

August 16, 2011



J. JANKOVIC/I. Benesova

6-0, 6-3

An interview with:

JELENA JANKOVIC

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Talk about your match today. You obviously blew her away. What you did you do well?

JELENA JANKOVIC: First of all, it's never easy to play your first match at a tournament, and especially for me when I lost to her last I think last year.

So I really just tried to focus from the first point, and really tried to, you know, be solid out there and, you know, do the right things.

You know, my first serve was pretty good, but one thing that I was not happy with was that I made quite a bit of double faults. So there are obviously things I have done well and things that I can do better.

But, you know, it's a first match. Hopefully I can just keep improving. I'm happy with the win overall.

Q. I saw you in practice earlier this week, and you seemed to be getting pretty frustrated with the mistakes you were making. Were you surprised to come out and win the first set 6-0 with how frustrated you were earlier in the week?

JELENA JANKOVIC: Yeah, obviously when you're training -- I'm a perfectionist, and I want to do things and I want to be better and I want to, you know, improve.

So obviously when I'm making mistakes in practice I'm not happy. But, you know, that shows that I care. You know, practicing and then going to play the match is completely different. Sometimes

you can play so well in practice, and then you go to play a match and it seems like you didn't practice at all. You couldn't put one ball in the court.

I practiced well, but obviously, you know, you're going to make some mistakes there, and it's not so important to, you know, keep the ball in play in practice. You're working on certain things. Until you get it right, you're going to make mistakes.

In the match it's different, and you focus on tactics and what you're going to do. It's a completely different story.

I did pretty well today. I'm happy with the win.

Q. Is it hard to maintain focus after you've had a 6-0 set or things are so one-sided?

JELENA JANKOVIC: Yeah, it's never easy, because it can turn around easily and you have to focus from the first point in the second set.

That's what I did. I tried to keep my momentum going, and I didn't really want to let her come back into the match and start playing her game. So I thought I did pretty well.

There were some times, you know, certain, you know, periods of the match - especially in that second set - when I kind of stopped moving and I kind of, you know, I kind of stopped playing my game for a bit.

But then I came back again and served out the match and did okay.

Q. What's your impressions on playing in the new Court 3? What did you think of that?

JELENA JANKOVIC: Yeah, I didn't know which one it was actually, which court that was, because I usually, you know, over the years I played on center court and grandstand. Then they told me Court 3 and I didn't know because it's a new one.

Throughout this week when I was practicing, I tried to test all the courts. I didn't play on that one. I played on Court 9, Court 7, Court 5,

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and then I play on Court 3. But it's okay. You know, it's a pretty good court.

I really like the facilities out here. There are so many courts. You know, I really enjoy to be here, and especially I won it here in 2009. So you always like coming back to certain places where you played well.

Q. I heard that you had an interesting delay on the way in to your match today. Talk about that.

JELENA JANKOVIC: Yeah, you know, on our way to the site, we were driving, me and my coach and my mom and my sparring, and all of a sudden she was supposed to turn on the highway and then the car completely stopped.

Then my mom was like, Oh, this car is not working. We were like, What do you mean it's not working? It just stopped. It's not working. Something is wrong with it.

We looked, and it was zero gas inside the car. I was like, Oh, my God. Great. I have 20 minutes before my practice session.

And then, you know, luckily the gas station was like, you know, two minutes' walk. So me and my coach ran out to the gas station and bought that thing, that gallon that you put -- that you fill up. We kind of didn't know how you open this nozzle thing and stuff like that because it never happened. Then we ran out, you know, and then he put it in and it was okay. Then we got going.

But there were some players passing through and looking at us in the middle of the road, like, What is she doing up there?

Pretty funny. It's not how you begin the day, it's how you end it, so I'm glad I got my win and we got going. We arrived to the practice court.

When I came to the site, there was all these people that wanted autographs, and I'm like, Sorry guys; I'm late for practice. I got to go. I went straight to the court. They were all laughing. A lot of people found out because they saw me in the middle of the road.

I'm like, How do you know I got left out without gas? I saw you. I was like, Why you didn't stop to drive me back?

Q. Would you have stopped if you had seen one of your fellow players?

JELENA JANKOVIC: Yeah, sure. Why not? I think it's human. You know, you can help whoever it is if they have some problem.

But it was not a big deal. It was just I didn't want to be late for my practice session. It

took ten minutes, but still, you're kind of panicking because you have a match.

But anyway, it was pretty funny, and now everybody knows about it.

Q. You and several other Serbian players were recently granted diplomatic status. Talk about that.

JELENA JANKOVIC: Yeah, it's a huge honor for us to get a diplomatic passport. Over the past years we have done so well, and I think we are one of the greatest ambassadors for our country.

You know, it's written there like goodwill ambassador, so I'm proud to receive that. I think it's a great thing. Hopefully we can continue to, you know, represent our country in the best possible way.

Q. Your next match is against Jie Zheng, and you lead 4 to 1. What do you need to do well?

JELENA JANKOVIC: Yeah, she's a pretty solid player. She gets all these balls back and she is really -- she hits it flat. I haven't played against her in a while because, you know, she has I think been injured. But she's coming back, and I've seen the last couple matches that she played.

So, you know, we'll see. I just want to focus on my game and try to be positive out there and really move well and do what I do best. Hopefully it will go in a good way.

Q. What are the perks of a diplomatic passport?

JELENA JANKOVIC: I don't know. I just kind of got it. I think I get to go in a faster lane, you know, when you're...

I don't know. When it comes to certain visas as well. I don't know really. I didn't use it yet to kind of know exactly the benefits. Maybe you can ask some other Serbian players, because when they were getting it I wasn't there.

