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**Western & Southern  
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**MASTERS & WOMEN'S OPEN**

J. JANKOVIC/D. Safina

6-4, 6-2

An interview with:

## **DINARA SAFINA**

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Was she doing something different out there that other opponents haven't been doing earlier in the week? Seemed like she gave you a lot more trouble than maybe the semifinals or the quarterfinals?**

DINARA SAFINA: Well, I was just a little bit off today. I would say, I don't know, I was feeling very confident stepping into the court, and then I was just totally off. My legs were not moving anywhere, and I was just not doing the things that I was supposed to on the court and I let her dictate.

And then of course she felt comfortable and I was not aggressive enough, so it was easier for her to dominate the points.

**Q. Did you say your legs weren't moving?**

DINARA SAFINA: Just I think it was just with my mind. I think I was a little bit off today. I was just -- I don't know, I was always on the stretch. I was never on the ball. And when I was on the ball I was not doing anything, so I just -- I think it was a little bit -- basically I would say it was not my day today.

She definitely played some -- few moments like I was starting to get into the match, and she was, of course, using some good shots and hitting very close to the lines and down the lines. She played some great tennis today.

**Q. In the first set, even her first service game, you had a breakpoint and went to three duces. Do you feel that if you could have pulled that out it might have given you more control? Like you said yesterday, you wanted to attack and take control literally.**

DINARA SAFINA: Yeah, because first three games were good, and then suddenly from 1-All until, I don't know, it was so quick. Suddenly changed everything.

Just, yeah, sometimes happens one point up and down and completely different picture.

**Q. Where does this tournament fit in your preparation for the US Open?**

DINARA SAFINA: Well, I definitely played some great matches. You know, this match -- I don't even want it count it. It was a bad luck. Okay, nothing happens. I have next week that I want to focus. I played some great tennis yesterday, and before yesterday some great matches. I'm feeling much better on the court, and I think with each tournament I'll feel better and better and get stronger and stronger for the US Open.

**Q. Were you able to spend much time with your brother this weekend? And as his career winds down, does that make the time you're able to spend with him on the tour...**

DINARA SAFINA: Well, we had the dinner yesterday. Unfortunately, early morning tomorrow already I have to leave already to Canada.

But then in New York I come there a week before, so hopefully there I can spend sometime with my brother.

**Q. It seems to an outsider that you guys have grown closer as your tennis has improved and as his career has reached its end. Is that accurate, do you think?**

DINARA SAFINA: Well, I think -- because before I would tell him, like, I want to be top 10, and he would never believe me. He was like,

What are you talking about, top 10?

I said, No, I feel like I can be there and do much more. He's like, Come on. Relax and play. And when I started to prove I can be there, I think he started to have much more respect to me.

Before he would not take me so serious. Now he respects me much more as a person and player.

**Q. So you proved to him and earned his respect?**

DINARA SAFINA: I guess.

**Q. Obviously I'm sure you're disappointed at the loss. I've seen you a lot more disappointed after a loss. Is this the kind of match that you can just sort of put aside and say, Ah, it just wasn't my day, and it won't really affect you going forward?**

DINARA SAFINA: Well, yeah, because I played some great matches. Of course I'm disappointing. Next week starts really another tournament. I cannot think too much about it. I just have to speak with my coach what I did right, wrong, and that's it. Basically he will tell me just forget about it and step in next week.

I've been playing some great matches. That's what I need to look. I don't want to look about one match that I haven't been playing good.

**Q. Did you think Jelena is, as they say, back in the conversation, someone that could go far and even win in New York?**

DINARA SAFINA: Definitely she's playing some good tennis, you know. I think she played some good -- I mean, to beat Dementieva yesterday, Elena, especially she's playing good.

I think now everybody is getting there. You know, we needed some time to adjust, so I think we started to find our games.

**Q. What do you mean, everyone is getting there?**

DINARA SAFINA: I mean I think -- I mean, Serena and Venus are playing good, Svetlana is playing good, Jelena is playing good, Dementieva is playing good. Jankovic. I mean, basically all the -- Azarenka is playing good. We are there.

**Q. Usually this time of year everyone's tired.**

DINARA SAFINA: But I guess it took us a while to warm up.

**Q. Following Toronto, what's the game plan for the US Open schedule-wise?**

DINARA SAFINA: I have Toronto and then I have a week off. I have to do last step in Toronto, and just go out there and play some great tennis that I've been playing out here and move on to US Open.

**Q. Speaking of Serena and Venus, you've come of age and they've been at the top for your whole career. What do you think they've done for the tour? Have they been responsible for more power? Are they making everyone else become more athletic and powerful?**

DINARA SAFINA: I cannot exactly speak how was it before, because when I came in they were already at the top. So I don't know how they pushed, let's say Hingis or the rest of players, because I wasn't there.

Let's say definitely when I was growing up I was looking at them and they were like ideal for us how you have to you play and how athletic you have to be, and hit the ball.

Basically, they were big idols, I think, for us kids growing up.

**Q. Is that partly why you felt compelled to go to the conditioning extremes you have and pay so much attention to your diet, et cetera?**

DINARA SAFINA: Well, about this, I was just thinking about myself. Not really about them. I don't know need to look how them. Everyone has their own body.

You know, some of them skinny and some maybe a little bit heavier. Just about how you feel. I feel great with my body, and I think that there were some few kilos that were holding me back, that I could not play maybe three-setters. I would always huff whenever I had a three-set match.

**Q. After the match, Jelena congratulated you for being No. 1 so much this season. What does that mean to you?**

DINARA SAFINA: Well, I'm No. 1. What do you want to say with this?

**Q. There's been so much debate about who really is the best player. Seemed like she took a very public opportunity to congratulate you for being No. 1.**

DINARA SAFINA: Well, definitely -- you know, I think I also gave her always lots of credit when she finished the year No. 1, because she earn it same way as I am. We compete week by week. She played unbelievable last year. How many tournaments she won? She was ever tournament at least, I mean, semis or finals. She been always there.

So this is a sport that you compete the whole year. You know, and I always gave her a lot of credit when she finished the year No. 1 that she really deserve it.

**Q. Does what whole debate about the rankings and who should be and shouldn't No. 1 give you extra motivation for the US Open? Would that quiet the doubters if you did?**

DINARA SAFINA: Well, I'm working day by day hard. I compete every day. I'm improving every day, you know. I'm doing my best. I will take one match at a time. Definitely I want to get the Grand Slam. It's no doubt of it. It's not that I'm No. 1 and I want to stop. There is another goal.

I want to win a Grand Slam. When it's this year, I will do my best to win at the US Open. If not, next year I will work even harder to get it.

It's not possible to get two dreams at the same time, to finish No. 1 and to win a Grand Slam. It would be too easy. I go to No. 1.

Now my goal is gonna be to win a Grand Slam. I will put all my concentration, all my schedule for next year to come in the best shape for the Grand Slam.

**Q. Have you and Jelena ever had a chance to talk about that? Because you were both in a similar situation.**

DINARA SAFINA: Well, not so much with her. Sometimes I speak with her coach about this. Basically we have the respect to each other. We don't do the ranking system. We are there.

**Q. But maybe you talk or laugh about it or support each other, I don't know. Have you ever had a conversation?**

DINARA SAFINA: I mean, if we were to say support each other then we don't believe we are No. 1. I believe that I am No. 1.

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