

August 20, 2010



**Western & Southern
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MASTERS

M. FISH/A. Murray

6-7, 6-1, 7-6

An interview with:

MARDY FISH

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. You feel like you survived something out there? Pretty grueling match:

MARDY FISH: Yeah, it was physical. It's hot. The humidity is not there as much as, you know, maybe we had in D.C. or Atlanta, but it's every bit as hot.

So, yeah, I mean, it feels great to win a match like that.

Q. Midway through the set on his service game, at 2-3, his second serves were coming in at 85, 73, and his first serves for one service game at 3-4 were 101, 109. Was that throwing you off at all?

MARDY FISH: I mean, yeah, I'm sure he did it for a reason, try to mix up speeds. You know, sometimes if guys are just hitting as hard as they can or hitting 125, 130 every time you can get a rhythm on it.

So if you're mixing speeds up, it's tough to get a rhythm. I missed some second serve returns. I tried to stay as aggressive as I could. I think he doubles maybe at 5-All in the tiebreaker in that first set, and then played a great point to play the next...

But it's all about rhythm, and, you know, he was trying to mess me up a little bit.

Q. Congratulations on your win. What was the message that you inscribed on the camera at the very end?

MARDY FISH: Well, it seems like everyone just signs it, so I just say hello to

everyone at home that's watching. Sometimes I remember to just say hi to just one person, so I just it said to everyone. Then I said at the end, Sorry if I forgot you. (Smiling.)

Q. As you were giving hugs to the crowd, what thoughts were going through your head?

MARDY FISH: Yeah, just happy to, you know, put myself in this position again. This is one my favorite spots of the year, and I have a lot of great memories here, like I've said this week. I haven't played great since that 2003 tournament here, and I do love coming here.

So, yeah, I mean, I was just excited to, you know, win, you know, to beat one of the best players in the world in that fashion on that court. The crowd was incredible. Just wanted to let 'em know.

Q. The fact that you're still alive in doubles, is that a good or bad thing in terms of preserving your energy for tomorrow's match?

MARDY FISH: Well, as far as preserving energy it doesn't help, but I love playing doubles. I'll be fine. I mean, it's just a two-out-of-three-set match today. This is what we train for. It's better to be in this position than not.

But we'll manage it. Luckily it's a super-tiebreaker for the third and no-ad scoring. That's one of the reasons why singles players play doubles, is you know that you're not gonna be out there for too long.

I've got one of the best doubles players ever on my side, so we should be okay.

Q. 3-0 against him now this year. Can you put your finger on a specific key for that success?

MARDY FISH: Well, I mean, I easily could be 1-2. I mean, I won two tiebreakers for the third.

I'm not sure why. I mean, I clearly feel like I'm playing a lot better than I had in the previous matches that I played against him. I've had a lot of trouble with him. He returns so well and moves so

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well that, you know, he gives players - aggressive players like me - a lot of trouble.

I mean, it's a great win for anyone. Clearly he's playing some great tennis that he showed last week and this week. Yeah, it's a great win.

Q. First game of the match you hit a dropshot winner, and he gave you a stare down. You kind of looked over like, What's going on? I noticed that. And then even at the changeover he appeared to say something. Was something going on right out of the gate with him?

MARDY FISH: No. I mean, you know, we're not in the first round of a small tournament anymore. I mean, these are the big -- it's big money here; big points here; bigtime confidence going into the US Open, you know.

So it's two competitive guys. I welcome it. I like a little bit of trash talk. It's fine. I was fine with it.

Q. To me, it seemed like maybe a big difference today. I don't know if it's something you've been doing all summer, but you seemed to control the tempo of the match really well. Every time you were going through your routine. When he would serve, the ball would come to your side, you were kind of really able to control everything. Just elaborate a little bit on this, if that was a focus or not.

MARDY FISH: Yeah, I mean, I want to go sort of at my own pace, especially on my serve games. You know, I'm pretty superstitious as far as when I get the balls, from who at specific points. I got to get 'em on one side from the deuce point and another side from the ad point.

I like to go to my towel a lot. I like to take my time if it's hot, if I know it's hot and I feel like it's gonna be a long match. Yeah, I try to -- you can only control so much. That's one of the of the things you can do, is take your time a little bit.

You know, under the rules of how many seconds you get, if they don't -- you know, if they're a little bit lenient - like today I thought they did a good job. You know, we were both, you know, feeling the heat for sure. You could feel that it was a tense match, and there was no reason to -- you know, it wasn't like we were taking two minutes at a time.

So it's good to sort of stay out of it and let us play, and they did.

Q. You didn't play after Newport last season, so will you have plenty of chance to improve your ranking.

MARDY FISH: Uh-huh.

Q. Could you please tell me how you're looking forward to this, and also your playing schedule in Asia.

MARDY FISH: Yeah, definitely. I wasn't able to go to Beijing or Shanghai last year that I was looking forward to those tournaments.

Yeah, I mean, I don't have anything to defend as far as my ranking is concerned, not one point. It's sort of a weird spot to be in, because that won't -- clearly it won't be like that for long. You know, I've done really well this summer. You know, next summer at this time we might be having a different conversation.

But I'll look forward to - if I'm healthy - to, you know, play a couple of those tournaments over there, two or three of those tournaments. I look forward to it.

Q. I appreciate it is difficult for you to answer because you're still involved in the doubles, but do you have empathy for Andy and the fact that he's played a lot of matches in the last little while in the heat? He was saying earlier that he asked the organizers for a later start and it didn't happen. Obviously he's exhausted now.

MARDY FISH: Yeah. No, sometimes -- I actually like playing, you know, sort of first-up matches when I know exactly what time I'm gonna go on. Sometimes it's tough. Andy and Novak probably were waiting there for a long time to go on. Sometimes that can get tricky.

As far as the heat's concerned, I'm sure he'll go through times where he's playing a night match every time and he's thinking, Man, I'd like to be done and go to dinner at a decent hour.

So I can understand where he's coming from, but what can you do? It's bad luck for him today anyway. He maybe could have asked a couple days ago for a later match if he played someone that's not in the doubles. I mean, there's nothing they could do today.

Q. You broke him early right out of the gate in the second set. Really appeared as if he was conceding the set to conserve energy for the third. May not have looked that way and

felt it. How do you play someone like that, almost like someone with an injury? Is it harder to play that way?

MARDY FISH: Yeah, well, it is different, difficult for sure. You know, I broke him there the first game, and he actually had 15-40 in the next game. If he wins that game, he gets back to 1-All, maybe he gives the second set a go.

I kind of felt like, you know, the first set tiebreaker was big, you know, winning that first set and getting that under your belt. But I really felt really good after that. I could see and sort of feel from his side that he wasn't feeling great and the heat was sort of getting to him.

So I knew that I was still in an okay spot if I could just get a break early and get up a little bit. I was fortunate to get out of those first maybe two or three games in the second set to hold serve and stay up a break. Then you could sort of feel that he was ready to play the third and saving some energy.

I didn't think for any stretch that how the second set went was how the third set was gonna go. We've all been this in that spot. You get tired and it's hot out there. We've all been there.

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