

**April 1, 2009**

**Sony Ericsson Open**

**V. WILLIAMS/I. Benesova**

6-1, 6-4

An interview with:

## **VENUS WILLIAMS**

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. I think you were down 1-4 that second set. Did you have a little loss of concentration, or did she just pick it up?**

VENUS WILLIAMS: Uh, yeah. I think sometimes when things aren't going your way, sometimes you can just have -- you know, it can be a few points. And then before you know it, the the games go fast because everyone out here is good.

Unfortunately it was wasn't a double break. That may have been a little tougher to come back. For me, I look at it as one break. I don't always look at it as the score is 1-4.

**Q. Did you watch Serena struggle at all today?**

VENUS WILLIAMS: You know, it wasn't on TV, so I just, you know, could only watch the score. I didn't get to see the match.

**Q. 10-9 Venus in the family battle.**

VENUS WILLIAMS: I know. It's an immense struggle. Dubai was what, 7-6 in the -- was it the third?

**Q. Yeah, I think.**

VENUS WILLIAMS: Yeah, 7-6 in the third. So yeah, I have to work hard to get the win.

**Q. Couple of questions. Your serve looked like it was kicking pretty good today. You had a couple double faults. How did you feel? And number two, if you can elaborate just coming to Miami. I know they asked you outside, but could you elaborate a little bit more?**

VENUS WILLIAMS: My serve, I rely on it a lot. Sometimes too much. But, yeah, it kicks pretty high, which is a good advantage for me. I had a couple double faults in a row, and I think I just lost focus on my technique. Sometimes I started rushing a little bit because I want to hit, you know -- I want it to go, and then it's all about slowing down a little bit.

And I love Miami, really. It's probably my favorite city in the world.

**Q. Serena said she is really going to pick it up another level to play you. What's your take on what you have to do when you play Serena?**

VENUS WILLIAMS: That's flattering. (Laughter.) Obviously she's a great player, but I think -- I'm just going to focus on my game. You know, I was in here the other day and I said I don't really take into account whether I played -- if I didn't play my best in my last matches, I just know that I know how to play.

So when I go out there tomorrow, I'll just know that I know how to play tennis and then play.

**Q. Do you have a cold or something?**

VENUS WILLIAMS: No. It's just a super-sexy voice. Gotta get used to this. I don't know.

**Q. Who you using that on?**

VENUS WILLIAMS: I'm a mellow Californian, I guess.

**Q. Given how close you guys were growing up and remain today and the coaching factor with your dad, how do you explain that you ended up with such different games?**

VENUS WILLIAMS: Well, how do you think our games are different?

**Q. She hits it a little bit flatter and seems a little more economical in her strokes.**

VENUS WILLIAMS: I mean, I'm so long. (Laughter.) My arms are like an eagle. Sometimes I'm trying to get out of the way of them.

Everybody is different. You got to play with what you have. Our styles are a little different.

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**1**

I think they core though our game is pretty much the same because we had the same coach.

So, you know, or core beliefs and our core is very similar. The difference in our game would be down to personality, I think. Just how each person is different, the personality, that makes your game different.

**Q. You have such an exceptional record at Wimbledon. Do you give anything up coming to hardcourts? In a situation like this, is the comfortable level any different for you?**

VENUS WILLIAMS: Hardcourts are great because you get a true bounce. You don't have to worry about, Oh, my God, I am match point down and I lost because I got this horrible bounce. That is comforting about hardcourts.

I'm actually comfortable on every surface. I love playing. Obviously growing up on hardcourts is probably the surface I'm most comfortable on.

**Q. If you had one surface to play on, what would you choose?**

VENUS WILLIAMS: Grass, yeah.

**Q. Do you feel like when you and Serena are playing at your best and are sharp, do you feel that you two are the best in the world?**

VENUS WILLIAMS: Yes, on the women's tour I believe we are the best in the world. We work hard at it, so...

At the moment my ranking doesn't reflect that I'm at No. 1 or No. 2, but I'm working on it.

**Q. What do you think it'll be like for you guys at home the next couple days and leading up to the match?**

VENUS WILLIAMS: Just hanging out, chillin'.

**Q. Do you go home or stay down here?**

VENUS WILLIAMS: Oh, no. I go home. We play tomorrow night.

**Q. As far as like coming in here, mom and dad, are they a little nervous? How are they usually when they know you're going to be playing, the day of?**

VENUS WILLIAMS: They just want the one to win who hasn't had as much luck or didn't win the last time. Pretty much comes down to that.

**Q. They'll be cheering for her then? You had her two in a row.**

VENUS WILLIAMS: Have I?

**Q. Yeah.**

VENUS WILLIAMS: Oh, man, yeah. Okay. Yes. Hopefully that'll mean something for me tomorrow.

**Q. They'll be cheering for her?**

VENUS WILLIAMS: I don't know. We'll see.

**Q. In your mind then, whatever round you play Serena is is the de facto final?**

VENUS WILLIAMS: Yeah, obviously I think it would be fantastic if this was the final. It would be wonderful for us to be 1 and 2 in the world so that way it could be the final.

All the players ranked ahead of me are very good and have played well and deserve to be there. But like I said, I'm working on moving forward.

**Q. Do you feel like the ranking system is not reflective of the reality of the tour?**

VENUS WILLIAMS: Well, the ranking system this year is new, so we'll have to see how it works. The tournaments are weighted according to how you do in the big events, so playing well at the big events important. I think it should be that way.

**Q. You've got a chance to knock your sister out of No. 1.**

VENUS WILLIAMS: Do I? I don't see it that way. I obviously want her to be No. 1. I want to be No. 1. I don't want knock her off her ranking, but I do want to win.

So I'll do my best on the court. Once we leave the tennis, then we're gone from the WTA. That's it.

**Q. Is there something wrong, though? A lot of people are going to No. 1 and they haven't even won a Grand Slam title. That's the big prize.**

VENUS WILLIAMS: Well, I mean, Serena has played fantastic.

**Q. Well, she's won.**

VENUS WILLIAMS: It's strange. It is a

little strange that she's having to fight so hard to keep her ranking. Regardless of if she's No. 1 or not, I don't think the person who might take over her place or persons, whoever are up to that -- whoever, I don't know the numbers.

But I don't think that that'll feel that they are the true No. 1. I think Serena right now is the true No. 1.

**Q. Will you still think about what you need to do or think about strategy before you play her, or is it so familiar by now and so routine that you just go out there and try to find your best game?**

VENUS WILLIAMS: I think about strategy. I try to be as best prepared as I can, and I try to have plan B, too. I definitely go through all the marks before I play, and during the match.

**Q. Do you enjoy playing her, or do you sort of try to block it out?**

VENUS WILLIAMS: Serena?

**Q. Yeah.**

VENUS WILLIAMS: Yeah, I enjoy playing her, because we challenge each other the most. I think also you really have to know that - at least I walk out there knowing - that it's not over till it's over. I really have to beat her.

**Q. I usually hear people saying, Come on Venus, but there was a lady next to me shouting, Come on VW. Did you hear it?**

VENUS WILLIAMS: No.

**Q. As someone who's played Fed Cup, the United States was already in the World Group or whatever. In a few weeks, both Jelena and Ana are going to be playing to bring Serbia into the World Group for the first time. Can you imagine how special that can be for a small country, or is that even too hard for somebody from the States?**

VENUS WILLIAMS: It's too hard. Sorry.

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