

March 26, 2009

Sony Ericsson Open

S. QUERREY/G. Muller

6-4, 6-3

An interview with:

SAM QUERREY

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. You and John hanging out, walking down the street. He's saying people are coming up to you bothering you about your height and basketball. What's that like when you're hanging together?

SAM QUERREY: I mean, it's fine. We're really good friends on the tour. Pretty much if we're at a tournament together we'll go out to dinner most nights and kind of hang out at the tournament, outside the tournament. We also hang out with a lot of the Americans, James, Andy.

We get that question a lot. Can we get a picture? Do you guys play basketball?

Q. What do you say?

SAM QUERREY: I mean, sometimes we'll be sarcastic. Yeah, like he plays on the Heat.

Q. He says he tells them he plays chess or water polo.

SAM QUERREY: Sometimes I say I'm a jockey.

Q. Well, you did play hoops, and you're a Clippers fan. Was there ever a decision to choose?

SAM QUERREY: No, I wasn't that good at basketball. In my high school I played freshman year, but our high school had great basketball. I would have played freshman year and I would have been an average player on the freshman team.

Q. Anyone we heard of who went on?

SAM QUERREY: No, we had like white guys. No one really went too far. We just shot the 3 and played good defense.

I mean, like our high school team four out of the last five times won the CAIS Championships and gone on to like State championships. So it wasn't like I was a huge asset to the team. The coach wasn't crying when I walked off the freshman team.

Q. He talked about how he grew seven inches when he was 17. When was your spurt?

SAM QUERREY: You know, I didn't really have a spurt. I was always the tallest kid in the class by an inch or two. Freshman year I was 6'3", sophomore year, 6'4", junior year, 6'5", senior year 6'6".

Q. So was it movement, was that your problem?

SAM QUERREY: No, I didn't -- I played one year when I was 10 or 11. It just -- I didn't play a whole lot of basketball on a team when I was younger. I played baseball, basketball -- or baseball, football, soccer.

Basketball I just played like one year when I was younger. I just knew the fundament and I was a good athlete, but I wasn't dominating down low.

Q. Your dad plays baseball?

SAM QUERREY: My dad played baseball in college and was drafted to the Tigers.

Q. He could take you one on one, he said.

SAM QUERREY: I mean, we should play.

Q. You haven't done it yet?

SAM QUERREY: No, I mean, I think I can take him.

Q. That would be a good one.

SAM QUERREY: He's got no jump shot.

Q. Talk about difficulties and advantages of being a tall tennis player. I don't

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think there has ever been a grand champion who has been as tall as either one of you. Tell me what you think the other pluses and the minuses?

SAM QUERREY: The pluses are obviously the serve. And then also, I mean, especially on -- I think John and I, our forehands are pretty big. We have a big wing span, so we can generate a lot of racquet head speed. If my arm is this long plus the racquet, you know, I might have an extra foot, where a David Ferrer is maybe a little shorter so I can generate some swing speed. I mean, at the net, you know, I can -- you can cover more -- cover more ground.

Disadvantages, you always hear movement, but I don't feel like my movement is an issue at all. I always felt fast. I feel like I have good footwork and I'm always in position. I feel like can scramble from the back.

There's really no disadvantages for me.

Q. Is there a difference in the mindset because you always feel you can rely on your serve?

SAM QUERREY: Sometimes. Sometimes if it's break point, I'll just think, you know, All right, hit an ace. If it comes back, you're kind of like, Oh, crap. Now you gotta play a point you don't want to.

I don't really feel like I'm limited at all. Although if you watch TV or listen to the announcers, they talk about -- they always talk about they're like surprised when big guys can move well. What basketball player who's 6'5" or taller doesn't move well?

People are like, bigger, stronger, faster these days. Guys who are, 6'5", 6'6" all the way to 6'10" and are 200 to 300 pounds are quick and can move. People still seem, especially the commentators, still seem surprised when you've got a guy like that.

It's common these days.

Q. That upsets you, I think.

SAM QUERREY: Yeah. Yeah, it does.

Q. Do you have trouble with the wind, particularly here you're on an island?

SAM QUERREY: Little bit. But, you know, the other guy deals with it, too. It's always windy here. It's just something you got to deal with.

Q. Do you feel you could have an intimidating factor when you're playing like a

Rochus or one of these little guys who are foot and a half shorter than you?