So, you know, I guess I was, I don't know, in the States or somewhere when they were receiving those passports. So those players that were there, they used it for many months. I just got it, and I still haven't used it because I still have my old one that has a few pages left.

You know, because they give you a stamp, so until you get -- you know, you use, then, okay, you can take a new one.

Q. Not coming from a small country like Serbia, can we really understand the impact of someone like yourself or Djokovic who gets to No. 1 back at home?

JELENA JANKOVIC: What do you mean? How big...

Q. I don't come from a small country like Serbia. Can we even understand the kind of impact that you've had at home?

JELENA JANKOVIC: If you can believe, for example, for a country that has about maybe 8 million people and we have like three No. 1s in the world in tennis, you know, I think that's pretty impressive.

If somebody told us that when we began our careers, we would think it's a joke or it's not even -- it's like a mission impossible. But this shows that anything is achievable. Doesn't matter where you come from and what kind of facilities you have to train, if you're wealthy or poor.

I think with the will and with the desire and the hunger, the determination, you can achieve anything. We showed that, and, you know, I'm pretty proud that we have done so well. It's really amazing success for Serbian tennis, and hopefully we will inspire other younger generations to come our way as well.

Q. How do you feel about the combined men's/women's events? What did you see as the pros and are there some minuses?

JELENA JANKOVIC: I think it's nice to have the combined event, especially now that we have these good facilities. We have lots of courts and big, you know, restaurants and big things that we can all fit inside.

I think those are the biggest issues that if we didn't have, you know, like a big player lounge or some small places and then we they all come in, there is no place to sit and you have to stand and eat lunch.

But we are lucky that we have good facilities and that we can all be here. It's nice for the fans to see men's and women's tennis and enjoy a lot of good tennis throughout the week.

And as well for me. I like to watch men's tennis and as well learn from them and see how they play and pick up some tips and learn.

So I'm happy that it is like this.

Q. Before your match today, you were outside. Were you just trying to get away from all the bodies in the players' lounge?

JELENA JANKOVIC: Yeah, you saw me there? I can't hide from anybody, I guess.

Q. I wasn't stalking you, but...

JELENA JANKOVIC: Just before the match I kind of like to have some quiet time and just focus and think about, you know, what I have to do in the match.

And as well, just get my, you know, keep my energy and then stay calm. Then when I go on the court I feel good and I am ready to play, as if I'm running around all over and kind of losing my energy elsewhere.

Q. You're a veteran. After all this time...

JELENA JANKOVIC: Veteran? (Laughter.) I'm 26 years old. You call me already a veteran. (Laughter.)

Q. I'm sorry. After all this time, what motivates you?

JELENA JANKOVIC: You know, I'm still happy to be on the court every time, and I'm really happy to work, especially on the practice court. There were times when I didn't really -- you know, it was tough hitting balls every day and doing the same things over and over again.

But, you know, I found ways to kind of motivate myself and kind of find fun routines, different exercises and different things that push me to work on my game and get better.

I think in any profession if you just keep -- like I guess you guys -- if you're just writing the same articles and doing the same thing every day, or if you're -- if you love pizza but if you eat it every day, you're eventually going to get sick of it.

I think you have to kind of mix it up and find some balance between your sport and some other things that you like to do and then stay happy.

So I think for me, I play better when I'm happy off the court as well. When I go on the court, I go with a smile on my face and I'm happy to be hitting balls and working on my tennis game.

So so far, you know, I've been working pretty hard to come back in form again. For me, the biggest thing is to stay healthy so I can go out on the court and not think about, Oh, I have pain

here and there and all of these things. So far so good. So I'm knocking on would.

Q. Novak is having a great year. Can you comment about his year from a players' standpoint? Do you see anyone on the women's side being able to do what he's done, for instance?

JELENA JANKOVIC: I don't know. It's so tough to say, because what he's done, you can just, you know, put your hat down. It's really unbelievable.

Q. Is there anything you've learned from watching him over the last year?

JELENA JANKOVIC: You know, you can watch, but I think... (laughing.) You can always watch. I think the other players are watching, too, especially the men that are playing against him. But they can't do anything.

So it's easier to say and speak, but it's tougher to do it, you know, in practice; it's just theory.

You know, I just wish him a lot of luck, you know, to continue like that. Hopefully, you know, he can, you know, finish this season strong and finish as the best player in the world that he has been so far this season.

So really congratulations to him. I think he's the best one in this moment, and has been since the beginning of the year. He has been playing so well. One thing that's amazing is that he's keeping his form for so long, which not many players can do and have done maybe in the past, which is very hard.

A lot of players play well certain parts of the season, but they cannot play so consistently well the whole year. He has lost only one match since January, so that shows how impressive his game and his mentality has been.

The most important thing I think is that he's mentally really, really strong, and I think he breaks down a lot of the players with, you know, his toughness.

So unbelievable.

Q. Are we going to see you together in mixed doubles maybe?

JELENA JANKOVIC: I don't know. I'm playing actually -- I don't think he will be playing mixed doubles in Olympic Games. I'm playing mixed doubles with Tipsarevic. He's my old friend from juniors. We won in mixed doubles juniors

when we were 15 years old. So we have one title together, which is good for the beginning.

Q. Would you say you had fun today?

JELENA JANKOVIC: Yeah, I did have fun today. It's always fun. And especially it's fun when you win. It's never fun when you lose. Even when you played well.

Anyway, like I said, just got to go on the court and just try to have fun and play your tennis. Sometimes you can't do everything perfect. When you make mistakes, keep positive and keep going. I did that today, and hopefully I'll just keep getting better and better.

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