

August 1, 2008



D. CIBULKOVA/J. Jankovic

7-5, 6-2

An interview with:

JELENA JANKOVIC

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Leading 5-1, it seems you hit a wall. What happened there?

JELENA JANKOVIC: Yeah, until 5-1 I was doing quite well. I was feeling good and I was hitting the ball well. But then all of a sudden I just got exhausted, completely lost my concentration. It was hard for me throughout, you know, for that rest of the match to keep up because the points were quite long. The longer the play went, I felt worse and worse. I just couldn't do it.

I'm still not in the best physical shape. I'm suffering in that department. It will take time for me to get that better because at the moment, you know, I'm struggling to play in a high level for two sets. If I was playing three sets, I don't know, they would probably take me in an ambulance and I would go out (laughter). But that's the way it goes.

Q. Did you feel ill?

JELENA JANKOVIC: I felt dizzy on the court. I needed a little bit of time after the match to come, you know, to life again. You know, I felt not so good. I'm still not feeling that strong. I'm feeling weak at the moment.

But what can I do?

Q. Is it harder to accept because the first ranking was available for you this week?

JELENA JANKOVIC: It's okay. Doesn't matter the first ranking. I want to be healthy. I want to improve. I want to play tennis. I mean, I don't really think about No. 1 or whatever happens. If it's going to happen, it will happen. But at the moment I don't deserve that spot. I am not in the best shape. I am not, you know, at my highest level. So it will take time for me to get better and better.

Q. Was the knee okay today?

JELENA JANKOVIC: My knee was okay. But because of the knee, I wasn't able to play for more than two weeks after Wimbledon and I completely got out of shape. You know, I lost also my muscles, endurance of course. It cannot happen overnight. You need days of training and days of hard work to get it better.

Q. You knew it was going to be against Cibulkova, but did you think it was going to be that tough?

JELENA JANKOVIC: I knew it was going to be a tough match because I played against her at the French Open. But there I was in good shape. I could play the long points. And she was the one who got tired. I was the one who was physically better at the French Open, and so I won in two sets. Especially on clay, where she plays better, the points are even longer, and she has a better chance.

And here I should have a, you know, better chance, kind of an upper hand, you know, on this surface, on a hard court. But when you're not prepared well enough, it's hard. She returns a lot of balls. She runs very well. It's tough to take a point against her. You have to earn it and you have to work hard for everything when you're playing against her.

Q. Do you think you're going to be in good shape for the Olympics?

JELENA JANKOVIC: I don't know. How many days I have now?

Q. Seven days.

JELENA JANKOVIC: How many? Seven? I don't think miracles can happen. But I can get, you know, a little bit better. You know, I'll try my best.

Q. How do you compare your match to the match you played against her in Fed Cup?

JELENA JANKOVIC: I don't know what the Slovaks made, but it was the slowest court I have ever played on. I guess they did it because of her. I won. Especially playing in Slovakia with all the Slovaks cheering for her, which is normal. Fed Cups, there's always a different atmosphere there. But I managed to win that match.

And we played again in the French Open. I won there again. But here I'm not the same player as I used to be. I'm not as fit as I used to be.

Of course, it's a different opportunity for her. She used her chances and she got the match.

Q. How would you assess your ability to handle pressure?

JELENA JANKOVIC: What do you mean? Handle which pressure? Which pressure? What is the pressure?

I mean, I'm just going out there to play my game. But, you know, when you're not your best, it's hard to do anything. You know, I want to play great tennis, but sometimes it's impossible.

Q. Did you see this coming today? Did you think there was a chance the match would turn out the way it did?

JELENA JANKOVIC: I didn't. You know, I thought I was gonna be fine. But just your body, it kind of collapses for some reason. I don't know, I guess it's normal. It's natural, you know. My body's not a machine. You play, you play, and eventually it will break down.

And that's what happened, especially today. So what can I do? I mean, when you're at this level, when you're not physically prepared well enough, it's very hard to compete against anybody 'cause nowadays the girls are very strong, very fit, and they can play for not just one hour and a half or two hours, they can play for five hours and run side to side. I cannot do that, even for an hour.

So that is the difference. That was the difference today.

Q. There have been a lot of complaints over the years that the schedule might be too busy, especially at this time of year. Do you get a sense of that right now?

