

**August 3, 2008**



**D. SAFINA/D. Cibulkova**

6-2, 6-1

An interview with:

## **DINARA SAFINA**

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. How tired are you?**

DINARA SAFINA: I don't know. I think somebody who knows me very good, like my coach, my fitness coach, they can see that in my eyes there is no more emotions - not positive, no negative, just empty (smiling).

**Q. So how do you win a tournament, L.A. and Montréal, back to back? How did you do it?**

DINARA SAFINA: If I would know, I would do it every time.

But really, I don't know. Just unbelievable. It's first-time experience like this for me. Normally, if I come to tournament and I would win it, next week was always first round lose. Okay, didn't happen after Berlin, because after Berlin, I had 10 days off, like I still had time to recover. Here I had only one and a half day because on Monday I flew.

So really I don't know. When I won the first match, I was like, Okay, at least I'm one step better than the previous times. Then I just took one match at a time, I don't know, playing better. Very good match against Kuzy. Yesterday was very tough match. I pull it out. Today, like whatever I had inside, I said, Okay, give everything what you have, and the only thing, just stay quiet and don't show any emotions because gonna destroy me. And I did it.

**Q. Does this give you a lot of confidence going into the Olympics, especially the fact that you look healthy and you're playing very well?**

DINARA SAFINA: Well, but at the moment I just want to recover. Tomorrow's going to be a flight back to Munich. From there I'm flying to Beijing. Well, these days I will have to take really good care about myself, to recover really good.

I don't know. Just Beijing, Olympics, first experience for me. And, I don't know, I just want to enjoy those moments, I don't know, give everything what I have inside of me.

**Q. What are you doing better when you consider Berlin, the French, L.A., here? What are you doing better in your game?**

DINARA SAFINA: Okay, I would say physically I'm also much better. Before Berlin I started to work with a new fitness coach. There it was still the beginning. But now I think I'm much fitter than before. It helped me to play two weeks in a row. I don't know. With my tennis coach, we're working that I'm becoming very aggressive, use my shots, use my advantages that I have. So just maybe putting all this together between being faster on the court and being more aggressive, that's what it comes together.

**Q. What is it like winning a tournament that your brother has already won?**

DINARA SAFINA: It's unbelievable, really. But still, he's in front of me with the titles.

**Q. Three wins this year. Do you believe you have as good a chance as anybody on the tour right now stepping up and taking over No. 1 in the world?**

DINARA SAFINA: Well, for to be No. 1 in the world, you have to win a Grand Slam. So this is much bigger than to win a Tier I. There, you

don't have to play for a week; you have to play for two weeks really your best tennis. It's much more emotions in a Grand Slam. I've been already this year in a final. It's already a little bit different experience there.

So I don't know. I still I think have to get stronger mentally and also tennis-wise, fitness-wise, and then when I'll be like hundred percent.

I don't know, I don't want to think. I just want to be healthy and take one step at a time and let's see if I ever can make it.

**Q. Since Justine retired, it seems like no one or two players have jumped up and dominated. Do you think there's a level of surprise or players aren't quite ready to seize and be dominant yet?**

DINARA SAFINA: I think if you look at the top 10, okay, we have Williams sisters. They're older than all of us, but mostly all of them are young. You would say Ana, Jelena, Sveta, Chakvetadze, Radwanska, we're all less than 25 years old. So for us, maybe it's still like some new experience. Justine, she was more mature. That's why for us it's something new experience. So maybe we're still a little bit young to deal with this or maybe just changing the whole top 10.

**Q. Changing?**

DINARA SAFINA: Like in ages. Like new generation coming, I would say.

**Q. What do you have to work on before heading to Berlin now?**

DINARA SAFINA: Sorry, Berlin?

**Q. Beijing.**

DINARA SAFINA: I don't know if something can be better. I guess just to recover, just put some more engine in my body. I don't know, keep going.

