

April 1, 2009

Sony Ericsson Open

S. WILLIAMS/N. Li

4-6, 7-6, 6-2

An interview with:

LI NA

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. You seemed really in command of that match. Did you feel like you gave it away or she took it?

LI NA: I mean, she was so strong on the court. I have chances in the second set. I have like maybe six or seven breakpoint, but I didn't hold for one point. She just like -- she didn't gave me any chance.

And on the second set, I mean, I still think about I have a chance in the second set, so, I mean, yeah. Also, she have good serve in the final set. So a little bit give up.

Q. Did you feel like in the beginning you were playing great, that she just seemed like asleep the first five games?

LI NA: I mean, in final set she played much better. In first set, maybe like, how do you say, she didn't try 100%. Yeah, so yeah.

Q. Why do you think that was? Were you surprised? Any idea?

LI NA: I mean, first set I was a little bit surprised. But after I was 5-Love, and then she come back 5-4 I have a nervous. So I call the coach and I say, Come on. I was 5-Love up. I only need one game and then I win one set, you know.

Q. What did your coach say?

LI NA: Don't see what she do. I need focus my tennis. Yeah, because, I mean, I was 5-Love, then be like relax. I just like easy miss the ball in the four games. Yeah.

Q. You've played both sisters, right?

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LI NA: Yeah.

Q. Can you compare their games? They really play such different styles. Which is more dangerous and difficult for you?

LI NA: I feeling these two, if they want to play, they can win any tournament. If they want. Because they're so strong in the mentally, also. They're so strong on the court. They gave me a lot of pressure.

Q. What's your coach's name?

LI NA: Jiang Shan. Yeah, he's my husband. My coach was leaving last week, because he -- young daughter have birthday, so he was back to Sweden already.

Q. Did you feel like it was more a case where you let the match get away, or she took it and she started playing better?

LI NA: I mean, she was play better in the final set. After she win the second set I didn't think I have a chance, because, I mean, I was feeling like, yeah, she stand up.

Q. You double faulted twice. Did that bother you?

LI NA: Yeah, because I have eight double fault in the final set.

Q. Do you feel you played a poor tiebreaker?

LI NA: I mean, I was come to tiebreak I think okay. I have to win seven point, but, I mean, she didn't miss. Always I miss like easy. Feeling like I give the tiebreak for her.

I mean, she play ball back, and then after she win the second set she had more confidence in the final set.

Q. Did that affect you, too, knowing you were in that tiebreaker and you could have had the match right there? When she won, did you feel like you lost a little bit of energy?

LI NA: No, because I still think I have a chance in the second set. I couldn't focus in the final set. I still think like if I win one point I have 6-5 up, and then I have serve game. I still think about

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second set. Yeah.

Q. Forgive me if this is too personal, but being from China, do you get to keep most of the money that you win in prizes?

LI NA: What?

Q. Do you personally get to keep most of your prize money?

LI NA: Yeah. Yes. No, all Chinese player like western. We pay for the coach and we pay traveling, we pay flight ticket. We pay everything. We take all the prize money. Yeah.

Q. Are you proud of your fellow Chinese players? This week I think Serena had to beat three in a row of you.

LI NA: What do you mean?

Q. Are you proud of your fellow Chinese players that are top 40 now? Serena almost lost to two of you in the last two days.

LI NA: I mean, I was feeling like she play Fed Cup, three in a row always like Chinese player. Good for the Chinese player. They have more experience to play No. 1 in the world.

Also, we can see what do we need to do after, how do you say, after this year or next year, what we have to do. Whether we have to like coming up or...

Q. Which is a more difficult match: Serena on hard court or Venus on grass?

LI NA: I play these both in the hardcourt, so right now I didn't have any chance to play anyone in the grass court.

Q. Which is more intimidating of the two girls? Which is the one that scares you the most if they're playing well?

LI NA: I think both. (Laughter.) Yeah.

Q. They're such huge celebrities in the United States. How popular are they in China?

LI NA: Also big.

Q. Really?

LI NA: Yeah. Yeah. I mean, if we talk about tennis, if you say Serena or Venus, I think if the Chinese people play tennis, not for professional player, but they will know both player.

Q. If they're playing each other tomorrow night, that would be something

people in China would pay attention to and be interested in?

LI NA: I think so, yeah, because right now in China they have channel only for tennis and the golf. So any big tournament, yeah.

Q. And if you say Li Na in China?

LI NA: Yeah. Yeah, in China we call family name first and then the name. I mean, a lot of people ask me what I -- what they call for my name Li Na or Na Li. I said it doesn't matter because my name is so short, so easy to call. So doesn't matter.

Q. Your English has gotten much better?

LI NA: Oh, yeah?

Q. You were in the top 20, or around 20, and obviously you were hurt. But do you feel like you're playing at a level now to get back into the top 20?

LI NA: Actually, for me, this year the goal is I hope I can play whole year. I didn't want injury anymore, because last year I only play like six month, and also year before I only play half year.

So, I mean, for me, I was like -- I have two time in the operation. Every time I was in the hospital I watch the girls play the match. I was like, What I do? Every player they play ten month or a year, but I only play six month a year. What should I do? I have a lot of time for the rest.

Yeah, so hopefully not injury anymore. I didn't like that.

Q. When did you have your last knee surgery?

LI NA: 22 of -- before Christmas last year. Yeah.

Q. But your confidence is back? It's coming back?

LI NA: Yeah, because not easy. I'm not seeded in these tournaments. I play five round already, so that give me a lot of confidence. But after season was clay, so I have to be careful.

Q. Will you be thinking about that second set tiebreaker a lot later today?

LI NA: No, I think I never think of all my life I didn't want think about this tiebreak. Yeah, always like, okay, don't say that. I didn't want to

think about it.

Q. It was mainly the breakpoints that you're really upset about?

LI NA: Yeah.

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