

November 7, 2006

**Sony Ericsson Championships
Madrid, Spain**

M. SHARAPOVA/E. Dementieva

6-1, 6-4

An interview with:

ELENA DEMENTIEVA

MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. What are you feeling just now?

A. I feel upset because I think it's very hard to play without serve. And even today, when I had chances, I didn't take my opportunity. I did too many double-foots and foot faults as well. So it was hard to play, because she has such a powerful serve so she can save so much energy.

I mean she doesn't need to play along well. And I just, I was finding for every single point, but because of my serve I couldn't take a lead in the match.

Q. Is there a special reason that you didn't serve well today?

A. Well, I don't think there was a reason. It's been a problem for a while for me. So, well, I mean there is no excuse for such a, for such a bad serve. Maybe I wasn't focused enough on my service game.

Q. Do you feel a little bit better with your service today?

A. I didn't hear you. I didn't hear you.

Q. Do you feel a little better with your service today?

A. Well, I just, I think I just answered. I just answered this question.

Q. Do you think that ball boys taxed you out for the match?

A. I think they were trying hard, and I think that they did a good job for them. It's also for the first time, and I think they were quite good today.

Q. Elena, you were the last player to beat Maria. Can you just talk about if there's anything you're noticing different in her game, besides your own troubles with your serve today? Anything different?

A. Well, I mean, I think she's in better shape right now because she won two tournaments in a row and the U.S. Open as well. So she has such big confidence playing today.

But I guess I know how to play, just I didn't take my chances, like I said, and I wasn't playing my best, especially on my service game.

Q. Obviously it's hard when you don't serve that well. But was she serving better than when you last played her in August? Was she hitting deeper? Was she moving better, anything like that?

A. Well, for her, you know, her serve is a big weapon of her game, and

especially in the most important moment of the match she always go for the big serve. Sometimes she go for the aces, and it's very hard on you because you feel all the pressure on her service game. And it's very hard because she's staying focused all the time and you have to fight very hard for every single point.

Q. Kind of the same question, she won the 17 matches in a row, and do you think it's something very unbelievable or it's normal for her?

A. Well, I think this is a very impressive result. She won so many matches in a row. It's amazing how well she was playing at the end of the season when most of the players are a little bit tired.

So it seems like she's in good shape and she's physically fit, you know, to play that well.

Q. When a player is serving like you did today, is it the most difficult thing for a player, I mean to focus when you know you're not serving well, and did you try to change anything during the match or it was just letting it go?

A. Well, I think it's very hard to play when you feel that something is not going well and I realize that my service is far away from being perfect. So that's why I have to be very focused and that's why I put so much pressure on me. Because I know I have to fight on my service game, especially against Maria, because she's trying to play every point. She's going for the win. And

it's even more difficult to play.

Q. Do you think she improved her volley?

A. She didn't play a lot of volley this time, just a couple one or two. But you know, with the powerful game she has, she doesn't really need to. She feels so comfortable on the baseline, and I don't think she wants to go to the net.

Q. Elena, it's very close at the top right now with the number one, two and three rankings. But do you think that Maria is showing, with the consistency with the last three months, that she might be able to separate herself from the rest of the players?

A. Well, I think she -- right now she deserves to be number one with all the results she's got for this year and especially for the end of the year. And she's playing like number one for the moment. So I don't think anyone else right now can really play close to the level of her game.

Q. What about your next matches, do you think it's possible that you will get yourself for the next match?

A. I still have a chance to go for my groove, but it's very difficult to play after you just lost a match. So it's not going to be easy tomorrow. But I'll try to play my best. I'll try to improve my serve tomorrow and as long as I have chances I will try, I will try to use it.

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