

August 19, 2011



M. SHARAPOVA/S. Stosur

6-3, 6-2

An interview with:

MARIA SHARAPOVA

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please?

Q. Can you comment on the speed of the courts here in Cincinnati compared to what you've experienced the rest of the summer and how it may compare to New York?

MARIA SHARAPOVA: Well, I think, I mean, obviously the court always changes depending on the weather and the conditions a little bit. You know, when it's as warm as it gets here, it's obviously not only the court but the ball flies a little bit more.

I'd probably say it's medium speed, but I think the speed varies with tournaments, you know. It's just about adjusting, I guess.

Q. You must be pretty pleased with this win. She's been in good form.

MARIA SHARAPOVA: Yeah, I mean, I played a really great match, and, yeah, did many good things today, you know, which caused her trouble. I was aggressive; I didn't give her much time to do things that she likes to do when she plays well.

Yeah, felt like I controlled most of the points.

Q. It's almost an ideal week to be hitting your form at this point in the week.

MARIA SHARAPOVA: Yeah, I came in here, you know, not having the greatest last couple of tournaments, so it was really important for me to emphasize -- it was going to be really important to play a few more matches.

Yeah, I'm quite happy that I've improved with every match. Gotten two really good wins.

Q. Kim pulled out of US Open this morning.

MARIA SHARAPOVA: I heard.

Q. You know what it's like to not be able to defend a major title because of injury. Can you speak just from your experience what that was like to have to sit home and watch as the tournament goes on without you when you're the defending champion?

MARIA SHARAPOVA: Yeah, it's frustrating, there's no doubt about it. It's probably one of the most frustrating feelings for an athlete just sitting there knowing that even before the tournament your name is not going to be in the draw, that you won't have that spot to compete for the title.

It's tough, but I think, you know, Kim, amongst many of us, we all know what it's like to deal with tough moments like this. So it's really about adversity and just realizing that you're fortunate to almost come into a position to be a defending champion. Obviously means that you've achieved something big there.

Q. When you were unable to defend, did you still watch the tournaments from home?

MARIA SHARAPOVA: Yeah, I mean, it's not like I give up on the sport. I mean, I probably don't watch tennis as much as maybe other players do, but I do if I'm at home and nothing else good is on TV. (Laughing.) I'll turn it on on mute. (Laughing.)

Q. What would you consider to be something better on TV?

MARIA SHARAPOVA: I'm not sure. Just I don't know, when you hit a tennis ball for a living since you were four years old, sometimes the last thing that you really want to do after playing and

practicing is seeing a lot of it on TV.

I don't watch TV too often, to be honest.

Q. Why on mute?

MARIA SHARAPOVA: I just -- I don't know, I prefer just to watch the game instead of hearing about people's opinions. Just a lot easier to watch. You appreciate the game more.

There are some people that are there that, you know, are just there to say things because they're obviously there commentate on the match.

So, yeah, I prefer to watch the game, the sport itself, rather than hearing about it.

Q. You were done pretty early. How are you going to spend the rest of the day?

MARIA SHARAPOVA: I'll go back, do treatment, maybe get a glimpse of the match of my next opponent a little bit. That's about it. Pretty simple.

Q. Speaking of giving commentary, you gave some on Facebook about a video Novak did doing an impression of you in a blonde wig.

MARIA SHARAPOVA: Uh-huh, yeah. (Smiling.)

Q. What are your thoughts on that, and what does it take to do a good Maria Sharapova impression in your mind?

MARIA SHARAPOVA: All I can say is it's on between me and him. It is on like Donkey Kong. (Laughing.)

Yeah, I have a few ideas in my mind that I've talked to Head about. I'm going to get him back, no doubt about it.

Q. Are you going to do a better job than him? He didn't even wear a dress?

MARIA SHARAPOVA: He didn't, I know, and I don't think he had the right shade of blonde either. I think he exaggerated that, among other things.

But it's fun. We always have a good laugh. Just one of the many things he does pretty well and funny.

Q. So you're going to get him back? Are you going to write the script or let Head do that?

MARIA SHARAPOVA: I actually love writing scripts, so I'm sure I'll be involved in it. Don't you worry.

Q. When players come here, we hear a lot of talk about the US Open coming up, et cetera. How important is this tournament for you to play well here?

MARIA SHARAPOVA: Yeah, very important. It's my last event before the Open. Coming here, I said that it was really important to play these matches. Obviously the more matches you play against different opponents and winning them, obviously it gives you more confidence going into New York.

Yeah, that's why we're all here. Everyone came here, except Kim and Venus I believe, so it's a tough field for us. Yeah, to be playing good tennis before New York is really important.

Q. When you go to a match where you're going to play the winner, what are you looking to see when you're scouting?

MARIA SHARAPOVA: You mean for the next round?

Q. Yeah, exactly. Like this afternoon if you check out the match.

MARIA SHARAPOVA: I think it's more I haven't played Vera in a long time. I haven't seen too many of her matches.

Played Daniela few weeks ago, so I know her game quite well.

But it's just a matter of I'm not going to be sitting there with a notebook and pen or anything like that.

Yeah, just to get a look at a few things.

Q. Reaching the semis puts you to No. 5 in the world probably in the next rankings. Do you get some satisfaction out of that? I know the numbers probably don't matter too much, but to get in the top 5...

MARIA SHARAPOVA: Yeah, it's great. I mean, I certainly don't finish the match and go count up the points to see where I'm going to end up.

I mean, no, it's not something that I do. But, yeah, it's great. I've always said that the more matches you win, obviously the higher and better you're going to be in the standings.

So, yeah.

Q. How much would a Roland Garros win mean to you to get the complete career slam?

MARIA SHARAPOVA: Yeah, of course it would mean a lot. It's a tournament that I've always said would be the most challenging for me to win. But I feel like overall my game has improved with every year that I've been coming on the clay.

Yeah, I love that challenge. I love competing against the best players on clay. I had a decent result there this year, and I hope I can improve on that.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports