

**August 19, 2014**



**S. WILLIAMS/A. Ivanovic**

6-4, 6-1

An interview with:

## **SERENA WILLIAMS**

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Think that was the best performance of your summer?**

SERENA WILLIAMS: I think so. It was definitely the best performance of the -- hopefully not the last.

**Q. Not the complete summer.**

SERENA WILLIAMS: But of the US Open Series. So good note to end on, and I'm really happy about that.

**Q. How were you feeling out there today knowing you had some back tension in the previous match?**

SERENA WILLIAMS: I felt good. Got work on it for like three hours yesterday and then I have it taped, so I was just like...

I felt it a little bit in the second, but I just was so excited for this final and to be in the final. I just really felt like I had nothing to lose. So I was able to relax.

**Q. You broke her at 4-5 when she was serving in the first set. Do you think that was the moment of swing for you in the match?**

SERENA WILLIAMS: No. I think maybe when I was serving that long game, I think 1-3 or something like that, and I'm not sure if I was down a break or what. She could have been up 4-1. She was obviously at that point playing so well.

It was good for me to just kind of get through that moment.

**Q. You saved three break points in this game.**

SERENA WILLIAMS: Okay.

**Q. You had never won this tournament. It's one of the biggest you hadn't won. How does it feel to add Cincinnati to your resume?**

SERENA WILLIAMS: It truly feels good. I'm really excited. I feel good. Like I, you know, didn't expect to come here and win or have such a good summer.

I've just been trying to go with the flow and be positive and it's working out, so I'm really excited about it.

**Q. You were saying on ESPN this week sort of bolstered your hopes for 2014 (indiscernible.)**

SERENA WILLIAMS: Yes, definitely. Well, I won Stanford but I definitely didn't play as well. Then Montréal, I got to the semis but didn't play as well as I did here.

Then my first day of practice here something just clicked. I was playing better and I was serving better. I don't know, I think all the hard work was just paying off.

**Q. How do you carry that forward?**

SERENA WILLIAMS: Just take everything I did. Just like I said, be good to myself and be positive. Whatever happens, I have to be happy. Like I'm not doing so bad, you know.

So it's good to have another title though. Really feels good. I'm excited.

**Q. Can you elaborate on that? Something clicked here in practice?**

SERENA WILLIAMS: Yeah, first day I was hitting it just felt good. I don't know. Just on the practice court it felt good. Like in Montréal, never on the practice court did I feel good. Felt like I was hitting late or just didn't have my contact point. Just felt off.

Same in Stanford. Just felt a little off.

When I got here, just felt better.

**Q. So when you won in Stanford and also last week in Montréal in the semis, did you feel like, Okay, I won the title in Stanford, but I don't think I'm playing at the level I can win the Open, as opposed to now where you feel like especially with today this is a level that could take you to the title?**

SERENA WILLIAMS: This is definitely a level that could take me to the title. I still have a lot of work to do, but I think my serve was doing a lot better. And not just in this match. I just think the whole week I've served pretty solid. Hit more aces than I have been hitting.

Yeah, it's definitely a better level than I've played I think for all year, to be honest.

**Q. Were you worried about your back, like it might have been an Australia-like thing?**

SERENA WILLIAMS: No. It was totally different feeling from Australia. Just lower back pain just from running so much. In Australia it was way different.

**Q. How much different is it at 32 to play three weeks in a row than it was at 22?**

SERENA WILLIAMS: Yeah, definitely -- I don't remember. I don't remember playing three weeks in a row. Apparently I have, but I don't remember.

I feel great I think at 32. I'm in some of the best shape I've been in. I can play long points and be ready to go again. I feel really fit.

32 is the new 22, right?

**Q. What's the motivation? You've been out here since '95. You're obviously financially set.**

SERENA WILLIAMS: See, that stat isn't really, really right, though, because I -- they say '95, but I feel like maybe I played a tournament, but I didn't play again until like '98.

Anyway, '98 is a long time still, yes. Just over forever.

But I just love to play. I love being out here. I love the competition. I love this moment. I love holding up the trophy and I love doing the work that it takes to hold up a trophy. For me, there is no better feeling.

**Q. I know you have high standards with your game. What are some of the things in the last three tournaments that you've played that**

**you still want to excel at and work on coming into New York?**

SERENA WILLIAMS: I definitely want to work on my return. I think my return game can be tremendously better. And I have returned better in the past.

So that's exciting to know that I can definitely do that a lot better. That's something I really want to do. I just stay focused for the match, you know, the whole two or three sets.

**Q. Talking about getting more focused for the majors in the future. I mean, how does that decision get made and how does that...**

SERENA WILLIAMS: Well, that's something me and Patrick have been talking about a lot. It's his suggestion, and I think it makes a lot of sense. At the end of the day I definitely want to be able to win majors and then just pick and choose really carefully around the tournaments.

So make sure I'm super healthy. Although 32 is the new 22, it's still 32. Or 33 in a couple weeks.

So, yeah, just want to make some really smart decisions going into my future just because I want to continue to play for a long time.

**Q. How do you plan on celebrating your birthday next week?**

SERENA WILLIAMS: Oh, I don't celebrate birthdays. No one should after a certain age, right? It's almost depressing. Still, it's just like, okay, I'm 32, going to be 33. I never celebrated a birthday in my life.

I think even if I did I would be kind of trying not to at this point, trying to forget it. Like, Oh, gosh, oh, gosh, don't look at me kind of thing. (Laughter.)

Q. Is climbing the singles titles ladder a goal of yours?

SERENA WILLIAMS: Well, it's the only goal I can do right now, so, yeah. It's good to have five titles this year. It feels good.

**Q. People talk about you catching up with Chris and Martina. How much do you keep an eye on Federer? You're tied.**

SERENA WILLIAMS: Well, I was looking at his prize money. I think he had \$86 million or something; I think I have \$56 million.

I'm like, That's incredible. But this guy has been winning a lot, so got to give respect where

respect is due. He's just the greatest.

**Q. Margaret Court's 24, does that motivate you? Is that realistic for you?**

SERENA WILLIAMS: It's always motivated me, but at the end of the day, I have to get 18. That's been kind of -- that's been avoiding me, actually. We'll see.

**Q. Does that mean you've never received a birthday present?**

SERENA WILLIAMS: I have, I have. People give me presents, but I don't celebrate them. I've probably got to like, I don't know, 15, 20 presents, but people mostly know I don't celebrate so they don't give me anything.

**Q. So on the day of your birthday people that know you don't wish you a happy birthday?**

SERENA WILLIAMS: Yeah.

**Q. Noted.**

SERENA WILLIAMS: Yes, thank you.

**Q. Two years ago in Cincinnati you came back from London with a couple gold medals, including one with Venus in doubles. Venus talked about Rio was on her radar. Is that something you two still intend to play Rio? Do you still talk about that?**

SERENA WILLIAMS: Yeah, we love the Olympics. It's our favorite thing to do. We really want to be there.

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