S. WILLIAMS/N. Li

4-6, 7-6, 6-2

An interview with:

SERENA WILLIAMS

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. How would you explain your slow start today?

SERENA WILLIAMS: I don't know. I have to think about it. I just had a really slow, retarded start.

Q. Were you tired? Did you get bad sleep?

SERENA WILLIAMS: None of the above. Maybe I was tired, but still not an excuse really.

Q. Did you feel like you just weren't moving your feet?

SERENA WILLIAMS: Definitely wasn't moving my feet at all. Just, I don't know. I just wasn't doing anything that made a lot of sense at all.

Q. Are you angry at yourself?

SERENA WILLIAMS: Yeah, I'm a little disappointed. I don't think I played great, but I'm glad to have gotten through.

Q. When you're down like that, does it ever just jump into your head to let the set go and go for the next one? Because you did battle back.

SERENA WILLIAMS: Yeah, I thought it was good for me to battle back, because I felt like I could still win that set. I still had an opportunity to do well.

Unfortunately, I didn't win it.

Q. What does to tell you when you - I'm sure you feel like you played poorly today - when you play that way and still can win and get to the semis?

SERENA WILLIAMS: Just that I need to be more consistent in my play more than anything. I don't have to be out there going three sets, and just get motivated.

That's what I think it tells me more than anything.

Q. Did you feel like you played well in the third set?

SERENA WILLIAMS: I definitely played better in the third set, which was good. Because, I mean, I needed to play pretty well to win the match.

Q. She just said that your basically beat entire the Chinese Fed Cup team.

SERENA WILLIAMS: Seriously, I just -- it was -- I mean, I played a lot of Chinese girls this week. Wow.

It was definitely a new experience. And hey, it's good news for the U.S. Fed Cup team, I guess.

Q. I don't mean to lump them together, they're all different, but what's tough about them? Do you feel like they have a good consistency on their groundstrokes?

SERENA WILLIAMS: Yeah, obviously really consistent. They hit a flat ball and keep the ball low. Just good players, as everyone is on tour.

Q. Given how different and close you and Venus are, how did you explain how differently the two of you play? Does that ever surprise you, or have you thought much about that?

SERENA WILLIAMS: I haven't thought much about it. I always thought we played alike, but I guess maybe we don't. I don't know.

Q. Will you be out here watching tonight?

SERENA WILLIAMS: I definitely will watch the match, obviously. It's my next opponent. So I'll

watch and then go from there.

Q. Have you played the other girl?

SERENA WILLIAMS: Have I? I played her a lot, so...

Q. Did you give Venus any tips?

SERENA WILLIAMS: Venus has played her a lot, too. We both played her plenty of times. A lot in Fed Cup, so yeah.

Q. How do you have to beat her?

SERENA WILLIAMS: Benesova?

Q. Yeah.

SERENA WILLIAMS: (Laughter.) You know, she's a lefty, so you have to -- and lefties can being tricky. You always have to be on your toes.

Q. You feel like you're playing well enough this week to beat Venus tomorrow night?

SERENA WILLIAMS: Is it at night?

Q. I assume so.

SERENA WILLIAMS: Yeah, I feel like I am. I definitely feel like I need to just keep that confidence and go with that and see what happens. Just play the best that I can play.

Q. Do you feel the key to the match today was you holding on to those breakpoints that she had in the second set? She would have served for the match twice. Was that the key for you?

SERENA WILLIAMS: I honestly don't even remember that, so...

Q. What will stand out for you about this match? Anything specific?

SERENA WILLIAMS: Um, I mean, yeah, obviously. But I just can't think of anything right now.

Q. Just didn't know if I would watch this match again or just put it in the recycle bin and say, forget that, and just move on.

SERENA WILLIAMS: I'm thinking about just shredding the DVD, too.

Q. Do you watch past matches, win or lose, to study them?

SERENA WILLIAMS: If I'm not playing well I watch the ones that I lose, which is complete torture.

Q. How does that help you?

SERENA WILLIAMS: Because, believe me, I don't ever want to watch a match that I lost, so it helps me not to lose. So maybe tonight I'll watch a match that I lost.

Q. Did you talk to your dad at all? He showed up late in the first set.

SERENA WILLIAMS: Yeah, after the match I did, because he's -- I could call him out on the court as my coach. Venus is usually my coach, but I guess she wasn't available to come out today. She came out before, though.

Q. Why didn't you call him out today? Any reason?

SERENA WILLIAMS: Honestly, I hate that. I really do. I almost think it's -- I just hate it. I'm not saying I would never use it, because I have in the past.

I feel like the best thing about tennis is that tennis the only sport where you're on your own. If you need a coach, then...

All my life, you know, the greats, like Martina and Steffi, you know, Monica Seles and all the greats never used that mechanism. I think it takes away from -- I don't know, I don't love it. I don't love it at all.

Q. You seemed to start playing better about the time that he showed up on the side. Did it boost your spirits a little bit, or is that just a coincidence?

SERENA WILLIAMS: I just felt like he was there really supporting, and I felt more the support when he was up close as opposed to in the stands.

I don't know, I just felt like I could take it up to another level.

Q. How would you grade your play in the first set?

SERENA WILLIAMS: If I was in school and I was like the professor and I had to give myself a grade, I would give myself like an 8% out of 100, which is failing. (Laughter.)

Q. And by the end, the final grade of the whole match?

SERENA WILLIAMS: The whole match is

still an F. But it is what it is. It's over with. I'm honestly glad to get through it.

I feel like I wasn't as upbeat and spirited as I normally am. I think I maybe one or two, Come ons during the whole match, which is not really normal for me.

I give it a A for -- well, a B for effort.

Q. Did you feel just coming on that you weren't as spirited, or just the way the match was going?

SERENA WILLIAMS: Yeah, I don't know. I'm really moody, so maybe that had something to do with it.

Q. You just started out that way?

SERENA WILLIAMS: Yeah.

Q. What mood do you need to take into a match against Venus?

SERENA WILLIAMS: I'm always going to be up for V, because she's playing really well and always playing me super tough. I feel like playing her it's like I have to automatically be on a different level because she's already playing an a different level.

Her balls are harder and her serve is way bigger. It's like I have to be there. And it's fun. Not that this wasn't, but it's super fun to like hit these serves that are like 120. It's frustrating, but at the same time fun.

Q. There was a time you guys didn't play for a while, and now you're meeting more regularly. Does that frequency make it any easier?

SERENA WILLIAMS: Yeah, I mean, as long as it's in the finals it's okay. We are always in the same side of the draw nowadays, so...

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