

**23 February 2012**



**J. JANKOVIC/S. Stosur**

6-4, 6-2

An interview with:

## **JELENA JANKOVIC**

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. You were comfortable in that match all the way through really, weren't you? You always had the upper hand?**

JELENA JANKOVIC: Yeah, I think obviously I broke her in the first set. You know, I held my serve the whole time, and then broke her again a couple times in the second.

I tried to -- you know, I got broken in one game. She really returned well and she really went after those returns and broke me there. I managed to break right back.

I think the key was my return. You know, she has one of the best, if not the best, serves in the women's game. It's never easy to return her serve.

So I was really focused on that and I really tried to make as many returns as possible in the court, and then, you know, I would feel comfortable afterwards.

But usually she likes to serve and then start dictating the point with her forehand. I didn't really allow her to do that. I think I kind of broke her rhythm in her game a little bit there. I was pretty much in control the whole time.

So I'm happy with the win. It's never easy. Against her we always have tough matches. Last year I won 7-6 in the third, and that shows it. Great to be in the semifinal again.

**Q. Do you try dictate the points yourself more than you used to?**

JELENA JANKOVIC: Yeah, I'm trying to play a lot more aggressively and trying to use my shots in a better way. You know, as well, I been trying to improve my serve and try to hold my serve a lot more and get some, you know, free points and start the offense with my serve.

I think if you have a great serve it really helps your game a lot, and then your other strokes fall in place as well. I been serving much better lately, you know, holding my serves, you know, my service games a lot and waiting for opportunities to break, you know, the other player.

So it's going pretty well so far, so hopefully I can continue.

**Q. How happy are you with the way things are going with the new coach?**

JELENA JANKOVIC: Yeah, you know, I have a new team, and, you know, we are working on certain things. And as well when you start the season -- and we were working in the off-season a lot trying to make some changes, but then when you start your season, you have to -- yeah, you have to still try to improve some things.

But then you got to compete at the same time. So you cannot really make drastical [sic] changes. You just have to find the middle and try to keep improving and still compete and still do it at a high level.

So so far so good. It can always be better, but I'm not complaining.

**Q. Where did you meet this guy? Where did you do your off-season stuff?**

JELENA JANKOVIC: I was doing in the States.

**Q. Bradenton?**

JELENA JANKOVIC: A little bit in California, a little bit in Vegas.

**Q. And how did you get to know this guy?**

JELENA JANKOVIC: Just started working with him and some other people, and, you know, I started feeling comfortable. You know, that's how we thought we might, you know, try, you know, on the road and see how it goes.

**Q. Did you know him before?**

JELENA JANKOVIC: Not really.

**Q. Because he hasn't really worked in**

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**top tennis before.**

JELENA JANKOVIC: I was recommended, so I just tried to see. And on top it's a little bit different because he's a young guy, and usually you have the older coaches, you know, with a lot of experience on the tour.

The coach I have, he's really young, but he's motivated and he has other qualities other than experience. We'll see how to goes. It's tough to predict the future.

**Q. But it was your new agent that recommended him?**

JELENA JANKOVIC: Right now I don't have an agent, so...

**Q. Sorry. I thought you had one.**

JELENA JANKOVIC: No, I don't have an agent right now, so I'm just playing and competing and focusing on that.

**Q. Did you think at any stage you might just carry on without a coach?**

JELENA JANKOVIC: Yeah, at one point I really wanted to. I really wanted to start -- because at one point, you know, having a coach all the time with me, at one point I really thought that I was so reliable, I was really depending so much on the coach really like, you know, with all the things, with the tactics, with the strokes.

Then when things didn't go my way I really wasn't being myself. I wasn't really using my skills and my, you know, ability to win matches, which was the case in the past and that's why I did so well.

I'm one of those instinct players. I really have to kind of do everything on my own on the court and really not rely so much on the coach.

I don't really use coaching on court as well. I really want to be on the court and figure out a way to play on my own and really fight out there. So I'm one those kind of players. I kind of tried to go to the old self that I've been and that gave my success.

**Q. Why appoint a coach at all then?**

JELENA JANKOVIC: No, no, it's nice have to a coach. But at the same time, you have to find a person, you know, that you have to work with him on the court and do a good job.

My goal so to improve as a tennis player and get better. If a coach can help me do that, it's great. If it doesn't work and you cannot make steps further, then it's no point to keep someone.

And as well, you have to have good chemistry off the court because you have to spend a lot hours together on the road.

**Q. Do you think in the women's game many players are two reliant on their coaches? I sat behind one - I won't say who it was -- but I sat behind a very well-known player, and every single point was looking up to the coach. Things go wrong, it was sort of a...**

JELENA JANKOVIC: Yeah, I think that's maybe, you know, women's tennis is a little more women rely in general on coaches or their entourage.

Men, because they don't have that rule and the coaching on court, I think men are a little bit focused more on themselves and not really look so much up to the player box as women do.

And as well I was looking up at the box a lot and really looking for almost a miracle to fall from the sky. It's really, you know, up to me. It's a battle between me and the player, and I have to figure out a way to win.

The coach cannot or a parent cannot take the racquet and perform for you. You still have to produce those shots and you still have to think through what you're going to do and perform it, do the right things at the right time.

You know, whatever suits. Everybody is different, and whatever suits different players. But I kind of tried to really be myself on the court and really be kind of alone and kind of isolated and really focus on the playing and not really like too far what's going on outside.

**Q. Because both the ATP and the Grand Slams are insistent that the men's game will not have on-court coaching. They say that it's an individual sport.**

JELENA JANKOVIC: Yeah, it's an individual sport. But we have now that rule in women's tennis where we have the coaching on-court. Some players use it; some players don't. You know, if we have that rule and players want to use it, why not?

