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S. KUZNETSOVA/M. Larcher De Brito

7-5, 2-6, 6-4

An interview with:

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Svetlana, please.

Q. Were you surprised by this young girl?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: No. I knew she plays good. I went to watch her yesterday. Yeah, I expected her to be good.

Q. How tough was it out there? She was relentless, never giving up.

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: Well, no, but I give her all credit. She plays good. But, still, when I was serving well and dictating more, I was just winning. I was not playing good at all. I think I took a little bit more control in the third set. I was a bit lucky to win first one also.

I have not been playing matches for three weeks, so it's very hard to get the rhythm. You know, I think I just fought (sic) a lot this match, so that's why I won.

Q. What's the advantage of sliding the way you slide? Seems like an injury waiting to happen.

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: I think it's only disadvantage because I break my shoes very quick, I risk my ankles, but it looks good and it feels good (smiling). This is all I can tell you.

I don't know if I manage to get well feet behind the ball to get this ball. I don't know if I can do that. I feel comfortable sliding. That's it.

Q. There's a chance you'll play Safina again. How do you feel about that?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: How what?

Q. What do you think about that?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: Yeah, I mean, it's a good chance because I think she's in very good shape. She's playing at her best level probably for the last years. She's very consistent. She makes finals. Confidence makes lots of things.

Yeah, I think it's gonna be very tough match and I have to fight a lot definitely, yeah, and play good.

Q. Can you talk about the importance of this tournament, where it stands in the schedule.

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: A lot, because this is -- first of all, it's a big event. I love to play here. I like hard court, Canada. You know, I really have fun here.

It's also important because before Olympics, it's only one tournament going to Olympics, and two before the US Open. And I had three weeks' break after Wimbledon. Definitely it's important to have few matches and to play good.

Q. Can you make a comment on the state of the women's game, how tight things are right now?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: It's just a bit unpredictable. I guess all players, we got it, but we not quite got it, because otherwise there would be one up there all the time.

But we keep switching, so I guess everybody's pretty equal. Ana, so far she's better, because she get there and she won French Open.

But I think everybody of these four players have a chance to be there, even six players. You know, everybody plays very good. It's very interesting, tennis right now.

I also was thinking about this, like this morning, about how different the game is a few years ago when I just came to the tour. I was playing doubles. Everybody is saying how hard you hit the ball. You been surprising people hitting hard the ball. Now you're not surprised to get even harder ball back because everybody hits stronger and stronger.

So I guess tennis just coming like changing to be so much physical, everybody hitting the ball so hard.

Q. Is there one quality that you think is perhaps the most important thing to reach No. 1?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: I guess it's a mentality thing, just to stay there every time, to fight every time. I guess this is a mentality thing, to have good attitude.

Q. Are you concerned at all about Beijing, the conditions there, the smog, things like that? Are you doing anything special?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: What can I do? You recommend me something, I'll do something. But I cannot do anything. Here it was humid, it was hot. I guess there it's going to be even hotter. You know, it's gonna be tough, but you cannot do anything.

Q. What does playing in the Olympics mean to you?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: It's a big thing for me because my family been to Olympics, my brother, my father. And I'm just looking forward to play, to defend my country colors.

Q. Do you think it's a good thing that women's tennis is getting so physical?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: I think it would be much more interesting if it's going to be different, you know. So that's why I'm looking forward to try some more new things in my game.

Q. What are some of those new things?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: Well, just slice, to mix it up, to play more spin, more short cross-courts, more coming to the net, come in from return. Many different stuff.

Q. How is this tournament helping you prepare for the Olympics?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: This is what I was saying. I have not been playing for three weeks, and it's great to have some matches. Everybody's playing very well here. It's very tough draw.

Q. Whose games have you watched that you appreciate either in the past or now playing, men or women?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: Well, as I said before, Roger Federer for sure in men's. I think men's tennis, it's so interesting. Like I would watch Roger, Nadal. Like you can learn so much from them. Then Nalbandian, when he's in good shape, he plays so beautiful tennis. I think he plays very different game from other guys. He's very talented. He has good hands and he doesn't overpower or something. Marat Safin, definitely to watch him, like a bit show, what he does on the court, it's good.

Q. Back to today's game. Did you get scared at some point that she might steal it away from you?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: If you get scared? For me it's not get scared. You just try to fight it back. I was feeling at one point it was close, like in the third set. But I was making break, and then I could not hold twice. I was feeling it there. I knew I had to push just a little bit more, a bit more serve better and I could stay there. But like 'being scared,' I don't have this expression. I don't know.

Q. I think there were five breaks in the third set.

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: I think she broke me just two or three times.

Q. Twice, then you broke here three times.

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: So that's what I was saying. I knew I was breaking her almost easy, and she broke me once I think 2-Love, but other times I knew I was fighting. I knew I just need serve a little bit better to hold my serve.

Q. When you play a young player like that, do you feel she goes out there and she doesn't have any pressure open her?

SVETLANA KUZNETSOVA: Yeah, definitely I feel this. Then people ask you, like you have pressure on yourself, you play young players. In the start, I did feel pressure. But now I feel like I'm older than everybody else, even I'm only 23, and everybody's younger (laughter). You don't even think about it, because so many other younger players.

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