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**Western & Southern
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MASTERS & WOMEN'S OPEN

D. SAFINA/R. Vinci

2-6, 7-5, 6-4

An interview with:

DINARA SAFINA

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. How did you get out of that?

DINARA SAFINA: I don't know. I just think it was a day when just nothing was going -- was going all over the places except for the tennis court. Nothing was loosening. So I just accepted it. Okay, just forget about it. I thought that if I will lose I just have to forget as soon as possible this match because it makes no sense. That's not me, like not my normal game. Let's put the ball at least inside.

Slowly I think she got tight. I don't know what happened to her because I was completely off. That happens, you know. Even in the worse day, you try to find some positive, you know, you try to change.

Q. What was happening at first? Why was it such a bad day?

DINARA SAFINA: I don't know. I started pretty good, actually. 2-Love up, and to lose nine games in a row, it didn't happen for me for a while actually. I was like, Okay, that's interesting.

I don't know, just I was playing all over the place. I was trying to put it inside the court, but it was like, Okay, maybe change the racquet and I'm okay.

At 3-Love I called my coach, and he said, Okay, maybe change the racquet. Maybe also this helped me. So it's okay.

Q. On days like this, do you wake up feeling rubbish?

DINARA SAFINA: No, actually I was feeling good, and I was looking forward to play. Then I stepped in and I started to play, 2-Love up, everything good, nothing spectacular, but like solid.

And then just like completely, off, off, off everything. So I still managed. Tomorrow I have day off and I play after tomorrow. I would say like now the tournament starts. Because I don't know what, it was a bad day of practice.

Q. I don't know if I missed it, what did your coach tell you down Love-3 in the second set? That's when it turned around.

DINARA SAFINA: Well, he's like, You realize you can put the ball inside? I said, Yes, that's what I'm realizing. He's like, Okay, just dig for the middle and don't go for anything else. Also he said take a tighter racquet.

Maybe I was playing a little bit looser, and here with the humidity it was flying. He was like, Okay, just try to not -- don't do anything. Just go deep through the court and let her do something.

I guess she was not ready to beat me. She got afraid and things turned around.

Q. I saw a strapping on your hand. Is everything okay with your hand, or is that for protection?

DINARA SAFINA: It's since Los Angeles. I would say I lost a bet with a coconut. I was trying to open a coconut, and actually didn't open very good because the knife slipped and it went straight into my hand.

So it was pretty deep. Actually, I was lucky that I was able to play in Los Angeles, because until the day before the tournament I didn't hit any backhands. There was no chance I could hit any backhand.

The day before the match I was like, Okay, I at least have to try to hit some backhands. I didn't get to play any points, anything. Just

standing in the forehand corner the whole time and serving. That's the only thing that I could do.

It's better, but I was also lucky that I didn't touch any ligament. It was very deep. They didn't put the stitches because the doctor was not there on site. Now it's okay.

Q. What happened to the coconut?

DINARA SAFINA: Went straight into the garbage. When I saw in the morning the coach I was like, Don't get angry at me. You say you would not get pissed. I said, Look at -- I showed my hand, and he's like, Go straight to the physio.

Yeah, because in quarters during the match I hit my leg, so next day also couldn't do anything because it's like stress fracture. He's like, Can you just don't do anything anymore?

Q. So now you've been in two of the last three Grand Slam finals. Are you ready to make it to the US Open and get in a final and possibly win?

DINARA SAFINA: That's what I'm playing for, you know. I'm giving my 100% day by day and working hard on this. I take one match at a time and go step by step. I will focus each match, you know, and give my 100% each match and we will see.

I been in the semifinal last year, and I'm always doing better than last year. There is always one more step.

Q. After Marat's match last night, he had some harsh words for the critics that you have. I don't know if you heard what he had to say, but how do you feel about that?

DINARA SAFINA: My brother said something?

Q. Yeah.

DINARA SAFINA: I didn't hear anything.

Q. I don't want to repeat the words he used.

THE MODERATOR: He was defending you and saying you were a very hard worker. Harder than him.

DINARA SAFINA: I am a harder worker, harder than him. My brother and me, we're 360 degrees opposite. I guess guys is also different. He can spend one hour a day on the court and he's fine.

Me, I need to spend six hours a day on the court to feel good. Completely different

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personalities. I'm more like at home staying. I don't go anywhere. I go like dinner.

Completely different personalities. He's laughing at me, but he's except accepting it now.

Q. What do you say to those that criticize you?

DINARA SAFINA: I just don't care. I am where I am. This is the ranking. I'm No. 1 in the world. What else I need to be? I don't do the ranking system. I am where I am and I played the whole year. It's about how you play the whole year. The ranking doesn't lie, so...

Q. Did you watch Kim's match last night?

DINARA SAFINA: No, I had dinner because I had to wake up early today.

Q. Were you surprised by the result?

DINARA SAFINA: Actually, she been away for three years?

Q. Two years.

DINARA SAFINA: For me, I see her and it feels like she was always here. I'm sure she played exactly the same how she played. She's such a good player and talented. What can change her? She's a great player.

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