

**August 17, 2011**



**N. DJOKOVIC/R. Harrison**

6-2, 6-3

An interview with:

## **NOVAK DJOKOVIC**

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Kind of an odd way to start the match with so many breaks of serve.**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yeah.

**Q. Did that affect the way that you played?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, it was a slow start, not a good start. But, yeah, I was serving not so great today. I think everything else was quite good.

You know, from the baseline I wasn't making a lot of unforced errors. I was returning a lot of balls in and played quite good really for the opening match.

But I knew it's an opening match. It's totally different conditions from Montréal, so you got to get used to that.

**Q. Could you compare the conditions from last week to this week, the speed of the courts?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Faster. Much faster here. Ball flies through the air faster, so it's really hard to control.

**Q. Do you prefer this week to last week?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: I prefer last week. (Smiling.)

**Q. When other players who have been around longer and are more established talk about Ryan Harrison coming up, what do they say about him - including yourself?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Look, Ryan has a lot of potential in his game, I think. He knows when to use the opportunity to come to the net, he mixes up his serve, his serve is quite good. Today he didn't have quite a high first serve percentage, so it didn't help him that much.

But if he gets that serve 60%, 70% in, he can be really dangerous to anybody. I think he's a great fighter. He's committed to the game, which is really important.

**Q. When you see his anger that he shows so often during matches, do you think that hurts his development?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Look, I don't think there is anything bad with that. Over the time, he's going to learn how to use his experience on the court. He will learn how to control his emotions. It's all a process.

His emotions are showing me that he wants to win and he's out there to win, not just play his best tennis. That's something that I like about him.

**Q. What's your opinion of back-to-back Masters 1000s? Would you like to see them spread out?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: The way the schedule is, I don't think that's possible. There has to be some radical changes in the schedule if we want that. I don't see that happening.

But, yeah, I don't think it's very good for the players to play all the time on the top level every single day in two weeks just before the Grand Slam.

But that's the way it goes. It's not the first year we have that. You know, you have to just adjust to it.

**Q. What were you not happy with in**

**your game tonight?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: I just said. It was the serve. Everything else was okay.

**Q. I have a follow-up to a question you answered yesterday about the players' box at the Open final last year or the Wimbledon final this year. When you looked up in the box, were there any faces you did not recognize, that you did not necessarily know who the people were?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, look, you know, I really don't want to get into that. I don't want to get into the details. I said yesterday, and I'm going to repeat again: I had too many people, and it was somehow expected because all those people, the ones that were close to me and the friends of my family, they wanted to be there because it's my first Wimbledon finals and US Open.

But, you know, now it's going to be a bit different.

**Q. Another player told me he finds it disconcerting when he looks up and sees someone who hasn't necessarily been on the journey with him; is that how you feel?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Depends. I cannot answer in the name of other players. You know, I don't really pay too much attention on who's in my box rather than my team. When I look in my box, I look to my coach, to the closest ones on the team. I think most of the players do.

So regardless who's there, I need to do my job on the court and to win.

**Q. Do you feel that your game is where it needs to be before the US Open? Rafa's is the defending champion, but you beat him several times this year, and on hardcourts. Do you think you're ready to go in there and try and get back to the final and win it this time?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yes, I think so.

**Q. You've had such an incredible year and you've set all these records and have a very good win/loss record. On the other hand, Serena Williams who is considered the US Open favorite on the women's side at this point pulled out of this tournament to get herself in better shape to play the US Open. With that in mind, is it important for you to keep this one loss through this week and to win this tournament, or is it more about getting ready for New York?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: You know, performing the best tennis is the priority in New York. But still, I will not, you know, play matches on this tournament just to get some practice. I don't do that. I go to every match to win.

So since I came here, I will give my best to every match to win. So we'll see how far I can go. I am not predicting anything.

But, you know, in the past years I did play couple of finals here and then I got to the late stages of the US Open, so it's not something that I think can affect my performance on the US Open physically as well.

There is still a week, which is more than enough for me to rest and get ready.

**Q. When you were in L.A. recently, did you have a chance to hit with Sampras or anything like that? I know he was a player you looked up to.**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yes, unfortunately not. He got hurt on golf, but we had a nice dinner in L.A. and it was a very a valuable experience for me.

**Q. Did he give you any advice on how to handle No. 1?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yes.

**Q. What did he say?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: We spoke about many things, and of course I was interested how he was feeling when everything got together for him, when he won his first couple Grand Slams, when he became No. 1.

It was great. He was always the person that I was looking up to. He was always the tennis player that was my idol. So to be able to sit down with him and have the opportunity to get advice from him, hopefully I can use that experience.

**Q. Do you want to play him in an exhibition?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Would love to. Would love to just hit with him. I'm always open for that.

**Q. Who picked up the check at dinner? (Laughter.)**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: It was Pete. He was the host.

**Q. When you go to New York, you're going to see these giant buss billboards with your picture on it advertising the US Open. What's it like to be the face of tennis now?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: It's flattering and it's great. You know, I guess that's something that follows up with the success and with the position that I have at this moment as No. 1.

I know that there is a certain increase in the responsibility of me carrying myself on and off the court. I'm trying to do it as best as I can.

It's all fresh, it's all new, but it's a challenge. I'm ready to accept that.

**Q. Jelena was saying the other day about getting a diplomatic passport and being a goodwill ambassador. Have you got something similar to that?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yeah.

**Q. Over the years, have you felt that the success that Serbian tennis players have had, the girls as well, has that changed, do you think, the world's perception of Serbia and the image of the country? Is that something you've been happy to see or been conscious of?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, as far as I know, in the world of sport, I think we have done a good job in changing the image positively. We were doing our best. You know, it's not an easy task to do, but tennis players and other athletes in Serbia are, I think, the biggest ambassadors of our country at this moment.

The country is aware of that, and giving us diplomatic passports was one of appreciation moves I think they have. We are honored to have these passports. It makes our traveling a bit easier, and of course we do carry this responsibility everywhere we go to represent our country in the best possible way.

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