

**March 29, 2009**

**Sony Ericsson Open**

**S. STOSUR/D. Safina**

6-1, 6-4

An interview with:

## **SAMANTHA STOSUR**

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Can you talk about your match, generally how you're feeling?**

SAMANTHA STOSUR: Well, yeah, really happy. Just I thought I played really well, and I executed exactly what I wanted to do out there.

It was a little bit testing, I guess, with a little bit of a rain delay at 5-4, but I came out and played a really good game.

**Q. Before your injury layoff last year you were consistently beating the top players again. How does it feel to be back to where you were prior to getting sick?**

SAMANTHA STOSUR: Well, great. Yeah, since I came back I haven't been able to get a top-10 win. I came close a few times. Today I got over the line, and just really pleased. I thought I could do it and I knew I could. It was just a matter of when it was going to happen.

Today, I played well and really did exactly what I needed to do. So it's a great feeling to beat a top-10 player again.

**Q. What specifically did you do well? What shots worked for you today?**

SAMANTHA STOSUR: I think my shots that usually work well for me: forehand and my serve.

At 5-4 in that second set I made four first serves in a row and played a really good game. It's not always easy to serve out matches like that. Today I thought I did that really well.

I ran down a lot of balls, especially at the start, and got off to a good start. It's always great to get that. But playing someone like Dinara, you

have to be aware they're capable of coming back. It's certainly not over.

I'm just really happy with how I stayed in it mentally, and I guess kept my foot down right from the first point and tried to do that to the last point.

**Q. Is this your biggest win?**

SAMANTHA STOSUR: Yep. Yeah, it would be.

**Q. Did you sense early on from the way she was playing that she wasn't perhaps on the top of her game and that this was a day you could really get one over on her?**

SAMANTHA STOSUR: Well, I guess I don't know if she wasn't on top of her game or if I didn't allow her to do that. I mean, I tried to mix it up as much as I could with heavy topspin on my forehands, a few slice backhands, and tried to not give her as much rhythm as possible. I think that worked really well.

So yeah, she shanked a few balls, missed a few balls. Who knows whether that was because of what I was doing or not. I don't know. But I'm just glad that I was able to consistently do that throughout the whole match.

**Q. Did you change your approach at all when you saw that she was making a lot of errors, a lot of double faults, a lot of just bad shots?**

SAMANTHA STOSUR: No, not really. I mean, that's -- what I did at the start of the match is what I wanted to do throughout, and I thought I did that well today.

**Q. You're playing doubles later?**

SAMANTHA STOSUR: Uh-huh.

**Q. Is that tough in one day?**

SAMANTHA STOSUR: Well, we're used to playing singles and doubles in one day. I guess it's a bit tough in the sense that we haven't played a first-round doubles match yet. This is going to be the first round, and that's not going to be an easy draw.

I mean, I guess I can enjoy this as much as possible. But, yeah, in a couple of hours' time

I'm going to be out there trying to focus on playing doubles and then coming back tomorrow, as well.

**Q. You didn't play here last year, right?**

SAMANTHA STOSUR: No.

**Q. But you won in 2007.**

SAMANTHA STOSUR: Yeah.

**Q. Is this kind of a special tournament for you, or you've won a lot of doubles titles?**

SAMANTHA STOSUR: Yeah, I've won quite a few doubles titles. I've had great doubles success here. I think we won in 2006, as well. It's always nice to be playing in finals, and Miami has been pretty good to me out there. So I'm looking forward to getting out there again this afternoon.

**Q. I'm curious, are you prepared to play someone ranked that highly? Do you actually have time after the draw to sit down and do any sort of video work on them, or is it all in the memory bank? You've seen them quite a few times.**

SAMANTHA STOSUR: Yeah, I guess tennis is one of those funny sports where I don't know if too many people do do a bit -- do a lot of video analysis. I didn't do anything on Dinara for this match, but I tried to watch a little bit of her game in the round before.

And, yeah, I guess we've all played each other quite a few times whether it's singles or doubles. We've all got coaches that we can go out and try and scout with. I guess that's where most of the tactics and preparation for each match kind of happens.

**Q. Are you trying to concentrate more on your singles game now or, you know, when you're such a strong doubles player, or are you always focused on both the same?**

SAMANTHA STOSUR: No, I mean, probably since I came back from being sick, my priority has been singles. It always has been. I just had great success in doubles, which is, I mean, fantastic. I'm not going to say I don't want it, because it's -- I mean, it's always nice to be winning titles.

But from when I came back, singles has definitely been the No. 1, and that's what I'm always trying to focus on. It's always nice to go out there and try and play doubles.

Stubbsy and I are friends off the court, so it's good. It's sometimes relaxing to go out there

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and be able to play a bit more tennis and work on a few more things for my singles and all that.

We'll see how it goes today, and then I'll be getting ready for tomorrow's singles match as early as I can.

**Q. Also happy almost-birthday, correct?**

SAMANTHA STOSUR: Yeah, exactly. Nice little early present. I'll be playing again tomorrow, which is my birthday, so hopefully I can do it again.

**Q. Do you know what you're going to do on your birthday if you do well tomorrow? Do you have any plans?**

SAMANTHA STOSUR: No, I don't. Last time I was here it was my birthday. I played second night match, so I didn't do a lot that time. I've had a few birthdays in Miami. It's always tough during a tournament, but hopefully get some friends together and go out to dinner or something like that.

**Q. With your new focus on singles, how satisfying is this win in terms of making a name for yourself in singles?**

SAMANTHA STOSUR: Oh, it's great. I've been trying to get a win like this for a long time. For me, personally I was happy I was able to do it, and hopefully there will be more to come. It's never easy out there. I know it's always going to be tough, but today I'm just going to really enjoy it.

**Q. Also, Safina is kind of an emotional player. Can you use that to your advantage, or do you have to just not look at that at all and focus on yourself when you're playing?**

SAMANTHA STOSUR: I guess against someone like her you try to use it to your advantage, but we all know she's like that. She's like that nearly every match she plays, so I think somewhere along the line she's gotten used to that and tries to use that to her advantage, as well, whether it's hitting balls or yelling out, whatever it is.

I think it's not -- we're all used to seeing that happens. I try and use it, but I think she tries to use that as a bit of an outlet as well to try and get herself back into the match.

**Q. How can you use that? How can the**

**opponent take that?**

SAMANTHA STOSUR: Well, I guess if you see anyone, not just her, but in general, your opponent kind of going off a little bit, you can tell that they're rattled. I guess that's a time where you have to try and keep your foot down and know that they're not feeling great out there.

So it gives you a little bit of an opportunity to really kick your foot down and try and step up and win a few more games quickly in that situation.

**Q. Last thing. How far can you let yourself look ahead, or not at all?**

SAMANTHA STOSUR: No, I don't think so. I think every match is tough. I mean, fourth round of this kind of tournament is not going to be easy, whoever you're playing.

So, yeah, you can't really look ahead. It's just one match at a time, and go from there.

**Q. After the illness last year, did you ever think you'd be back here at this point, beating the No. 2 players in the world?**

SAMANTHA STOSUR: Well, I always hoped I would. When I first started playing again, I started playing well towards the end of last year, I thought that it was possible. Now that's kind of all in the back of my head. I don't think about that anymore, and I've been playing well since.

So it's just -- I guess it's nice to have wins like that pretty soon after coming back and all that kind of thing, so, yeah, I'm just really happy.

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