**Q. Do you think the time for you to go up in the rankings is quite good right now because you seem to be pushing very hard and some players on the top are injured? Is it a good moment for you to push and make a statement in the tennis world?**

DINARA SAFINA: I don't know. I never think like about the rankings or looking so far what can I do. I don't know. I just want to stay healthy because, like you say, there are many girls that are injured. You start rushing, like you want to get

there, then you forget about maybe your fitness. You start to play more tournaments because you want to go somewhere that your body cannot go.

For me, I just want stay healthy and plan the schedule and give my hundred percent. God knows what can happen.

**Q. Did you expect a tougher match today?**

DINARA SAFINA: Yeah. I was coming on the court thinking like, Okay, it's going to be not an easy match. I don't know. Today I would say I was maybe more experienced in the final and it really paid off. I hit some good shots. She gave me some -- in the crucial moments, she gave me some good mistakes. I would say that I could say thank you, and that helped me to win in two sets.

**Q. Cibulkova beat good players on the way to the final. Is it a sign that anything can happen on the tour right now?**

DINARA SAFINA: Well, it's not that she was not unseeded. She was seeded player. Okay, she didn't have bye. Oh, she was unseeded?

**Q. Yes.**

DINARA SAFINA: Still, I mean, she's a great player. She been doing already good results this year. She beat Venus in Doha and she was in the final in Amelia. She's very tough opponent, I must say. I don't know. It's good from her. Also maybe it's new experience for her because she beat some players that she never beaten before. It's not easy kind of after beating, I would say, Dementieva, then go next match and you play Petrova. It's also not easy. Then you beat Jankovic. So many emotions come.

I think she still not know how to deal with this. I guess I went through this a little bit earlier this year. That's why I could deal a little bit better.

**Q. Do you think she was emotionally exhausted coming into this match?**

DINARA SAFINA: I think she was a little bit tight. I don't know. I cannot speak for her. I look, she was a little bit uncomfortable. At that moment I stepped it up.

**Q. It seemed like you knew what to do against her. High balls to the backhand. You had a good game.**

DINARA SAFINA: Well, I had to do something today to beat her.

**Q. Who is playing the best right now on the WTA? Don't be shy.**

DINARA SAFINA: I don't know. I mean, okay, if you take last Grand Slam, you would say Williams sister. They didn't play anything after. Okay, Serena, she got injured in Stanford. Dementieva was playing some good tennis. She came here, first tournament after Wimbledon, and she had good opponent. You could see, she was in the final. I don't know. Ivanovic, if she was not injured, she's very dangerous. I mean, she's No. 1 in the world. Kuzy, I think we had very good match against each other.

I don't know. I don't like to say. Whole top five, top 10, whatever.

**Q. Are the Olympics just as important to you as a Grand Slam?**

DINARA SAFINA: Doesn't matter, Grand Slam or Olympic. It always will be in the world written. If I could pick one, it's only it's once in four years, yeah, maybe it's more like kind of special. But I don't know, I don't mind to have one of them (laughter).

**Q. We're looking at having a new No. 1 in men's and women's tennis. What does that say about tennis?**

DINARA SAFINA: What do you mean?

**Q. Nadal will be No. 1 and Jankovic will become No. 1. What does that say about competition, the way tennis is these days?**

DINARA SAFINA: Well, about men tennis, Nadal, he proved that he's an unbelievable player. I mean, he was No. 2 in the world and he won two Grand Slams this year. He really proved that he deserve to be there. And I think he's gonna be there for a really long time.

Jelena, she was playing consistent through last two years. She was every tournament almost every semifinal, every Grand Slam. She also deserve to be there.

**Q. We can't have a press conference without mentioning your brother. The best advice, the best help he ever gave to you in your career?**

DINARA SAFINA: Once I remember he was playing the match against Kiefer in US Open. I came to watch him. It was my first Grand Slam

singles I made. He's playing really bad match. He's like, Dinara, look, like this you don't have to play never (laughter).

**Q. That was the best advice?**

DINARA SAFINA: Yeah, because he was really like defensive, not doing anything on the court. He's like, Never play like this tennis.

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