

Jacob bows out of Rome but continues to climb rankings

Jacob Fearnley did enough in a 4-6, 6-7 defeat by Matteo Berrattini in round two of the Italian Open to show that soon he will take a major scalp.

The Edinburgh tennis ace served for the second set at 5-3 without being able to get over the line and had he taken two break points at a key stage of the previous set who knows how it would have turned out against the Rome-born home favourite and former Wimbledon finalist?

As it is Fearnley's reward will be a career high ranking of 52 – up six places – as a consequences of defeating another Italian, Fabio Fognini, in the previous round.

In his previous tournament in Madrid Fearnley also exited on a second set tie-break against Grigor Dimitrov, former ATP Tour finals champion, and once again it seemed he might have paid a price for pushing too hard at a critical stage.

That is all part of the learning experience along with not letting concentration slip apparently as he stood 5-3, 30-0 in the second set, a mis calculated drop shot allowing Berrettini to become inspired, reeling off a string of winners.

By the end of the tie break Fearnley cut a distraught figure in going down 0-7 having given his absolute all and there was just a hint he might have been concealing an injury of some sort.

The French grand slam looms on the horizon now for Fearnley and where better than to put it all together on clay and bring down one of the major players? He certainly looks capable with just a bit more judicious play at key moments as this latest performance was sprinkled with some sheer genius in front of 10,000 spectators solidly behind their home grown talent.

