

April 17, 2010



Post-Match Press Conference With:

VERA ZVONAREVA

VERA ZVONAREVA defeats
CAROLINE WOZNIACKI (ret.)
5-2 (ret.)
Semifinal Round

AMY BINDER: Questions for Vera, please.

Q. Of all people to be in the situation of winning like that, what can you say about your injury and her injury and what went on out there?

VERA ZVONAREVA: Well, you know, it's great to be in the finals, but it's not great to be in the finals this way. I know it is very tough, and you know, unfortunately that's sports and these things happen. But I don't wish anyone to be in that situation because last year it was very difficult for me, and you know, I had a lot of desire to come back and play again, so I can only imagine what Caroline is going through right now and emotionally.

She's been playing very good tennis, and was looking for the clay court season. She's very young, and right now she probably, you know, in her mind there's so many things, oh, am I going to be able to play next Grand Slam, when am I coming back, is this injury very serious, do I need surgery, or is it something that can get fixed in a couple of weeks.

You never know. With sudden injuries like this they might look very bad in the beginning and then in a couple of weeks you feel good. Or you

know, sometimes it looks like it's not bad injury and then it takes a long time.

So you know, I think it's a difficult situation, but I tried to, you know, I will probably try to put it away out of my mind because, you know, when I saw Caroline twisted her ankle, I was like I have these flashbacks in my mind, and I even feel like I have pain in my ankle right now. You know.

But yeah, I wish her a quick recovery. Hopefully it's not too serious, and you know, she was able to walk on the court after that, which is a good sign. I was not able to do it last year. So you know, I just have to try to put it away, and I think injuries, it's part of our game, and now I'll try to just come back on the court tomorrow and do my best.

Q. Can you talk a little bit about the way you were playing today? You broke her early and were up, you know, very good. Looked like you were moving her around on the court a lot.

VERA ZVONAREVA: Yeah. I think I started off pretty well, but it was still only six games into the match when that happened, so it was -- it's probably not enough time spent on the court to really assess how I was playing, but definitely started really well, and I think I improved my game throughout the tournament. It's much better tennis than in the first round.

Q. How do you feel about, you know, going into the final tomorrow, I mean not necessarily because of the injury, but as far as the way you're playing? How do you feel about your chances at this point?

VERA ZVONAREVA: Well, there are always 50/50 chances. You can win or you can lose. For me all players out there are very tough to play and Daniela and Sam are two great players

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KellyMcKee, CCR, RPR, CRR
kadmcr@yahoo.com

and it's going to be very difficult task for me tomorrow, but no matter what, I think I have to try my best.

You know, I've been improving and playing better and better since the beginning of the year, and we'll see. It's going to be a tough challenge, but I'm going to try my best.

Q. Vera, do you feel like there have been more injuries on Tour since when you started, from the time you started and why do you think so?

VERA ZVONAREVA: Yeah. You know, to me it feels definitely like more injuries are happening. Maybe because the game is a little bit more physical right now. Maybe scheduling, the schedule is very tough for players. You don't have many choices of where there are a lot of mandatory events and you have to play certain weeks, and no matter how you feel, you gotta be out there and compete.

Before, you could make a little bit better choices, and you know if your body is feeling tired, you can skip that week and go play another week. If you feel you're fresh and ready to go, you can choose and make your schedule and play two or three tournaments in a row.

Right now it's pretty much the same schedule for everybody, but everyone is different. Everybody has different level of fitness, different bodies, different results, different amount of matches that they played in the previous weeks. So it is very difficult to manage and schedule it. And sometimes you're forced to play a lot of events when you're tired, and that's most of the times when injuries are coming, when your body is not fresh.

Q. When you see an opponent, you know, suffer an injury, whether it's minor or major or anything, as a player, do you try to exploit that? I mean you see that she's injured her ankle and will not be able to move around, so do you try to emphasize that part of your game more?

VERA ZVONAREVA: You also know in this situation players will usually take more risk and will go for their shots and either they will make them or no, because she knows that she cannot move on the court, so she's gotta put me in defense right away, and for me, for example, it's

the most important thing in this situation is try to concentrate on yourself and try to put away that you just saw that your opponent is injured and you just try to keep playing the same way as you are playing before, because if you try to think, oh, maybe she cannot move there or there, you try to change something and sometimes it's not worth it, because you don't know what you want to do anymore.

