

November 10, 2006

Sony Ericsson Championships Madrid, Spain

K. CLIJSTERS/E. Dementieva

6-4, 6-0

An Interview with:

KIM CLIJSTERS

Q. Okay, I'll go directly to what I need. It's about tomorrow's match. Can you talk about playing Amelie, because you had a couple interesting matches with her?

KIM CLIJSTERS: Yeah, they've been very interesting. I think the last one we played each other must have been the Australian Open one. Antwerp. It's good to have you guys around.

No, Antwerp, yes, I lost that one. So lost both of my matches that I played against her this year, I think. So they've been close. Obviously the one at the Australian Open was very disappointing one, but we've always had -- I mean even in the past last year we always had really tough battles, and I think we enjoy playing each other. We get along well off court as well. So it's a nice one.

I think if you look at the four players that made it into the semis, I think the tournament can be pretty happy with the way things turned out.

Q. If you look at the other three semifinalists they're all winners of the Grand Slams this year. So do you feel like a guest at the party?

KIM CLIJSTERS: Well, I felt a guest of the party just making it in the top eight first of all. So, yeah, being here in the top four is, you know, I'm very excited. I've always enjoyed playing the championships and I always felt it was an honor to be part of this group, to be part of the last four, especially at the end of this year for me, you know, means twice as much, I think.

Q. How do you think -- only Maria Sharapova plays good in championship among other Russian players, Petrova, Kuznetsova, Dementieva and Kournikova plays not good always, is it mental or physical problem?

KIM CLIJSTERS: I don't think it comes down to something, especially Maria she started playing, dominated the American hard core tournaments and the U.S. Open playing a lot of confidence and I played against her here too I lost. She's playing some really good tennis and today you know the way she played in that first set today I think was really good tennis, and you can't blame the other girls for losing against her. So I think a lot of the girls maybe physically too, last tournament of the year, maybe a little more tired.

Maria is always a girl that, she's always motivated and very hungry to do what she, when she is playing to do everything right.

Q. What's your opinion about matches starting at six in the evening?

KIM CLIJSTERS: That's fine. I think the atmosphere is great playing night matches. Although I'm getting a little tired from playing the third matches twice in a row now. And so that's been hard. When you play at 6:00, I think that's fine.

Last week in the Belgium tournament, I think I played all my matches at 7:00 in the evening until the finals.

So that's not something that is that big of a deal if you can have your schedule similar. When you played third match after six you don't really know what time you can start or what time you're going to finish. And there have been some late nights for me. So it's going to be -- it's harder to be fit, but I just give it 200 percent.

Q. How can you comment on the absence of the American players?

KIM CLIJSTERS: Well, the European players have been playing too good, I think. And, yes, I think that's -- the European players have been very consistent, I think. In a way, it's weird to see, not to see players like the Williams sisters. They're still great players but they don't commit to just playing the amount of tournaments to have enough points and that's their problem, I think.

So I think every girl who is here is worth being there.

Q. Venus is coming tomorrow with Billie Jean King, to Madrid I think (inaudible),

they say something with (inaudible) with the United Nations, do you think it's nostalgic or perhaps next year because the cash is there. We are, Europeans are playing much better now, but we need Vonya Kings (phonetic) or is it life goes on, you know what I mean. If you are not up there, what's your opinion?

KIM CLIJSTERS: Again, I think it's all the players that are here now have worked very hard to make it to the top eight and I've played really good tennis, and, yeah, I think if the American girls, especially Venus and Serena, if they would make it their goal to be there until the end of the year, they have to play more and you know and just focus on the tennis a little bit more. But that's their choice so you can't blame them for not wanting to play the amount of tournaments that they should play, I think.

Q. Do you remember still 2001, you have changed a lot or you (inaudible) in Madrid so it brings you luck or this is just only a coincidence?

KIM CLIJSTERS: Yes, that year it was, that was a great year. That was a great time to be here. I think Justine and myself we played some really good tennis here, some of our best tennis I think against the Spanish team on clay. And so it was, but the atmosphere, that's what I remember the most was the atmosphere, the public I think the Spanish public is really, you know really into it. And they like to scream and get into the matches and support their players.

And I think to be in such a big tournament as this one it's nice to have the crowd react to great points or great matches when you compare it to LA the last few years. It was very quiet and I think just for all of us it's so much better to be here.

Q. Kim, the round robin games are over. You were the only one among the Russians. What is the secret of your survival?

KIM CLIJSTERS: I don't know. You know, it was very close at the end. It came down to the last match, and you know Maria went to there as well, so she's the Russian, too. And yes, I just felt like after losing to Maria I started to play a lot better, played my best tennis especially against Svetlana Kuznetsova and today I played my important points as well. The end of today that's what it comes down to.

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