SAM QUERREY: You know, if I played the right way. If I impose myself and serve big and take some chances on the serve and come at him and kind of get in his face, you know, tennis-speaking, I think can you kind of impose yourself and make a statement.

Q. What do you have to do to get to the next level, Sam? Obviously John had the big breakthrough a few years ago. He said he lost his confidence last year. You've had your spots, too. What has to be done?

SAM QUERREY: You know, I've been working harder lately than I've ever been working. Not necessarily harder, but more focused. The stuff I'm -- training I'm doing I think is better than I was doing. I'm at the track, the gym. I've been working on the right things. A lot on my backhand and my return. That's the main focus on all my practices this year.

This year already -- in the previous two years I feel like I would have a good tournament, and then a bad one. Good tournament. This year already, it's a little more kind of, I mean, level, I guess you would say. You know, how my -- like results-wise.

I mean, the finals, a couple quarterfinals, third round last week. So already it's an improvement. I think if I just keep working hard and doing what I'm doing -- I'm confident right now. I'm playing really well. There's not too many guys -- when I walk on the court, there aren't too many guys I think will beat me.

Hopefully I will keep this mindset and keep working hard. My goal is to be in the top 20 at the end of the year.

Q. When you get your racquets from the company, how much adjustment do you have done to it?

SAM QUERREY: Not much at all. I used to play with them. They would just take them off the shelf and send them to me. A year ago I started kind of making it so they're all the same. I think it's just very little adjustments.

Q. Do you know where...

SAM QUERREY: I don't know how much it weighs or anything. It shows up at my house and I string it up. I don't string it up. Someone strings

it up for me.

Q. Is your coach like McEnroe? Davis Cup team? Do you have a private coach?

SAM QUERREY: Right now it's David Nainkin. He works for the USTA since like October.

Q. Separate?

SAM QUERREY: He still works for the USTA, but I guess has a special interest in Sam Querrey.

Q. How about John's?

SAM QUERREY: Craig Boynton right now down at Saddlebrook.

Q. Is it disappointing for you, because of Andy and James and maybe even Mardy that there's not necessarily a spot for you on the Davis Cup team?

SAM QUERREY: Yeah, you can't blame James or Andy or Mardy. You can blame the Bryan brothers. Not blame them. I mean, no other country in the world has a doubles-only team. We're playing for two spots when every other country in the world is playing for four spots.

Right there, it makes it that much more difficult. At the same time, they've lost one match in Davis Cup history, or two matches. So it's like -- you know, what are you going to do?

Q. You and John join forces.

SAM QUERREY: We played against the Bryan brothers at the French Open and we served for the first set and John blew it. He was serving 5-4 and just played a horrendous game.

Q. Did the Bryan brothers give you grief about losing?

SAM QUERREY: Not really. They were out there focused. They wanted to go out there and beat us 0-0, and it was a little closer than that. I think it was -- they were angry the first set that we were serving for the set. You can kind of see it in their faces that they didn't want to lose that.

Q. You feel you could be a formidable team? Big serves?

SAM QUERREY: Yeah, definitely. Definitely. Hopefully we're going to be playing a little bit more this year, and I think we could do well.

Q. Was that your best result?

SAM QUERREY: I made the quarterfinals of the US Open doubles in 2007 with Robert Kendrick. A lot of people don't know that.

Q. Back in the day, people played Davis Cup because they were playing for their country and just for expenses. Nowadays, I mean, the Americans are getting big bucks. Some other countries don't have that much, but they have to fork over something. What's your take on that? Do you think the players should just be playing for the love of their country and taking expenses that weekend, or should they get paid because they're working? Do you have any feel on that?

SAM QUERREY: I don't know. I haven't really thought about that. I haven't really -- I've only played one match, so, I mean, you're not going to hear the players say they don't want to get paid.

At the same time, it is -- it's like an Olympics. You're playing -- I think if you didn't get paid -- if I didn't get paid I'd still play. I wouldn't hesitate to play. I'd be there every tie. I guess it's just a bonus. But I've only played one match, so it's hard to have a real strong opinion on it.

Q. Do you think it would be hard for them to get some of the stars playing if they were just paying expenses?

SAM QUERREY: No, I mean, take Andy or James. You know, the check they get from the USTA is not going to make or break their year financially.

Q. It's a big check.

SAM QUERREY: Yeah, it's not bad. I mean, I still think they're going to play.

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