The most important thing is try to keep executing your game plan that's been working for you before.

Q. Vera, I know you do not prefer to have this extra rest, but to what extent do you think it will benefit you going into tomorrow?

VERA ZVONAREVA: You know, it's hard to say. Sometimes you have a long match and you can still feel fresh the next day. Sometimes, you know, sometimes you play just a little bit and you still feel tired the next day. It's hard to say, but definitely, you know, it's my first clay court season -- I mean first clay court tournament. I played three good matches along the way, a few more games today. So I think it's -- you know, it's already, you know, physically it's already difficult for the first tournament on the clay, and hopefully if I can stay fresh for tomorrow, it is good.

But, well, I would rather have the full match anyways.

Q. The clay court season obviously culminates at the French Open, and there are a few tournaments between now and then, some master's premier WTA events. Which tournaments will you be playing and how does today's result plus this tournament portend for you at the French Open?

VERA ZVONAREVA: Well, it's still months away or more from the French Open, and it's going to be on the red clay, which is a bit different. You know, but we'll see how it goes out there, but I will be playing in Rome and Madrid, those two events. So I will have a week off after Charleston and then going to Rome and Madrid, then another week off and then the French Open.

And you know, I'm trying to manage, like I was saying earlier, manage my schedule a little bit better, so by the French Open time I'm not too tired, playing on clay especially, taking in consideration that I haven't been -- I haven't played

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***KellyMcKee, CCR, RPR, CRR
kadmcr@yahoo.com***

on the clay for two years. So it's physically a little bit different, you know, tough for me, in the movement wise and everything. So I will try to play a limited schedule.

Q. When she retired you kind of had an extended little chat with her at the net. Was it you giving her advice or her explaining to you what happened?

VERA ZVONAREVA: I asked her if she thinks it's, you know, something very serious or she was not sure, of course, yet. But I told her to take care about it and, you know, I have some experience with that and if she needs some advice, you know, but I think she needs to relax a little bit right now because it's difficult to -- there are so many things going through your mind once it happens.

So I think maybe in an hour or two if, you know, she knows better what's going on with her ankle, I can give her some advice, I'm more than happy to help from my own experience.

Q. Vera, you're not defending a lot of points obviously. Do you think about that and how does that impact how you play?

VERA ZVONAREVA: To be honest with you, I don't think about any points, you know. For me, it doesn't matter anymore. Like I said the other day, the most important thing every tournament I'm going to play, I'm going to try to win it. That's I think the goal for me, and rankings, it's not the most important thing.

Q. I know why you didn't play the French Open last year, but in 2008 why didn't you play the French Open?

VERA ZVONAREVA: No. I played in 2008, but since I've been on the clay really playing it's been since 2008, which was two years.

Q. Okay.

VERA ZVONAREVA: And I mean it's quite a long time not playing on the clay court, two years, so I'm just, you know, a little bit finding my feet and all this, but I'm doing really well because I think I've been -- when I was a kid I used to practice on the clay courts a lot back home. So I sort of know how to do it. I just have to spend a little bit more time on it.

Q. Vera, are you fully recovered, do you think, because you know, the last two grand slams it seemed like you started off well but at the end, sometimes it seemed like you were feeling it more. I'm not sure. Do you feel like you're recovered?

VERA ZVONAREVA: Well, I think right now I'm definitely much, much better than in the beginning of the year. The December time off season I was mostly concentrating on recovering my ankle, so I was not able to play a lot of tennis, so coming into the Australian Open maybe my tennis was not there yet. I was not ready.

But after that I think I played tournaments in Pattaya and Dubai, I did pretty well. And I think after that I was able to put -- before starting Indian Wells time, I was able to put much more time on the court. I was able to spend the usual time as I, you know, three hours a day, that was fine for me to be on the court.

Before, I was not able to do it more than an hour because then I wake up the next day, my ankle is too sore, too stiff and I have trouble with it. I think right now I'm able to spend, you know, if I need to, three, four hours on the court and I feel fine the next day. So it is -- I think right now I'm pretty much recovered.

End of Interview

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