V. AZARENKA/S. Williams

6-3, 6-1

An interview with:

SERENA WILLIAMS

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. First of wall, what was the injury exactly and when did it start hurting?
SERENA WILLIAMS: It was hurting probably in my quarterfinal, and it just progressively got worse.

Q. And today, was there any point before the match that you really weren't going to play this final?
SERENA WILLIAMS: Well, I thought about it. I thought -- well, you know, I didn't -- I don't like to not play, so...
But I definitely thought about it. I thought the warmer I got the better I thought it felt.

Q. What was is the official injury?
SERENA WILLIAMS: Well, I don't know. I guess it's my -- I have an ankle strain in addition to something else on my thigh.

Q. In the quad?
SERENA WILLIAMS: Yeah.

Q. You just couldn't move to the left on the backhands?
SERENA WILLIAMS: Yeah, it was a little difficult moving to the left and a little bit to the right. A little forward was also difficult. (Laughter.)

Q. What about her game, degree of improvement or difficulty?
SERENA WILLIAMS: Yeah, I think she's really, really improved. I actually look forward to playing her again so I can play a little better and obviously do better.
But I think she obviously has potential and she's going to be a really good player.

Q. Is there any letdown factor after facing Venus?
SERENA WILLIAMS: I thought, Gosh, I could have at least lost in the semis. But I guess I wouldn't have kept my ranking. So that was the only upside to it.
So, you know, it was what it was. I gave the effort that I could give today. That's all I could give.

Q. Did you think beforehand that, Hey, I could still beat this girl?
SERENA WILLIAMS: Absolutely. Even when I was down match point I thought I could still win. I didn't really know how, but I thought it was a possibility.

Q. I know you love collecting titles. This would have been the six to pass Steffi and tie Andre. A little bummed about that?
SERENA WILLIAMS: Yeah, I guess. I'm not that bummed because I feel like there's next year and next week, and then there's the year after and the year after.
So I feel like I have -- I definitely have it in me to try to tie that record, and then to ultimately beat it.

Q. Do you see any upside for women's tennis with the new face up there?
SERENA WILLIAMS: Yeah. Like I said, I think she's obviously going to have a good year and she's gonna have a good season. She's a good player.
She's an all-round good player. It actually makes my feel good, because it makes me want to do better and work harder.

Q. After a good first quarter of the year, what are the thoughts heading into the clay court season?
SERENA WILLIAMS: I'm excited to get on the clay. Definitely want to improve some things and just keep working on fitness and consistency, obviously, which are the things going into clay

court that you kind of have to do.

Yeah, I'm ready for the clay court season.

Q. How much rest will be required, do you think, before you get back at it?

SERENA WILLIAMS: Yeah, you know, I should probably take a couple weeks off. I don't know. We'll see.

Q. How is your motivation now compared to other seasons about what you want to accomplish and how you're feeling excitement-wise?

SERENA WILLIAMS: I'm extremely motivated. I feel that -- you know, even today when I was losing, I thought -- when was on the court, I was thinking of things that I could improve on and things that I want to improve on for the next match and the next tournaments and the next, you know, clay courts and grass courts and things like that.

So, yeah, I think that goes to say I was -- I am extremely motivated.

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