

August 10, 2010



M. SHARAPOVA/S. Kuznetsova

6-4, 1-6, 6-2

An interview with:

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. What was bothering you with your leg, and how is it feeling now?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: It's a little bit sore, which is normal. I played lots of the matches. It's sore.

Q. Were you feeling this in practice, too?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: No, I felt in the first set.

Q. Do you feel like the quick turnaround from winning in San Diego and coming here had any affect on tonight's match?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: Yeah, it's hard. I mean, definitely it's very tough to come and play in one day and have night flight, you know, after the finals.

Definitely it's hard, but my ranking is low, and hers as well, and we just to have play. It's bad luck, but I cannot change it.

Just get my ranking higher probably and have a bye.

Q. What was the biggest challenge in adapting? Obviously you have higher humidity here, the travel, the short turnaround.

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: I feel the balls here, they fly a little bit differently. I think

overall, in the match I had to use my chances in the first set. I didn't use them.

To win in three with conditions like this with me adapting in so short time, it was really hard. I was feeling good physically, except the leg.

But, no, I give credit to Maria. She played good in the third.

Q. You talk about both your rankings being low. Is this the toughest first-round match I've had in a long time?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: Well, last year I played Samantha Stosur first round. I played Kim Clijsters here second round. I mean, now the draws, because we don't -- some girls who's very good players who don't have very good rankings, it's tough.

Q. In your career, do you feel like this is the most challenging time as far as this ranking discrepancy causing tough matches early on?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: I mean, I just got low, and it's hard to come back up. It's always the same thing. I've been low in 2005, and when you're down, it's hard to come up definitely, because you have to win good matches like that.

Q. What did your coach tell you when you talked to him between the first and second sets?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: It's my hitting partner, not my coach. Just because some balls I don't feel, so I was laying back a little bit. So I had to go forward because I was defending too much.

Q. Was that your strategy, to wait for her errors? Seemed like you were playing defense more, so is that something you did not want to do?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: Well, you know, in these conditions and coming and adjusting in one day, you cannot choose what you do. I did what I could.

Definitely I would like to serve better, and I

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think it would cost me less energy and less power, you know, from my side.

And I would like to attack, but I don't feel the ball so good in these conditions. Better to attack. And playing with Maria, you got to feel the ball much bare.

Q. Do you remember the last time you played in this much heat?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: Today, I don't think it was -- day heat was much hotter than now.

Q. That's what I mean, when you were practicing.

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: Yeah, I mean, I been preparing in Sochi by the sea in Russia, and it was real hot. But I think it's hotter here.

Q. What do you think the key difference was in terms of outcome? Your return game and your service game compared to Sharapova's was really close in terms of points won. In fact, there was only one point difference in total points.

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: I think I didn't use my break chances. I didn't return so well, especially 15-40, 30-40. I had more break chances.

And second thing, I have to improve my serve to play with player like Maria who is very good server.

Q. Did you think of retiring at any point in the match?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: Yes, when I was like 3, 4, Love, but I still felt like I had chances, you know, and I still wanted to try.

And I did have chances in 2-4 or something to break back. I felt like I have it. Even my leg is sore, I can do it. I don't want to give up.

For me, it's hard to pull out. I want to still try all my chances.

Q. How did you deal with frustration after a bad game or set?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: Just breathe, and you try to calm down and start all over again.

Q. Even though you lost early here, you did have a great week last week in San Diego. You still feel like you're on track for preparing to play well at the US Open?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: Yeah, definitely. It's not like only US Open. It's long term. I had bad year, and I feel like I'm coming back.

It gives my pleasure to be on court and play the right game. I mean, I don't count today, but normally it does.

Q. You commented on your ranking. Do you think of yourself differently when you're ranked differently? Does it affect our how you play?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: No, the draws are harder because you have to play top players earlier.

Second of all, it's like confidence. It's not about ranking. I didn't win many matches before San Diego, and you play, two, three matches you can get the right rhythm. You cannot go through hard moments. You play two, three matches and you're done.

Of course you're not gonna apply everything together, so I have to wait to my possibility to breakthrough, and finally it happened in San Diego.

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