

August 16, 2011



S. WILLIAMS/L. Hradecka

6-3, 7-6

An interview with:

SERENA WILLIAMS

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. I kid you not, I heard a fan during this match say that your legs look skinny. I was wondering when the last time you heard that was and where your level of fitness is now. Is this the most fit you've been since 2008?

SERENA WILLIAMS: Um, I definitely think it's the most fit I've been in general. I've never used me and skinny in the same sentence. (Smiling.) Maybe me and thick or me and like curvy or sexy, but not necessarily skinny, so...

Q. What did you miss the most when you were out for that extended period of time?

SERENA WILLIAMS: You know, I just missed kind of winning. I love to win. I love being out there. You know, I think that kind of just motivates me, so that's...

Q. Talk about the second set. You were up 5-1 and then you got down 6-5. I saw you look over to your box a lot kind of real frustrated. Talk about that.

SERENA WILLIAMS: Yeah, I was just, I don't know. I was definitely up and I didn't close it out, and she started playing different and better and running a lot. I just, you know, was struggling at that point.

Q. Do you have any fatigue that's going on from playing a lot of matches and winning two tournaments?

SERENA WILLIAMS: Probably, yeah. You know, haven't played in almost a year, and even the year before I didn't play that much.

But, I mean, I would rather have that than fresh legs from not winning.

Q. Is it mental or physical fatigue?

SERENA WILLIAMS: I don't know. I don't know. You know, it's tough. I got in really late yesterday and had to play early today. I was like, Uh...

So hopefully I'll be better tomorrow.

Q. What got you in so late?

SERENA WILLIAMS: (Laughter.) Um, I was in the finals of Toronto, so, you know -- and I won, so, you know, I couldn't -- the flight that I caught got me in late. (Smiling.)

Q. How has your attitude changed between pre- and post-injury in terms of your approach on the court? Today you were maybe more stoic and less animated.

SERENA WILLIAMS: Yeah, for whatever reason I'm more chill. I think it's just because I don't want to waste a lot of energy doing too much screaming and stuff. You know, I don't know.

Again, not that I didn't enjoy myself before, but I'm really enjoying every moment now.

Q. And you're wearing green and black. Is that a superstition now? Are you going to keep on doing it until you stop winning?

SERENA WILLIAMS: No. Nike made that for me this summer, so...

I had another green top, but I wasn't crazy about it. I actually always wear long sleeves when I practice, so I was pretty amped that they had made me a long-sleeved top.

Just happened to be green.

Q. Seems like you got a lot of fan support in Toronto and also here. Do you see a noticeable difference in the amount of applause

since you came back?

SERENA WILLIAMS: Yeah, they asked me that in Toronto. I definitely do see a lot of difference. I see a lot of fan.

But I've always had a lot fans here and always had a lot fans in Toronto, so I'm going to kind of judge that at the Open probably or something.

Q. How would you describe your work with Mackie? He's worked with so many athletes from all different sports over the years. How has he helped you these last couple years?

SERENA WILLIAMS: Yeah, you know, every time I work with Mackie I have really good results. We work well together. It's he's a great guy. He's smart. He's tough, but yet I still have a way of kind of making him not be so hard on me.

Q. How do you do that? When he talks, he talks faster than you serve.

SERENA WILLIAMS: Absolutely. He's like, you know, you got to do these cores. They're for the big leagues. I'm like, Well, those cores are for guys; I'm a girl. Then he's like, Okay, you can do the girly girl. I'm like, Okay, thank you.

Q. Is there anything in your game that you want to work on that isn't back to 100% yet?

SERENA WILLIAMS: Um, you know, I just I don't know. I just always want to keep improving everything in my game. I want to get to a point where I am doing better than I was before Wimbledon 2010. If I get it that point, I think I'll be pretty happy.

Q. You talk about all your fans. One place you have a lot of fans is on Twitter. Last night you Tweeted some of the lyrics of Britney Spears single, Lucky.

SERENA WILLIAMS: Uh-huh.

Q. Do you relate to Lucky's plight in that song about being a star and crying on the inside?

SERENA WILLIAMS: Um, I just love that song. I think it's funny. I always tweet lyrics a lot, and some people are always like, Are you okay? What's going on? I'm like, You clearly don't know Britney Spears.

So I don't know. I just was singing that song in my head and I kind of just Tweeted it.

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Q. Are there other Brittany songs that you relate to too, like do you ever listen to Stronger, for example?

SERENA WILLIAMS: Absolutely. I do, definitely. I love that song Stronger. I often feel like I'm not a girl, not yet a woman. I don't know why, because clearly I'm a woman, but I still feel like I'm not yet.

Q. Is there anyone who drives you crazy?

SERENA WILLIAMS: What do you mean? A lot of people drive me crazy.

Q. Anyone you want to name?

SERENA WILLIAMS: Um, probably be inappropriate. (Smiling.)

Q. You haven't won three tournaments in a row since 2008. Does that seem like forever ago?

SERENA WILLIAMS: I don't remember winning -- what three tournaments?

Q. Key Biscayne, one in Europe, and Charleston.

SERENA WILLIAMS: I don't know. I'm not even going for three. I'm just going for -- just going to play the best that I can, you know. I don't really think about that kind of stuff.

Q. Do you divide your career into your pre- health issues and post-health issues. Does this almost feel like a second career?

SERENA WILLIAMS: In a way it does, because, you know, it was just a totally different moment for me. I think I was doing really well before I got injured, so, you know...

But at the same time, I don't know if I would divide it. It would have to be divided in half, and I don't know if I will be able to get another 15 years.

Q. Because you're a dangerous floater, you're going to end of play Sam Stosur in the next round.

SERENA WILLIAMS: I'm telling you.

Q. Talk about that a little bit.

SERENA WILLIAMS: Well, yeah, Sam is playing great. We had a really actually tough

match in Toronto, and it was a big win for me. She plays really well, so we'll see.

This surface is a little bit faster, so, again, I think she's going in there with a lot momentum. She hasn't played as many matches as I have in the past few weeks, but she has a lot momentum going into this match, as do I.

So it will be a really good go.

Q. Are you in any dangerous of overplaying at this point? I mean, looking that second set...

SERENA WILLIAMS: Yeah, I'm going to have to figure that out. I definitely don't want to overdo it. My main goal right now is obviously to do well.

And nothing against Cincinnati or Toronto or the Stanfords that I played, but this is all preparation. Everyone is preparing for the US Open. So I have to be smart and make sure it's not too much.

Q. Have you spoken to Venus about doing doubles for US Open?

SERENA WILLIAMS: We were supposed to play doubles here and she didn't show up, so... I don't know. We'll see.

Q. What is it about the US Open and New York and playing there that is so amazing? Do you have any memories or funny stories about fans?

SERENA WILLIAMS: I mean, I have a lot memories at the Open. I think my best was definitely the first time I won. It was really cool. That was definitely my best memory at the Open.

But it's center stage, it's New York, it's the last Grand Slam of the year, and I feel like it's where everyone puts their final big effort into the big tournament. Then I feel like it's not huge again until the Australian Open. So it's a really big moment for the players and a huge moment for the fans.

It's great to have such a big tournament in the United States like that. And it's right before football season, so it's like, you know, you want to get on that SI cover before they only start putting football players on there, so kind of hard. (Laughter.)

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