

25 February 2012



HUBER-RAYMOND/Mirza-Vesnina

6-2, 6-1

An interview with:

LIEZEL HUBER LISA RAYMOND

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. With your run at the moment, you must be feeling a bit unbeatable.

LISA RAYMOND: It feels great. You know, I think when we step on the court now we feel like the teams are going to have really come up with something and produce some really good tennis to beat us.

I think we proved that today. That's a team that we've a lot to, and I think we went out there and had a game plan and decisively won the match.

Q. You lost to them three times in a row, didn't you, before this?

LISA RAYMOND: Yes.

Q. What changed?

LIEZEL HUBER: I think if we really looked at it, the very first time we played them it was definitely -- it was the very first match we actually played together. It was on clay.

Lisa had...

LISA RAYMOND: I had a -- well, whatever. It doesn't matter.

LIEZEL HUBER: Lisa had an ankle injury and shouldn't have played the tournament; regardless, they were a tough team.

We played them again at the French. Different scoring format, long format. We didn't play a good match that day. We lost in three sets. It just wasn't the tennis that we want to play.

Then we lost to them in Australian Open, and we played very hesitant. Again, a long format.

So when looked at those three times -- obviously we were very ready to play them today

because we had lost to them three times. But there wasn't anything in those three times that was the same as today.

Today was on hardcourt, on a faster surface, and short format. So where were like, Okay, we've lost to them three times, but it was different situation. If they were going to take it from us today, then take it from us.

But we have a new day out here, and that's kind of just how we started. If they were going to beat us, they were going to have to beat us at our game plan.

Fortunately, we stuck to our game plan and it panned out at the end.

Q. Obviously with the format being receiver's choice and champions tiebreak and all that, does to help once you get on a roll, like you did in this match, once you get on a roll it's very difficult for the opposition to come back? You won nine of the last ten games.

LIEZEL HUBER: Yeah. I mean, we have our formula for it and it's working for us. I'm not going to tell you what our formula is, but pretty much we like the tiebreak. We feel it's in our favor when it gets to the tiebreak. We do lose some, but when we lose it's by a point or two points. Oh, well. Well done to the other team.

But we feel pretty confident when it comes into a tiebreak and we sharpen it up a little bit. So even if today went into the tiebreak, we would have, you know, felt pretty confident at the end. And it is a toss up really, I think, in the tiebreak. But we are for this format really.

If it comes to the slams, then we'll go back to the long one. But for the tournaments, and that's what we play through the majority of the year, we do like this tiebreak.

Q. The scoreboard makes it look relatively easy. You may say it wasn't. But to beat the second seeds two and one is a very emphatic result. Were you surprised it wasn't tighter?

LISA RAYMOND: I think, again, there was actually a couple of those games that we lost. They were deuce games, so we could've actually won those as well.

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Kind of back to your last question, I mean, even though the score can be very decisive with this format, it can change on a dime.

For us today, we concentrated every game. You know, we had our game plan and we knew that we took a couple things away from them today and it worked well and we stayed on 'em.

We concentrated well, and Liezel served out a great game in the end with an ace. Yeah, you know, it feels good to beat them that decisive.

Q. Lisa, when you got together last year I think you lost your first three matches.

LISA RAYMOND: Uh-huh.

Q. Did you think at all, I made the wrong decision here?

LISA RAYMOND: Absolutely not. If you look back at some of my most successful doubles partners and partnerships, the first few tournaments I played with those partners lost first round. I think actually Liezel had the same experience with Cara Black, who was her most successful partnership.

You know, it took us a little while to hit our stride. We worked really hard with Liezel's husband, Tony, who has been coaching us.

We spent a lot of hours on the practice court. We went to tournaments we may have really not wanted to play but we needed the match practice.

You know, we knew and just believed in each other and, in this team, in this partnership. You know, once we hit our stride, it's been great ever since.

Q. Obviously you're very experienced doubles players and you've been successful in other partnerships before. How much does your collective experience help you in facing perhaps younger opponents?

LIEZEL HUBER: Well, I mean, I don't think of them being younger or less experienced. You really don't -- when you start thinking too much of the opponent, then, you know, you just kind of lose the focus of what you have to do.

So I'll take that question but minus the opponent part. I think for us, when we step out on the court, we know we've pretty much been in every situation there could be. Whether it's a first round in a place we've never been to before or if it's a final of slam, we know we've been there.

Something that's been very nice when we walked over here, Lisa said these three

tournaments we've won, she's never actually won those. So come around next year this time, you've been in this situation.

All things aside, I think we feel confident in each other when it comes to certain situations. I think the last couple matches we tried different things just within our game plan. I think just we're going to keep working and keep adding, and hopefully we'll keep getting better.

It's nice to win and that's why we play, we want to win, but in the same breath, the next tournament we play, the first match we play, we're going to treat it like any match. The first point is going to be the most important point. We're not going to get ahead of ourselves or huge ego.

We played a good tournament. We've had a good few weeks. We're going to have to keep working hard. That's what got us here, and that's what we'll keep doing.

Q. How does it set you up for the rest of year? Where do you go now?

LISA RAYMOND: Home.

LIEZEL HUBER: Home.

LISA RAYMOND: That's first and foremost.

LIEZEL HUBER: I'm very happy to go home. We're going to Indian Wells next. We'll get there a few days before, you know, being the professionals and get there and get used to it.

It's not been a very successful tournament for me. Hopefully Lisa can help me get through those obstacles. She says it's going to be successful tournament and I'm going to like Indian Wells. It's a beautiful place.

We're going to try really hard there and try and change whatever has been holding me back in Indian Wells. I don't know what it is, but we're looking forward to playing the next match.

Q. Olympics? Does that come into your...

LIEZEL HUBER: Absolutely. No doubt.

LISA RAYMOND: We hope.

LIEZEL HUBER: No. She keeps saying, We hope. Absolutely. We're going to be playing, you know. I think it would be crazy if our country didn't select us to go as the team.

But, you know, again, it's a selection process, so you have to honor and respect that. But we will be tough competitors and contenders.

Q. Liezel, can I asked you about Venus Williams. You played with Venus in Fed Cup. How was she?

LIEZEL HUBER: She was great. I

mean, she was great spirits, she practiced very well, she struck the ball very well, she moved well. I mean, I'm surprised she's not playing this week, but doubles is different than singles.

She knows her body, and she's not ready to play. At Fed Cup she wasn't ready to compete in singles otherwise she would have played that weekend.

But she seemed injury-free. She was feeling good. Hitting the ball big.

Q. Did she say they was expecting to get back in singles soon?

LIEZEL HUBER: Obviously that's the goal. Yeah, she would love to play singles. Why wouldn't she? It's just up to her health.

It was really nice that she could play that week and it was nice that we could play. You know, she knows her health. She obviously is getting advice of how hard to push herself and what not to do. The medication takes a while it kick in, but she will play if she can play.

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