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The Andy Murray referendum: why you should vote YES!

Andy Murray is arrogant and disrespectful and has now betrayed those who most supported him, writes Will Heaven



Olympic and US Open champion Andy Murray parades through Dunblane, near Stirling in Scotland, making the return to his home town Photo: PA

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Look: it wasn't what Andy Murray said, but the way he said it.

Good for him that he wanted a Yes vote. Good for him that he decided to go public with it. Those who say sport and politics shouldn't be mixed are talking rubbish. Besides, many people in Scotland respect Murray as a public figure: they value his opinion.

But why on earth did he wait for the day of the referendum itself to speak out? That decision, to my mind, was monumentally arrogant, crass and disrespectful.

As soon as I saw his tweet, I felt uneasy. It looked like a deliberate intrusion on a day that should have been considered sacrosanct. This was the moment when politicians and other campaigners stepped back to say: our job is done, the debate is finished. Now it's over to you, the voters, to decide the future of the UK in a secret ballot. We'll give you the space to think carefully and exercise your democratic privilege.

Everything went a bit quiet, like the moment a tennis player throws the ball up to serve. "Very strange day. Extraordinary time. Atmosphere on the streets is electric," a friend north of the border messaged me.

It was wrong of Andy Murray to wait until that hushed moment - after months of speculation about his political persuasion - to yell out. It showed a lack of respect to voters and to the democratic process. Clearly, Murray thinks he is more important than it all.

By contrast, take a look at JK Rowling's Twitter feed. It's immaterial, for the purposes of this argument, that she was a No supporter. What you'll notice is that, quite rightly, her campaigning and her tweets stopped on polling day. Not a peep on September 18. That's the way to do it. That's class. And Murray should learn from it.

Is Andy Murray a villain for backing Scottish independence?

- No - he is a sporting hero and a charming young man to boot
- Yes - where's his loyalty to fans across the Union who have cheered him to victory?

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