

November 8, 2006

Sony Ericsson Championships Madrid, Spain

S. KUZNETSOVA/E. Dementieva

7-5, 6-3

An interview with:

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA

Q. Are you happy with your victory? Although Dementieva is out of the tournament, You're not here to make friends, you're here to win.

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: Today I was a bit nervous because I thought I needed to win the match and she's been ahead for a while. Taking advantage for a while. I'm happy I won finally. I got relaxed and to feel comfortable and to feel better. It's very difficult to make more double faults than I did. But my serve -- my serve and my game is very important.

Today has not been that good. But it's important to win a match. I've still got two to go. And those are very tough ones.

Q. You've said this year it's difficult to keep fit; both in Miami, Sharapova suffered a little bit. Can you work on this because now you're fitter, because in Moscow we saw you tired. Is it a matter of schedule, calendar?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: You need to schedule your calendar smartly. The week of Moscow, I was there, on my calendar this year. I haven't really recuperated. And Stuttgart was very tiring against Petrova. Moscow, I didn't feel like playing, and that's very annoying when you go on the court. I hope it doesn't happen again.

Q. Congratulations. I wanted to ask you about Russian tennis players. There's four of them in the tournament now. How do you explain the success of Russian tennis players?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: I don't know.

This question is being asked once again we can make it frustrated, if you want. I guess it's a matter of competition, because we all want to win the other one. We have difficult moments. We haven't got many sponsors. Federation in Russia does not. So you need to fight hard. And when you get through a certain level and you see more Russian players next to you, you try your best again and that's competition.

Q. I want to ask you about Yeltsin's role in this development of Russian tennis.

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: I think it's been important the role he's played. Yeltsin and Kournikova have made tennis important in different ways, has made tennis more popular in Russia, has brought people to play tennis. Yeltsin loves tennis and hopes young people -- Kournikova, on the other hand, makes you also love tennis, want to be like her.

Q. Last question. At the end of the '90s, it was said that Russian tennis was so many tennis clubs and et cetera was receiving black money, it was a bit corrupted, have you been affected as a tennis player with those type of comments and the way of receiving maybe illegal money?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: People talk about whatever. I know nothing about corruption and black money in tennis. Of course, I haven't received any of this money if it exists. I fight with my effort. I enjoy my tennis. I love my country. I also like Spain.

But anyway, I sincerely don't -- not judge. I'd rather corruption help tennis than anything else. For instance, if there's black money, there's a lot of money. If there's help to support tennis, we don't have more tennis players.

Q. Congratulations. There's a detail, a remark at the end of the match when you got to the players lounge, you went by Sharapova and you said hello to the second one but not to the first one. What's happened? How is your relationship with them?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: Okay. It's not fair to say I'm very friend of Clijsters and not of Sharapova. Maria is very centered in her

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game. And she has other friends in the tournament. It's not that she -- she's reserved. We're rivals also, I think it's a normal thing not to be best friends of a rival. But she's, she keeps her private life to her.

And Clijsters, I think she's very happy, we have a close friendship. And on the court she fights hard.

Q. Is it difficult to start a day later than the six of the players?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: It's hard to say in points, which comes to a head. Of course it's an advantage. If you win matches, if you win all of them, you have to play all in a row. You don't have a day off then. I don't know. For me it was one more day to get used to the court. I was comfortable. I love to play matches in a row. I think I'm fit to handle it.

Q. How do you feel about the way you played today?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: I think I had really much, a lot of chances which I didn't close in the third set. And I was losing my concentration, but I think it's also normal after a long year and I had a week off, like three weeks without competition.

And here is very important tournament for me. Very tense and nervous. And I couldn't control all the way today in the first set, but I prefer it happened this kind of match than not really important tight moment.

So I'm looking forward to improve my game and to raise it. For today it was enough. So tomorrow I expect a very high match.

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