JELENA JANKOVIC: Especially we reached more than half the season. We played a lot of tournaments, a lot of matches. And now there is, you know, a big part of the season coming up, big tournaments, Olympics, US Open. It's very important for all of us, you know, to be in the best shape. And we try our best to play so much. It's hard to, you know, get in form and, you know, really prepare yourself for the biggest ones and perform at your best, at your highest level.

But now having so many tournaments in a row that are very important is quite difficult. But it's the same for me and for all of the players. As you can see, a lot of injuries, a lot of players who are at the top are not really at their best. But this is I guess what happens. It's hard, but we have to deal with it.

Q. Would you have preferred to have some tougher physical tests leading up to this match? Your first two matches were a little easier than you had today.

JELENA JANKOVIC: I don't know. Cibulkova is one of the players who is one of the girls who really makes you work hard for your money. You know, when you go out there, you know that you're gonna be there for, you know, at least an hour and a half or two hours. If you get in the third set, who knows how long.

So you know that she runs so many balls down. She's a girl who really doesn't give you anything. So when you know that, you really have to be prepared. If you want to do that, you need to be in good shape to manage to hit, you know, more than sometimes five, six, seven, eight balls. After you play such a long point, you need to be ready for the next one, be prepared, not just get so tired and let go, give her so many gifts the next three points.

I mean, that's what happens. I'm disappointed, but I still have to continue to work and believe in myself, and that's it.

Q. Are you playing doubles with Ana at the Olympics?

JELENA JANKOVIC: I don't know. I don't think so. I'm not sure. We don't really play doubles. Especially with injuries I've been having, I'm barely playing singles. So I don't know if I could manage to play singles and doubles.

Q. If you're not that healthy in singles, two excellent players, a chance for a gold medal in doubles.

JELENA JANKOVIC: I don't know. We'll see when the time comes over there.

Q. The entries are in now.

JELENA JANKOVIC: I don't think we are playing then. I'm not sure, I guess.

Q. You're a Wimbledon champion.

JELENA JANKOVIC: I have no idea how to play doubles. I won mixed doubles in Wimbledon but, you know, I don't think I'm a good doubles player.

Q. Did you feel any of the fatigue that you felt today in either of your first two matches?

JELENA JANKOVIC: You know, I feel it during, you know, the play. I get tired and I take a little bit more time. But against the players that I've been playing, you know, maybe I would play a longer point and I would be very tired and not ready for the next one. But my opponents would either make a mistake and kind of, you know, give me some room to come back and to - how you say - regroup again and come back into the next point.

And this girl always, you know, every point, she doesn't give you any unforced errors. Every point she's out there, hitting every ball, on and on and on and on. So it's hard.

Q. People in Montréal were pretty enthusiastic with Wozniak and Dubois. Since Cibulkova is a hit taking out a lot of top players, you said you were having a tough time playing against Canadians in front of this crowd. Today the crowd was a little bit on her side. How did you feel?

JELENA JANKOVIC: I don't know. I didn't, you know -- you know, I wasn't concentrate and focused on how the crowd was. I was just trying to play tennis. But I was not feeling so good, so I had so many things on my mind that, you know, the last thing was to think about the crowd, who was on which side or what they are doing.

When I play, I don't think about that. I just try my best.

Q. Do you think it could have been a source of motivation if the people would have been behind you?

JELENA JANKOVIC: No, I don't know. Maybe sometimes. But usually, to be honest, everywhere we play, there's so many Serbian people that come out and support us almost everywhere around the world. Here I haven't seen many Serbians, which is unusual. I don't know.

Q. Do you speak French?

JELENA JANKOVIC: A little bit. I don't want to speak French. I don't want to do anything. I am not in the mood now (laughter).

Q. How big are the Olympics for you?

JELENA JANKOVIC: Olympics, it's a very special event. We get opportunity to play Olympics every four years. Just to be surrounded by the best athletes in the world, being in the village with them, experiencing the whole event is special.

So I hope, you know, I really look forward to giving my best there and hopefully being a little bit better form than I was here. We will see. I don't know. Anything can happen.

Q. What do you prefer, an Olympic medal or win in the US Open?

JELENA JANKOVIC: Actually, to be honest, a win in the US Open. I don't know why. I want to win a Grand Slam. It's just, you know, individual. But if I could choose, I would choose both. Very humble, huh (smiling)?

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