

August 17, 2010



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J. ISNER/L. Kubot

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An interview with:

JOHN ISNER

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. This was your first match again him. Talk about his game and what he does well and not so well in the context of the match tonight?

JOHN ISNER: Yeah, he returns really well. That's probably the strong suit of his game. He's a really good doubles player. Him and his partner are ranked high in doubles. But I was fortunate tonight. I'm pretty sure this is his first match in a long time. I think he's been hurt, so he was a bit rusty out there.

But I also played one of the best matches I've played in a while. It was the best I've felt out on the court in a long time. Because the past two, three weeks I've just been gassed for whatever reason. I think that match in Wimbledon took a lot out of me, and then all I did afterwards and the tournament in Atlanta was super-hot, and that took a lot out of me.

So I think not playing last week in Toronto was a good decision for me.

Q. Sam had mentioned that he's gonna cut back on 250s going forward next year. Are you going to look to revamp your schedule going forward to just play the bigger tournaments?

JOHN ISNER: Well, I don't feel like I've played -- I haven't played as many as he has this year. You know, probably there's maybe one or two I can take out of the schedule. I think, for instance, next year in the clay court season I think

my coach wants to play Monte-Carlo. That's usually a tournament a lot of the Americans skip. So we're gonna try to work my schedule around that.

So, you know, yeah, I mean, like you said, it's hard to say, but maybe just one or two 250s out and really we want to focus on the big ones. Tournaments like this, these are the ones you want to excel at.

Q. When did you stop feeling completely whipped from that match?

JOHN ISNER: It happened in D.C. I felt surprisingly well in Atlanta, which I was shocked considering how hot it was and I hadn't really been training. I wasn't able to train prior to that tournament, so it kind of all hit me in D.C. my legs, they just felt so heavy. I just hit two, three balls and I keeled over. I had nothing in me.

So that's when it really kind of hit home, was in D.C. few weeks ago.

Q. You felt more tired in D.C. than you did for the second-round match in Wimbledon?

JOHN ISNER: Um, as far as like stamina-wise, yes. Second round of Wimbledon I was just hurting all over the place. If I could run, I felt like everything was hurting. Stamina-wise I felt all right at Wimbledon.

That was the issue in D.C.

Q. Was there anything in particular tonight that you were working on, particular shots that you were working on? And also, what do you want to work on for your next match against Nalbandian?

JOHN ISNER: Yeah, I felt like I returned well. I felt like I made a lot of returns. That's what I have not been doing the past -- really in Atlanta and in D.C. so that was huge.

For the way I play, if I can make a lot of returns and get in a lot of service games, puts so much pressure on my opponents. So I think you saw that tonight. That was huge that I returned well. I'm gonna have to do that tomorrow, and I'm

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J Isner - 08 17 10

also gonna have to commit to my shots tomorrow, especially on my backhand side.

I made a couple errors on my backhand side just not really swinging. I'm gonna have to go out there and go for it against him, because he's obviously one the hottest players out there right now.

Q. Nalbandian won I think close to 60% of his return games in Washington on his way to the final there.

JOHN ISNER: Yeah.

Q. He's one of the best returners on the tour; you're known as one of the better servers. Do you think that makes your service games more important or his service games more important?

JOHN ISNER: Probably mine. Like you said, he's breaking serve at an unreal rate right now. But I don't think he's faced a serve as big as mine. So it's gonna be interesting. I'd like to think I'm one of the best servers in the game; he's obviously one of the best returners in the game. So it's kind of a contrast in styles.

First and foremost, I got to hold onto my serve. Even if I'm not getting in his service games, as long as I can get a lot of holds on my service games, it'll keep the match close and really make the match hinge on a few points here and there.

Q. Almost two months removed from Wimbledon, are things slowing down for you, all the outside extra requests, fans, things like that slowing down?

JOHN ISNER: Yes, I think so. After D.C., I didn't play Toronto. I went home to North Carolina for four nights and just shut everything down. I just turned my cell phone off, too, just to kind of get away from everything and hang out with my family and hang out with my dog. That's all I wanted to do.

So I think that helped a lot. My mom spoiled me, cooked a lot of good meals. I really got to just hang out and unwind a bit, because I really didn't think I had time for that.

Q. Did the officials at Wimbledon mention that they were gonna try and put that match on DVD? Not that you want to watch it, but...

JOHN ISNER: Yeah, there's no chance I could ever watch that again. That's a good question. I haven't spoken to them.

Q. You talked in D.C. about being sort of sick of talking about the Wimbledon match. Do you think you're over that feeling now? You've already talked about it a lot today.

JOHN ISNER: Well, I think now I'm fine to talk about it. Like I said, the last ten days prior to this tournament I've been resting and practicing a little bit. I haven't really answered too many questions about it because I've just kind of been out of the scene, the tennis scene.

You know, I think like in D.C. I had really just been going nonstop, and a lot of the questions kind of got me. Now I'm fine. Mentally I feel fresh.

Q. Your route to being a pro was much different than so many others with the years you spent at Georgia. Can you elaborate a little bit on that time you spent there and how that prepared you for where you are today?

JOHN ISNER: Yeah, that's huge. It was really the only route for me, because when I was 18 coming out of high school, I wasn't nearly good enough to go pro. I mean, I was barely top 10 in the nation in juniors, and that's really not a level you want to be at if you wanting go pro.

So I knew college was the choice for me. I knew I was gonna be able to practice with players at my level and have the best coaching at my disposal for four years. Every year at Georgia I continued to get better. Finally got to the point where I knew that I had a big enough game and my game developed to where I could give pro tennis a shot.

