton club junior and Merchiston Castle tennis academy graduate who took down former Wimbledon finalist Nick Kyrgios and all his potentially disruptive showboating in Melbourne earlier this week.

Not only that but as coach of Jamie Murray, former world doubles No 1, Alan, from Edinburgh's Thistle club, has sat courtside in the highly intimidating John Cain Arena where Kyrgios was sent packing in straight sets in front of his raucous supporters.

Alan said: "I always knew Jacob was a great prospect having known him since he was aged seven or eight.

"I coached him a little bit before he went to the Merchiston Castle Tennis Academy to add to his development then onto Texas Christian University.

"I'd be lying if I thought he would be No 80 something in the world so quickly having only turned pro last April. It has been unusually rapid.

“To get to, say, 200 can be done pretty quickly but then to jump higher is no picnic.

“At first when he went to college in the US I got the impression he didn't always back himself 100 per cent, didn't realise how good he was.

“To go out into the John Cain Arena, which is a very intimate court where the crowd are very much on top of the players and perform as he did was amazing especially this early in his pro career.

“It was quite a unique draw and he said himself he was nervous the night before.

“He knew Kyrgios had a fitness issue but his opponent milked it a bit by talking to his box. He was trying to get into his opponent's head.

“Jacob coped with that and having had a day to recover I think he will be fine against Arthur Cazaux which I think is a 50:50 match.

“The more experience he gets the less and less that kind of thing will bother him, he'll have seen it all before.

“It is interesting versus Cazeaux (world no 78 to Jacob's no 82) that having played a load of Challenger tournaments in Europe last year Jacob is 11 wins to 0 against French opponents.

“I imagine these French guys having a What's App group sharing information about 'this guy Fearnley who is doing so much damage?'

“It is going to be really interesting to see whether Jacob goes on to rank as high as his old junior friend and rival Jack Draper (British No 1 and world No 18) or whether he will settle as a solid top 50 player?

“But having stood alongside him court-side when he played Inter-County week matches I know how powerful his ground shots are and they can take him a long way.”

For the moment the sky is the limit and Jacob will benefit from a bumper Aus\$200,000 prize money at least to help keep him on tour perhaps with the benefit of even more vital back-up.