So, you know, I kind of tried to stay away from it and figure it out on my own and tried to win the matches.

**Q. Which is the way tennis is supposed to be played, isn't it?**

JELENA JANKOVIC: Yeah. But like I said, there is a rule that we have that coaches are allowed. If some players want to use it and they use it within the rules, then that's fine.

That's the way it is.

**Q. So if you made the rules, would there be no on-court coaching?**

JELENA JANKOVIC: I don't know. It's

kind of tough to say, you know. Because for example, when we play Fed Cup, it's actually nice have to the coach on the bench sitting with you and kind of supporting you the whole time and kind of like giving you advice and really being there with you.

But, you know, having just a coach like coming in here and there, like one time per set, it's a little bit different. You're still playing, but you just can, you know, get a little advice, you know, during the time, or you can make some tactical change or change up something.

And the coach, I believe that the coach sees much better on the bench and from the crowd sitting outside of the court than sometimes the player itself. Because the coach is sitting and can see the whole court, can see some of the weaknesses and some of the patterns, where sometimes the player gets caught and doesn't really see certain things that you should be doing.

So if you can get good advice, it really helps. Like I said, I really decided I wanted to be on my own and try to play and try to figure it out on my own. That's all. It's not a big deal. Everybody is different.

**Q. Is your mom traveling with you as much?**

JELENA JANKOVIC: Yeah, she is, but she's mom. Just a mom. She never really, you know, told me how to play. She really just supports me in what I do and helps me, you know, get through some of the matches and just as well being a regular mom off the court.

**Q. Is she here?**

JELENA JANKOVIC: Yeah, she's here, but I think she's sitting not in the player box.

**Q. Yeah, I didn't see her.**

JELENA JANKOVIC: She's just supporting and being, like I said a mom. You know, there is a coach. He's doing his job and my mom is just mom.

**Q. Is that a new idea? Because your mom always used to be...**

JELENA JANKOVIC: My mom is always supporting and my mom is always the one who knows me the best actually. No coach will ever know me as good as my mom. That's the truth and the reality.

She knows just by looking at my face or body language how I feel and what I'm going through in the moment, where a coach that comes on board, he cannot know that - especially a new one - without spending a lot of

the time with you and really knowing you as person and then as a player.

So from that perspective, you know, my mother is the one who plays a huge role. But then when it comes to tennis and doing the right things, she leaves that stuff to the coach. Really that's his job to help me out there. Help me Julie.

**Q. We feel that you are focused and you want the title this year. How do you feel it, and do you think that you can be able to win?**

JELENA JANKOVIC: Yeah, yeah. I've been in the finals here like when I was 18, 19 years old here against Davenport. It's been long time since I been in a final. I been quite a few times a semifinalist.

Would be great to get to the finals again and play for the title, but I still have few matches to go. You know, it's my goal; it's in my mind; I want to try to get after it.

It's not going to be easy.

Who am I playing next? Who's my opponent?

**Q. Radwanska or Lisicki.**

JELENA JANKOVIC: Okay.

**Q. You've had a strong off-season. You've got a new coach. A lot has been talked about that. There are multiple slam winners in the tournament - or has been. What do you think you need to get to be in slam contention in the majors now?**

JELENA JANKOVIC: Yeah, anything can happen nowadays in women's tennis. You got to have a combination of few things. You know, obviously skill, you know, be physically fit, healthy, mentally tough, and, you know, have some luck here and there. (Smiling.)

That as well plays a part. You know, strong belief. You got to believe you can do it no matter what and hang tough in the tough moments. You know, you're going to have a lot of those when you're competing for a Grand Slam, which is a two-week period and seven matches.

That's not easy to do that. I think I would have won a lot Grand Slams if it was only five matches. But seven? And if it was in a week, one week or ten days. But two weeks, sometimes at the very difficult to stay there physically and mentally and win seven matches against, you know, great players.

**Q. Do you feel that you're up there now to compete with the big guns at the**

**moment?**

JELENA JANKOVIC: I have to. I have to improve on that and a long way and be able to stay for those two weeks and really be focused and really be mentally triggered for those seven matches.

It takes a lot out of you physically and mentally. It's not easy to do.

**Q. But you've been around the game for a few years now.**

JELENA JANKOVIC: I'm one of the veterans now.

**Q. You say that; I wasn't going to say that. But is it now a flatter playing field for everyone, everyone has more of a chance? There were six different champions in the last six slams, so none the top 25 can really be counted out.**

JELENA JANKOVIC: I think it's been kind of a change in generation. Some of the girls I played in the past, you know, that I used to compete week in, week out, they retired or they're not playing or they're getting older.

There has been, you know, a lot of young girls coming up on the tour. Even I'm 26 years old and I'm one of the older ones that's still competing.

**Q. But then Li Na and Sam Stosur win their first slams when they're more veteran than you.**

JELENA JANKOVIC: Yeah, there are also couple cases when a 29 year old or 30 -- I don't know how old is Schiavone. That's a different case.

So anything is possible. You know, nowadays there is really not a dominant player that's winning everything that's always favorite to win. So anything can happen. With strong belief, with hard work, I think you can achieve a lot of good things.

**Q. Do you think women's tennis needs the same kind of rivalry as men's tennis, or because it's so open it makes it exciting?**

JELENA JANKOVIC: We had before, you know, a lot times you would know the favorites. But now I think that has changed. It's kind of exciting for the fans, because the matches are very close, you know, from the early rounds. Anything can happen.

There is a lot of different winners. As in men's, with all due respect to Federer and Djokovic and Nadal and Murray, they're the ones more likely to be in the semifinal, final, and win

tournaments. They been doing like that for years.

You know, it's really amazing what they do. In women's tennis it's changeable and different. And on top of that, we're women. It's not easy.

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