

August 14, 2010



M. SHARAPOVA/A. Pavlyuchenkova

6-4, 3-6, 6-2

An interview with:

ANASTASIA PAVLYUCHENKOVA

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. This was your first time playing Maria. What did you think? Were you intimidated going into it? She was one of the people you looked up to.

ANASTASIA PAVLYUCHENKOVA: Normally I say that I don't care if I already played against someone or not, but today it was a little bit tough to, you know, play against her because it was my first time. So I didn't really know what to expect from her. She was quite aggressive since first point, so, yeah, she played really well today.

Q. What was the problem you were having with your shoulder?

ANASTASIA PAVLYUCHENKOVA: Um, well, I don't know. It's quite sore since few days. Probably a lot of tennis in a row, and after Istanbul I didn't have much rest. I was playing a little bit, and I had also tough matches here in this tournament.

So I guess I just getting too tired.

Q. Did she play the way you expected she might going into it? I know you haven't played her before.

ANASTASIA PAVLYUCHENKOVA: Well, I think she plays quite the same all the time. She has her game. She's very aggressive player and hits every shot and goes for it, so I think she plays every match quite the same. She plays her game all the time. Sometimes it works; sometimes it's not.

Today it worked pretty well. Well, she's actually playing very well at this tournament, and she beat some very good players. Also, today at the important points she was there. She was very good.

Q. Talk about your game plan coming in. What shots were you trying to attack her on specifically?

ANASTASIA PAVLYUCHENKOVA: You know, I tried to move her a lot today, but at one point I mentioned that by moving she was sometimes doing better than when I was hitting at her or I was -- sometimes I was too soft and so she was making winners.

So I guess I had to be more aggressive on every shot against her. So, yeah, and I had to be probably more aggressive on the return as well.

Q. You were down a break when the lights went out at 2-1, and he were you were getting treatment for your shoulder. Did that break help you at all? You came out really well and broke her serve twice in a row.

ANASTASIA PAVLYUCHENKOVA: Well, it helped me a little bit also to calm down, because I think I was a little bit angry with myself also because I got broken in the first set and I got broken early in the second set.

I guess I was too tired today that I probably -- it helped me to calm down and, you know, to get everything clear in my head.

Q. You were playing really deep on your return game. Is that something about Maria's serve that you were anticipating you were gonna need more time on? Talk a little bit about that.

ANASTASIA PAVLYUCHENKOVA: In the second set I got used to it a little bit more, so it was a little bit was easier. In the first set it was a bit tough because she was taking a lot of the time on her serve, so I was losing my focus a little bit just before the return.

So because of her very high toss and she

took so much time, it was like -- it was a big kick and it was going deep, so it was tough to come in and be aggressive.

Q. Did her height bother you? On ESPN they were mentioning that by the time she reaches her ball toss, it's almost ten feet off the ground.

ANASTASIA PAVLYUCHENKOVA: Well, yeah, I mean, I don't see it that often, you know, from other players, so it's something unusual.

Q. Do you go into games like that thinking, I can beat Maria Sharapova now? Are you at that level where you go in with that level of confidence?

ANASTASIA PAVLYUCHENKOVA: Um, yeah, of course. I mean, I actually got in the third set. But as I said, I don't know why, I just was out of energy today.

In the third set I think I didn't have a lot of energy left, and I just tried, you know, after each point to get myself active and energetic. But it just didn't work at the end.

But of course she was good. She was there. So good point of her. But I think she's not at her very best level right now, so of course I thought I could beat her.

Q. Do you think that your tiredness hurt your serve late in the match? In the third set you hit only 50% of first serves in and five double faults.

ANASTASIA PAVLYUCHENKOVA: Yeah, I think so, because I was also -- well, I think when I'm tired I'm also rushing sometimes. You want to get rid of the ball. You don't want to have that long rallies all the time.

I think I was just not very focused on my toss on my serve, and that's why I was tossing wrong and it was going into the net or I was doing a lot of the mistakes on my serve.

Q. Getting to the semifinals here, are you pretty happy with your performance at this tournament?

ANASTASIA PAVLYUCHENKOVA: Yeah, in general I am happy, of course, but right now I'm disappointed about my loss. I was thinking about it, Well, what have I done wrong? What could I have done to win the match?

So I have these thoughts in my mind right now. But, you know, I try to still keep positive for

the next tournament, because I don't want to hurt myself after one loss, match like this.

Still it was close. I think in the future it will be better.

Q. You had that tough game when you were serving at 2-3 in the third set. Very long game. I think you saved some breakpoints. There were several shots that looked like you wanted to challenge in that game, and maybe you started to but then didn't. Did that distract you at all?

ANASTASIA PAVLYUCHENKOVA: Yeah, because that few shots she really hit it close to the line. I don't know whether she was lucky or how to call it. But it was just right on the line like a few important shots.

Well, I guess that's why she won the match. She deserved it probably because she hit -- she played a really good game, important game, you know. So it's good of her.

Q. How much of a factor do you think the recent travel from Istanbul was just to get over here just preparing for the tournament, that type thing?

ANASTASIA PAVLYUCHENKOVA: Um, well, I was pretty tired after Istanbul, but then I had some time off and practicing a little bit. Then I got here, and I just -- I don't know, I just came here, enjoy the tournament, you know.

I knew it would be every player is almost top player here. You know, it's like almost as the Grand Slams. So I just came to prepare my game for the US Open, prepare it for the future. And, well, I knew that I have to try to beat that kind of top players, or at least to have the same level of game.

Q. I understand you are at a career-high ranking now.

ANASTASIA PAVLYUCHENKOVA: Yes.

Q. Did you have any goals this year as far as a ranking that you wanted to get to?

ANASTASIA PAVLYUCHENKOVA: Well, like I think I said last year, I would like to be top 20, but I didn't get to.

So I would like to finish this year at least top 20. If I can get higher, would be perfect.

Q. What are you really most pleased

with in your week here besides reaching the semifinals? I'm talking about your game: serves, returns. What are you really pleased with right now and what do you want to improve on before you go to the Open?

ANASTASIA PAVLYUCHENKOVA:

Actually, I'm pretty happy with my performance here. I proved to myself that I can get so far in the tournament, this kind of tournament. I had the really close, tough matches which I could pull through.

Like before, for example, I had some tough matches, close matches, but I was losing. Every time I didn't believe enough or something didn't work.

But this time everything was perfect. I fought from the first point until the end, so I guess that is what I have to do in the future.

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