

November 8, 2006

Sony Ericsson Championships Madrid, Spain

M. SHARAPOVA/K. Clijsters

6-4, 6-4

An interview with:

KIM CLIJSTERS

Q. Kim, just talk about what you learned about your game tonight. Obviously you came back had a good week but not at the level of competition we have here. So --

KIM CLIJSTERS: Yeah, I think especially in the beginning, she was very accurate, I think, especially with her serve. That's where I was -- she kept putting on a lot of pressure at the beginning of the points.

I never really had a chance to get into the match. Both I think because she was playing well, and I think in that first set I just, I wasn't feeling the ball at all.

I think different circumstances, different situations, different views, different balls, I think it's just a matter of getting used to that a little bit.

In the second set I started to feel more comfortable out there, but I think on the important points, that's where she came up with good serves, couple break points. She served an ace. And that shows. It was hard at the moment, you know, that's when they play their best tennis when you're down, and she did that.

Q. Was the lack of rhythm due to not a lot of match play?

KIM CLIJSTERS: I don't know. I definitely felt like towards the end it was getting better.

I felt I was starting to feel the ball better and see the ball better. But I'm sure it has something to do with it.

Not feeling that comfortable out there I think is definitely in such a big tournament already right now, I think is something that I'm definitely missing that a little bit. But I got through this match and hopefully I can feel a little bit better out there tomorrow.

Q. Do you have special regrets for the two balls at 5-5?

KIM CLIJSTERS: No. I mean she served that last game, she served it really well. And she, like I said, at the important points that's where she was better than me today. So she deserved to go through there.

Q. You had your chances early in the second set, and towards the end. It was break points, came up with big serves at the important moments?

KIM CLIJSTERS: Yeah, she did. What I said before, it shows that she takes her time. She really focuses on that serve. And that's a big advantage, I think, for her, is getting that first serve because I felt in the rallies, I felt once I started rallying with her, I felt pretty good out there. But I think the serve is where she just got an advantage.

Q. Sort of a contradiction here, but I think you're in a must-win situation for your next match, to advance. But also this is the kind of tournament where someone who is fresher but hasn't had a lot of matches maybe can take advantage of the fact you can have a loss and come back and do well. Is that how you see this?

KIM CLIJSTERS: I think every match that I have now, even a loss, I think, is only a positive for me. I can hopefully get better. Especially the start of my match I think needs to be a lot better. And be aggressive. And I think that's -- when I play my best tennis that's when I'm aggressive. That's when I'm going for my shots. I felt like today I wasn't really doing that. I felt I was always kind of on my back foot a little bit. I started to have the better feeling towards the end of that match. So hopefully I can keep working on the last few games of the match and start off tomorrow from the beginning.

Q. Seemed like Hawk Eye was a friend to both players. What did you think of the line calling there?

KIM CLIJSTERS: At one stage I was thinking it's nice that they use the electronic line calling right now because there were a few points that there were I think game point for her or

game point for me and that's when it's good that the system is in use right now.

Q. Kim, Sharapova is on a great winning streak, have you seen any changes or improvement in her game since the last time you played against her in San Diego?

KIM CLIJSTERS: I think the main difference I feel I think her strokes are still the same as when I used to play her. But I think her serve is just more consistent. And she used to just, in the past, just not produce many first serves especially when it was getting close, like she, that's when I think it was a little bit of a weakness.

She always had a very good serve but it was never as consistent as it was this match or even the way the last time I played her in San Diego, too, I think.

So, yeah, I think she looks stronger to me. She looks a little bit bigger and stronger, and I think that's something that she's definitely been working on.

That's what she did very well, I think, today.

Q. The match against Svetlana (inaudible)?

KIM CLIJSTERS: She played a good match today as well. It's going to be very tough for me tomorrow, but I enjoy playing, I enjoy playing against these girls, Svetlana as well. I get along with her off court. I think we have both similar styles of tennis. We like to put pressure on each other.

She's a good mover as well. I think that's where I can get a lot of my opponents, you know, to start thinking is when I'm defending well.

So that's going to be a very interesting one, I think, tomorrow, us two girls and see how we match up.

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