That's really the only reason that I'm here right now is University of Georgia.

Q. What did you like most about the changes they made to the facilities here, and also the format next year with the combined event with the women?

JOHN ISNER: This facility is amazing.

Q. What do you like most about it?

JOHN ISNER: Um, the locker rooms are great. I mean, the men's locker room is awesome. There's a lot of space compared to last year not so much space down there. There's more space in the locker room here than I think any tournament

on tour, so I think the player's appreciate that.

And the players' lounge. Just what they've done is amazing. This is really a top-notch tournament.

Q. Your success at Wimbledon obviously brought you international fame, but speaking just from tennis fans in America, now that Andy Roddick has dropped a little out of the top 10, do you feel a lot of pressure on yourself that a lot of the people are looking at you and Sam Querrey as the next guys to make it into the top 10 for the U.S.?

JOHN ISNER: No, I don't think so. I think it's only a matter of time before Andy gets back in there. Because really from this point on last year he didn't play much. He didn't do that well to the Open for his standards, and after that he was hurt.

So he can only go up from here. So I think without a doubt, assuming he stays healthy, he's gonna be back in the top 10 at year's end. Most likely, he has the best chance to be the highest ranked American at the end of the year.

But I don't feel any pressure. If I don't get to the top 10, I'm only letting myself down really. That's the way I look at it. It is what it is. I'm just gonna go out there and play and try to win.

Q. Going back to your schedule, I saw a little while ago you committed to the Hopman Cup. You were talking about 250s before. Obviously Auckland is one of the 250s that you won. Have you made a decision about coming back to Auckland?

JOHN ISNER: It's up not air, but as of right now I'm leaning towards playing it. I did that last year. I played the Hopman Cup, which was perfect, because I wasn't playing my greatest. You get guaranteed matches there. I played three of them; lost 'em all.

Then went to Auckland and won the tournament and then made the fourth round at the US Open. Excuse me, Australian Open. So I did really well Down Under last year. As of right now, we're thinking about keeping the same schedule.

Q. What kind of dog?

JOHN ISNER: Cocker spaniel.

Q. Name?

JOHN ISNER: Miguel.

Q. No bulldog?

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JOHN ISNER: No. No. (Laughing.) It was my mom's choice. He's cute, though.

Q. How many events you gonna play with Sam on doubles?

JOHN ISNER: As of right now, I don't think we're gonna play the US Open, so that's one to take off. If all goes well, I mean, we only have - including this one, if you count this one that we're in - we only have five more -- this one and four more events: the two in Asia and two in Europe that we're gonna play.

Q. Do you guys see yourselves as eventually maybe succeeding the Bryans?

JOHN ISNER: No, no.

Q. Even years down the road?

JOHN ISNER: No. I mean, they're only 31 or something. They're playing doubles, so it's not as tough on the body. Those guys will be playing for six, seven, eight, nine, more years in my opinion. They're in a different level than Sam and I.

We really don't know how to play doubles. We got big serves and we can make a few returns. (Laughing.) Those guys know how to play doubles. So there's no shot of us succeeding them.

Q. You're a big Georgia Bulldogs supporter obviously. What do you think their chances are of winning the SEC in football this year?

JOHN ISNER: It's gonna be tough. I think they can win the East, which obviously first and foremost you have to do. The quarterback's young, but the offensive line is experienced; the backfield is experienced; and we have the best wide receiver in the country and a new defensive coordinator.

So I think things are looking up for Georgia. They're flying under the radar this year, and that's usually when they do the best.

Q. Would you say the experience of playing doubles has helped you with your singles play?

JOHN ISNER: Uh-huh.

Q. In what way?

JOHN ISNER: Just seeing more live balls.

J Isner - 08 17 10

I think the match that Sam and I played Sunday night here helped me tremendously for my match tonight, because I got up on -- I was able to play on center court under the lights. It's a different feeling than most courts. So I was able to see the ball pretty well out there tonight.

That was the other advantage I had out there over my opponent, so I was lucky in that regard. I want to thank Bruce Flory for that, for the putting me on there.

So yeah, playing doubles helps a lot. Like I said, just seeing live action is invaluable.

Q. Does that make you more comfortable approaching the net? First set, for instance, you won three of the four net points that you made approaches to do it. Is that also another part of your game that you're trying to diversify instead of just hanging behind the baseline?

JOHN ISNER: Yeah, I probably need to get to the net more. 75%, so if I can get to the net six more times like that, it puts a lot of -- like you said, my wingspan puts a lot of pressure on my opponents. I feel like I'm pretty good at the net, so I got to try to keep working my way in there.

I mean, even tomorrow, Nalbandian is a lot better than me from the baseline. I might try to keep the points shorter and get in.

Q. Did you ever any concerns after Wimbledon about somewhat longer term problems with your shoulder after having served so many days in a row?

JOHN ISNER: No, I didn't. I usually recover pretty well. Still pretty young. I took an adequate amount of time off completely after that match, so I started feeling, you know, feeling pretty solid really a week after.

But in D.C., I think with that match combined with everything that I went through after, it kind of all just hit home right there. So that's -- so a little bit worried, because I wasn't feeling great at all.

Even during Toronto when I was in Florida practicing, I wasn't feeling my best. But I started feeling all right about on like Saturday evening here.

Q. Mono or that, which one felt better?

JOHN ISNER: Sorry?

Q. Didn't you have mono last year?



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JOHN ISNER: Yeah, that was the worst. Yeah, that's bad.

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J Isner - 08 17 10