

**March 30, 2009**

**Sony Ericsson Open**

**S. WILLIAMS/J. Zheng**

7-5, 5-7, 6-3

An interview with:

## **SERENA WILLIAMS**

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Talk about what you had to endure out there and how you hung in there.**

SERENA WILLIAMS: Well, yeah, I was just --you know, I don't think I played great. I thought she played probably her best tennis yet. I think I started out great and then maybe my focus lost. Next thing I know, I was in a 5-All in the first set, which should have never been.

Just happy to get through it, because at one point I hit a ball in the bottom of the net and I thought, Wow, I haven't done this since I was a junior. Actually, since I played Sydney.

**Q. I was going to ask about the third set. Seemed like when it was tied at 3-3 and you hit that big overhand it was like the Hulk came out. It was everything that had been missing to that point, you know, you looked confident. Talk about from that point on. It was 3-3 and you just basically controlled it.**

SERENA WILLIAMS: Yeah, you know, I just was -- I just felt like if I didn't straighten up I was going to lose. At that point, I was ready to get the match over. I knew I didn't want to lose, and I knew I had to do what I needed to do to at least play a little bit better.

**Q. Do you enjoy being in a position of being No. 1? Does that in any way help you, or do you...**

SERENA WILLIAMS: Most of all I enjoy winning slams and the big tournaments. I obviously do enjoy being No. 1. I think it's great. I think it's they epitome of a great athlete.

At the end of the day, I've been No. 1 and I'll be No. 1. It seems like I'll be remembered more for how many Grand Slams I'll win.

But No. 1 I think is also equally as important.

**Q. You won't be No. 1 unless you make the finals here, you know that?**

SERENA WILLIAMS: Well, I mean, I don't put pressure on myself, so we'll see. If I make it, I make it; if not, oh, well. It will be kind of weird to be No. 2 to -- because I think the girl that would take over would be like -- lost early here and hasn't really, whatever.

So it's like whatever. I don't really care.

**Q. Kim Clijsters is coming back in a couple months. Talk a little bit about what it's like to play her and any thoughts on her comeback.**

SERENA WILLIAMS: Um, you know, she's a tough player. She was always a strong player and always a fighter and a gritter. Yeah, so I think to play her, it will be good to play her again and see how she'll do. I think she will eventually be able to the level she was before she retired and even better probably.

**Q. Early in the third you really had a rough patch there. Was it frustration? Were you angry? How would describe your emotions and how did you collect yourself there?**

SERENA WILLIAMS: You know, I just went with the flow and I wasn't -- I was just trying to get the rhythm. I felt like at that point I wasn't playing great. I had lost a lot of points in a row.

Yeah, I was just trying -- I lost a lot of momentum.

**Q. Do you get mad in those situations? How would you describe the emotion?**

SERENA WILLIAMS: I think I get more relaxed more than anything. I just feel like, Okay. Oh, well. I just kind of relax a little bit.

**Q. You said you wanted to be remembered for winning the slams. But in**

terms of holding on to the ranking, you've come a long way to get back to the top.

SERENA WILLIAMS: Yeah. But, I mean, at this point doesn't matter how many Grand Slams you win, can't be number one. Even if you get to the finals of Wimbledon and win the US Open and Australia, that's not what the No. 1 player gets. It is what it is. It's like, whatever.

You have to like, I don't know, win all the smaller tournaments to be No. 1.

**Q. Would you prefer they change the system to make it a little bit more weighted so the Grand Slams did matter more? Those are the tournaments every player wants to win.**

SERENA WILLIAMS: Yeah, I don't really care one way or the other. Like I'm not -- my whole goal in life isn't to be No. 1. Yeah, I want to be No. 1, but I feel better about winning Australia or US Open or winning the French Open or anything like that. I think I feel better with that.

Or winning here. Just winning titles. Obviously winning titles doesn't make you No. 1 on this tour anymore.

**Q. Maybe it wasn't the fullest stadium, but you've had a lot of support down here through the years. Where did this rank in terms of tournaments you play in terms of what you feel in terms of fan support?**

SERENA WILLIAMS: I mean, obviously it's one of my favorite tournaments to play. I enjoy it a lot. You know, I feel like I'm playing at home here, so it's fine.

**Q. It's quite an entourage of people running around back there, too.**

SERENA WILLIAMS: Is it?

**Q. You've obviously won the last two Grand Slams. You are No. 1 now. You have gotten back in the minds of people in tennis the respect that you had years ago, and people know you've had to climb. What does having that respect now, being at this level, at the top of your game, how much does that mean to you?**

SERENA WILLIAMS: You know what, whether I end up No. 1 at the end of this week or not, I think people obviously see me as No. 1. The respect is there.

You know, I've been working hard for several years now and being super-consistent, and I think it's paying off. And I think it will payoff.

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**Q. Venus might be one round away. What's your sense as to how she's playing here?**

SERENA WILLIAMS: I haven't seen any of her matches, so I should try to catch up on a few of those. But I know she had a tough match today, and I followed suit. Hopefully she'll have an easy match and that way I can have an easy match.

**Q. You could potentially play a third Chinese player in a row here. It's kind of like the Beijing Open here.**

SERENA WILLIAMS: Yeah, I always go against one country. Whether it's Russia or -- and now it's China. Is it Li Na?

**Q. Potentially.**

SERENA WILLIAMS: I hope she wins, because I'm, you know, here I go again.

**Q. What about the Slam? Is that something you can think about at this point?**

SERENA WILLIAMS: No. I mean, I've had an opportunity to win the slam I think three years. Haven't quite done it yet. So I don't really put too much pressure on myself anymore.

If it happens, great; if not, you know, it's going to happen. I think it's going to happen.

**Q. How much do you and Venus see each other during a tournament like this?**

SERENA WILLIAMS: We haven't seen too much of each other this tournament. Normally we see a lot of each other.

**Q. She said your dogs like to play.**

SERENA WILLIAMS: Yeah, my dog sent her dog an e-mail, but her mailbox was full so he never got it. She was really upset. Maybe we'll try to resend it tonight. She worked on typing it out and all, so I'll have her redo it.

**Q. She's got her own little e-mail or texting...**

SERENA WILLIAMS: No, she uses mine and I help her with it.

**Q. Is that Jackie?**

SERENA WILLIAMS: No, her little sister Lauerlei sent an e-mail to Harold.

**Q. Do they talk about tennis?**

SERENA WILLIAMS: I don't know what she said. It was a lot of, grrr and woof, woof, woof. So I don't know exactly what happened, but I have to have her resend it.

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