

August 18, 2011



M. SHARAPOVA/S. Kuznetsova

6-2, 6-3

An interview with:

MARIA SHARAPOVA

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Just a quick question not related to the match. I saw that you changed back into your white Wimbledon dress for today. You were wearing the darker outfit for the rest of the US Open Series. Was that a heat consideration?

MARIA SHARAPOVA: Unfortunately you didn't look close enough, because that wasn't a dress. It was a top and a skirt. Mistake number one.

You got the second part right. When it's this hot outside, I don't want to wear too dark of a color. I prefer to wear it for the night matches since we usually play a lot during the US Open Series.

Q. Talk about you win today. How did you feel out there?

MARIA SHARAPOVA: I felt really good considering I was playing a pretty tough opponent. We've had really tough matches in the past, usually three-setters. So it was quite nice to get that win in two.

She's someone who has a tremendous amount of experience and is a really solid player, always dangerous. So, yes, it was a good win.

Q. When was the last time you returned serve that well?

MARIA SHARAPOVA: Well, it was really important against her to really be aggressive and put that pressure from the beginning. Sometimes even if you make a few mistakes but you feel like

you're doing the right things, ultimately it's going to pay off.

Q. Going back to the weather, can you talk a little bit about how conditions and the weather and the wind, precipitation, things like that, talk about how that might affect your game.

MARIA SHARAPOVA: Yeah, it's quite interesting in tennis, because you never really know. Probably the only thing you know is what court you're going to play on the next day and against whom.

As far as the conditions and if it's going to be windy or sunny or not, you know, you can look at the weather, but it'll never really tell you what the exact situation will be at that time when you play.

So in tennis, a lot of things are about adjusting. That wins you a lot of matches. The faster that you adjust to the circumstances, usually the better.

Q. You talked about knowing what court you play on. I saw that you were trying to practice earlier in the morning and had an overlap with Fernando Verdasco. Talk about that.

MARIA SHARAPOVA: Yeah, it was funny. I think they double booked our practices today, which usually doesn't happen quite often. So, yeah, I think both of us were trying to practice. There wasn't another court out there and we both of us had matches. It was getting close to 11:00, so we were both trying to get a few balls out on Center.

Q. What happened? How were you able to resolve that?

MARIA SHARAPOVA: We both got a little bit less time, but both we were both able to play on Center.

Q. Has that ever happened in any of these combined events where you've been, as

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you said, double booked on a practice court?

MARIA SHARAPOVA: I'm sure it happens, yeah.

Q. Has it ever happened to you?

MARIA SHARAPOVA: Um, yeah. Yeah, it has. Not sure if it's been with a men's player, but with a women's player, yeah, I think.

Sometimes the courts get switched around for different reasons and sometimes one person doesn't know about it, so you come to the same court and one has a different court. It just happens.

It's nobody's fault. There's a lot of matches and a lot of people need to practice. You've got singles and doubles.

Q. Is this a time year when players are particularly protective about their practice times?

MARIA SHARAPOVA: I think you treat practice the same as always. You know, it's what makes everyone better.

Q. This is the first time this tournament has been combined. Do you feel like the WTA players or players in general seem to be more territorial about courts and things like that now that it's more crowded?

MARIA SHARAPOVA: No. I'm not sure where that question is leading to.

Q. Do you feel like the WTA players need to stick up for themselves more as far as getting courts for matches, good court placement?

MARIA SHARAPOVA: I think the tournament is trying to do a fair job of making sure everyone gets the right amount of practice. I think that's why there is also an off-court site for the beginning of the tournament, where if you need an extra 30 or an hour of practice you can go there and maybe return or serve.

It's always like that, you know, whether it's Indian Wells or Miami. We have three to four other practice sites that we practice on, because not everyone can practice on site for however long they want.

Q. You have Sam Stosur next. You obviously have a very good record against her. What is it about the matchup that seems to go with you every single time?

MARIA SHARAPOVA: No matter what my record is and how much success I've had playing against her, it's always a new match. She's clearly playing really good tennis, so I have to really treat it as a new match. She's always a good, tough opponent. She has a really good serve, one of the best on the tour.

Yeah, it'll be a good match.

Q. Did Sasha get an invitation to Kris Humphries' wedding this weekend?

MARIA SHARAPOVA: We did get an invitation.

Q. Will he go without his plus one?

MARIA SHARAPOVA: He's flying to Turkey today, so unfortunately both of us can't attend.

Q. So another long absence for you guys?

MARIA SHARAPOVA: Oh, it's life. We're young and we have got many more years to spend with each other. Obviously while we're young and have the energy, and in our crazy young years, we might as well take care of our careers and do what's best for that.

You know, I love to see him doing what he loves to do. I don't want him to be short of that. Unfortunately with the situation, you know, he wouldn't be playing much, so it's great that he has a chance to play somewhere.

Q. This is the first sort of more high-profile relationship you've been in. Obviously you're engaged now to another athlete. Caroline Wozniacki was here with Rory McIlroy earlier in the week. Is that something you had to get used to, having a new dimension of attention towards you?

MARIA SHARAPOVA: I think it's just interest and something to write about for people other than forehand and backhand. I'm sure it's just a little more information.

Just another question for me, and I'm sure for everyone else.

Q. Do you have any advice for kids that might want to play tennis when they get older?

MARIA SHARAPOVA: Any other kids I know of?

Q. My audience is 8 to 14, so if they wanted to play tennis, what advice would you give them?

MARIA SHARAPOVA: Um, to obviously know what you're getting yourself into and that it's a tough sport that requires a lot of commitment and sacrifices. I think if you only put one foot in the water, you know, you're going to regret a lot of things.

If you're really committed and love the sport of tennis - and it doesn't even have to be tennis; can be anything else, whether it's an education or another sport - always really commit to it and put your mind to it.

You know, until you feel like you can't be better and you don't have interest in it, keep doing it, keep having fun at it.

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