

November 11, 2006

Sony Ericsson Championships Madrid, Spain

A. MAURESMO/K. Clijsters

6-2, 3-6, 6-3

An Interview with:

KIM CLIJSTERS

Q. Kim, it was a highly competitive and close match. What was the difference tonight in your mind?

KIM CLIJSTERS: Well, I think in the first she played too good. I think she was hitting the ball really well and just playing very aggressive tennis, too. In the second set I started playing some of my best tennis I think that I've played so far this year and really started dominating the points. Never gave her the opportunity to play the game that she wants to. That really mixes up her game. Mix it up, make the opponent stand on the back foot a lot with the high balls and bringing it forward with the slices.

And at the end it could have gone either way especially in that one game where the 3-all she held and we had a few break points. Really went for my shots. I was really hitting the ball well, seeing the ball well.

I mean, on these matches it's only a few points that make a difference.

Q. Mauresmo said it was one of the best matches she's played all year. Were you aware in the match of the high quality of play particularly in the third set?

KIM CLIJSTERS: Yes. I thought the way she came out was incredible, I think. Like I said, I don't think I've ever played against her where she played that well like she did in the first set, but then there's nothing you can do, just trying to keep hanging in there. If she plays like that for two sets good, then that's what she deserves it. Just keep fighting, maybe chase things a little bit. Tried to be aggressive for my returns, be a little bit more ready to go, take a little bit more risks and it worked.

I think she tried to change her game a little bit too in the third set, put some higher balls in there. It's like a game, just each try to test each other out there.

Q. Tell me what do you think, who is going to win tomorrow?

KIM CLIJSTERS: I have no idea. You know, it's going to be a very close one, I think. Both, Justine and Amelie have both a chance to play good tennis this week. It's very hard to pick a winner.

Amelie beat her in the round robin before and that doesn't mean anything. You never know. I think Justine is always a player who is when she's really focused and she can play some of her best tennis. I'm sure that's what she's going to go out there and do tomorrow.

Q. Tell me the secret about your game.

KIM CLIJSTERS: I have no secrets. [Chuckling].

Q. To be one of the best?

KIM CLIJSTERS: I think just work hard. Keep fighting and even when you lose a few matches don't, you know, don't -- take the good things out of it and try to keep working hard and work on things that didn't go well and that's all. No secrets. Nothing -- I'm not hiding anything.

Q. Advice for me to become one of the best like you?

KIM CLIJSTERS: I don't know.

Q. I'm just 28.

KIM CLIJSTERS: Well, maybe it's too late.

(Laughter)

Q. Oh my God. Thank you.

KIM CLIJSTERS: No problem. Good luck.

Q. You have ten matches under your belt now. How is your wrist?

KIM CLIJSTERS: Good. That's the positive thing about this, these last two weeks now I played some intense tennis, and I think maybe nine or ten matches in 11 days or so, and, yes, I feel pretty good.

My body overall feels good to me. I think my legs today were a little bit tired. They were a little bit more, I felt a little bit more tired out there than I had been so far.

But I'm human. That's what happens.

Q. Are you encouraged going into the next season and how do you assess 2006 for you?

KIM CLIJSTERS: Well, I'm very happy with the way that it ended. I had a really good week here and last week as well. So I was happy I was able to play these last two tournaments of the year and take those positive things as happened these last two weeks, take that with me to Australia. It's always nice to end the year when you're playing well, I guess.

And that's what I'm going to try to keep working on. I'll take a couple of weeks off tennis, but I'll still train and run and everything. So I think that's important to just make sure that once the first Grand Slam of the year starts, you're ready to go and ready to play those seven matches.

Q. Is 2007 still going to be a good-bye year or is there --

KIM CLIJSTERS: A good-bye year?

Q. No thinking, no change in that?

KIM CLIJSTERS: No.

Q. Just sum up now after playing this well for a couple of weeks how tricky a decision that is or is it just very much made up?

KIM CLIJSTERS: I enjoyed playing tennis this week but it's been very frustrating. It's been a frustrating year. And there's definitely been days and weeks even where I probably thought that I wanted to stop already. But especially after the injury in Montreal. I didn't know how much I had left of trying to get myself back and I tried hard. I worked with some new people around me. And I think that motivation was good, too, being able to not even, while I wasn't able to play tennis, still work on other areas, I think, physically-wise. That was fun, just trying to stay fit was in a different -- in different ways than I had before, I think it was something that helped me a lot.

Q. When you say 2007 is a good-bye year?

KIM CLIJSTERS: I don't understand.

Q. When you say 2007 is a good-bye year, are you really thinking that when you're enjoying on the court and things like that, it's going to be a bye-bye or maybe it's going to be a break?

KIM CLIJSTERS: No. I mean I'll never say never. But no, this is definitely something that I've thought about for long. It's been hard. My injuries have been restricting me from being able to play the amount of tennis that I want to play and that I feel like I need to play some of the best tennis. And that's probably been the most frustrating, is playing tournaments after injuries, I know it takes time to get your game back.

But I was losing to girls where I felt like if I played a little bit better -- that's the most frustrating part is being out on the court and knowing how good I can play and not being able to do it because I'm restricted.

And you know my wrist will always be the weaker part of my body. It will always be a part of my body that I have to work on until I play the last match of my career and until that match comes I will do that. And I will see afterwards. I'll be very happy to not having to do all that other stuff anymore.

Q. What do you want to do after you stop, new job, go to university? What would you like to do?

KIM CLIJSTERS: I would love to start a family. There's a lot of things I want to do. I enjoy working with kids. We'll see. That's not something -- I'm still focused on tennis at the moment. But we'll see what there is to do.

Q. Just because you've had this late season break, will your off-season training regimen be different? Will you be playing more tennis, training harder as a result of the last few weeks?

KIM CLIJSTERS: Yes, I don't think I'll be taking much of a break. Tennis-wise. Tennis-wise I will. Physically-wise I won't. I think I'll take a few days off but I'll start training again and just, you know, I think if -- I'm the kind of person if I have to practice just hitting balls for five weeks, drives me crazy. Like you want to play your matches.

And so, yeah, I'll start hitting the ball probably the second week of December and then physically-wise I'll keep working.

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