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**Western & Southern
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MASTERS

M. FISH/G. Simon

7-6, 7-5

An interview with:

MARDY FISH

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Both of you served exceptionally well today. Lots of aces and very few double faults; return games were solid. What was the difference?

MARDY FISH: Um, I think just the aggressiveness I guess, my sort of willingness to take some chances throughout some of the longer rallies. You know, we had some great rallies out there, and he certainly moves as well as anyone does. He covers a lot of ground out there and doesn't make too many errors. He's the kind of guy that you really have to beat if you're gonna beat him. He's not gonna give it to you.

So I think -- I'm not sure if I came up with very many, you know, clutch serves at clutch times or anything like that, but I did serve well. I served much better in the first set than I did in the second set. You know, you certainly need free points against someone like him.

Q. You're having a great year this year, and obviously a lot of that is attributed to your fitness program. We all know the shelf life of a tennis player is only so long. Do you have any regrets about maybe not getting on this program about five years earlier?

MARDY FISH: No, I mean, it's tough to do that. I certainly would have liked to have been, you know, as mature as I am at 28 at 20, but that's just simply not the case.

I took a lot of things for granted in this sport. Being out here and just being a good tennis

player was something that I took for granted. Hadn't taken it to the next level, like you said.

Um, you know, these things happen for a reason. I feel like I had my knee trouble for a reason, and finally really got the kick in the butt that I needed to get into shape.

Q. What did you do to lose the 30 pounds, and how has it affected your mobility?

MARDY FISH: It was mostly diet. I've always worked hard. It was just, you know, I would work until I got tired and stop. I got tired -- I don't get tired as much with 30 less pounds than I did before, so I'm able to do a lot more.

Able to train harder and train longer, you know, train for more hours, even days before matches, weeks before tournaments, things like that. So as far as affecting my mobility, it's been everything. I mean, it's night and day. I feel extremely good on the court, on and off the court. I feel like a completely different player.

Q. You've had a lot success here. One year you played the finals, the championship. What is it about Cincinnati that you tend to play well here specifically?

MARDY FISH: Well, I think I tend to play better in the States. Summer has always been a good time of year for me. It's close to home. You know, friends and family can come and go a lot easier.

And the courts and the weather have always suited my game real well. It's fast this year. The weather tends to be maybe a little bit hotter. It's usually extremely hot here. So that's something different.

But, you know, conditions are still almost perfect out there. You know, not much wind, not much humidity, still 80 or 85 degrees or something like that. But you don't feel it at all compared to some other events we've played this year.

Q. What do you think of the facility improvements?

MARDY FISH: Yeah, it's spectacular; it's

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awesome.

Q. What do you like most?

MARDY FISH: To be honest, I haven't been into the food place yet. We go to McAllister's for lunch. We've gone there; it's worked out. You know, I mean, just the locker rooms are spectacular, the locker room is spectacular. It's like a little sort of a mini US Open.

It'll even be nice with the women here. There aren't the many people here and there's lots of room. That's just great for us. The locker rooms are -- we can't tell you how nice it is to have some space and have your own locker, nice big locker. It's great; I mean, it's awesome.

Q. Give your rise in the rankings right now, with respect to that, are you going to look to maybe make some changes to your schedule next year, maybe play some larger tournaments instead of some 250s?

MARDY FISH: Well, you know, if you finish inside the top 30 you'll have to. You'll need those 500s. The way the ranking system is set up, the 250s just don't have much weight anymore.

And a lot of those tournaments I've loved playing. The San Josés, the Delray Beaches, you know, Queen's, a lot of the tournaments -- Newport -- a lot of the tournaments throughout the summer that I enjoy playing just won't carry as much weight, and that's just the bottom line. They only count two or three of 'em. It's just kind of a shame, because those are events that you really love to play. If you win three of 'em, one of 'em doesn't count.

So I don't know what I'll do with my schedule. Obviously it's a good spot to be in. I don't have one point to defend the rest of the year. So if I do finish top 30, which hopefully I will, come to that question.

Q. How is your health doing after the week off from the beginning of summer with the ankle?

MARDY FISH: Yeah, I feel great; ankle is behind me. To be honest, the ankle didn't affect anything. Got through that second-round match when did I it, and then, you know, it didn't have any effect. So I feel great. To be mid-summer to feel as good as I do is a blessing.

Q. I don't know if it is quicker conditions out here, but the ball is really

moving through the court when you're going after it.

MARDY FISH: Yeah, the ball jumps. I mean, the courts are quick. It's one of the faster surfaces of the year. It's a great surface.

You know, I'm happy to beat a guy that's given me trouble throughout the years in Simon.

Q. Are you happy with your movement? As a function of your weight loss, what other things specifically in your game has that weight loss helped you with?

MARDY FISH: Like I said before, it's helped me train a lot more. It's helped me put in longer hours with specific shots. My forehand has improved a ton because of the movement to it.

You know, I would say really the only shot that it hasn't really improved is my serve, because there's not much difference -- you know, not much different that I can do there besides just putting in the hours of working on it longer.

So it's improved my volleys; I've been able to play more doubles with Mark Knowles, and we've had a blast this year. We haven't had nearly the results that we would like to, but we've won five matches in a row now and winning Washington D.C., and he's playing great. It's fun to play with him.

Q. Do you have any rankings goals for the end of the year? Talk a little bit about your schedule, too.

MARDY FISH: I don't have any goals. I mean, I didn't think that I was gonna put myself in position to possibly be seeded for the US Open, and that's certainly a goal this week. Few more matches would probably do it, and that would be a huge bonus.

I didn't think that I would win -- or I didn't think I would gain 550 points that I've gotten this year so far, plus the points here. I knew that I didn't have much to defend, like I said, so it's all a bonus. It's all gravy.

Q. What you did change about you diet to lose the weight?

MARDY FISH: Everything. It was a lifestyle change completely. Time when I ate, what I ate, when I ate them, what I drank as far as sodas and alcohol and things like that. I don't drink any sodas anymore. The worst thing probably is some lemonade or iced tea or coffee in the morning.

So I've changed pretty much everything. I've lost over 30 pounds, and a lot of it has to do with times when I eat things. If I'm able to eat early in the day -- like today I probably will try to eat dinner around 6:30 or 7:00, so I can not have much in my stomach before I go to bed. I like to go to bed early. So a lot of things. I could go on and on.

Q. Is there something that you miss that you gave up?

MARDY FISH: Pizza. I love pizza. Burgers. I stare out the window from my hotel at a place called Five Guys. That's incredible food. (Laughter.) I just haven't, you know...

Q. You're not like slobbering on the window or anything, are you?

MARDY FISH: I think I am. It's right in front of me, too.

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