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**M. SAFIN/R.** Ginepri

7-5, 7-6

An interview with:

## **MARAT SAFIN**

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Has your impending retirement changed the way you view individual matches or tournaments? Do you put more emphasis on them, perhaps?**

MARAT SAFIN: Again?

**Q. You're retiring at the end of this year. Has that fact changed the way you play or view a match, tournament?**

MARAT SAFIN: I thought so, but it's not. At the end of day, it's not like that, because I always want to win. Always you get pretty tight in important moments, and it's difficult to push yourself to play relaxed, even though you know this is the end.

But still, you are a player deep inside, so it comes out in important moments, and you want to win no matter what. So it's not really -- you understand, but also subconsciously when you are getting into the game, it's coming the old you.

**Q. You talked about your lack of confidence days ago, but today you seemed very confident. What did you change?**

MARAT SAFIN: Well, not really confident, because I've been struggling for a couple of months. I was playing pretty good tennis actually, and I had a few matches very close. I was supposed to win them: Monte-Carlo, Rome, even though Paris, and I think somewhere else. Miami,

of course. I was serving and I was a break up in the third set.

So these kind of matches, you're trying, you're trying, and at the end of day they slip away. Also when you come into the next match you're already thinking about these moments, and doesn't really allow to you play the way you want, the way you should.

You're not so relaxed and you're getting tight in important moments. That's what happened today at 5-4 in the first set.

These kind of things don't allow you to play the way you should.

**Q. What do you think you'll be doing this time next year with competitive tennis behind you?**

MARAT SAFIN: Hopefully something interesting and different, completely different from tennis. You need some time off, because it been a long, long journey. I dedicate to tennis for 25 years of my career.

It's quite a long time, so it takes quite a while to relax and just to have a normal life and just get out of pressure and stress day by day and traveling and playing and hitting the balls every day.

**Q. On that note, you played Pete Sampras in L.A. a couple weeks ago. Did he offer any advice or encouragement about how to handle post-retirement?**

MARAT SAFIN: Well, everybody is different. Everybody has different character. He's relaxed. Agassi is different. He likes to take care of the kids. He has some kind of a school.

Courier, he has a band. McEnroe, he's commentating, and also he has a band. So everybody has a different approach. Some people get depressed and they try to come back. Some people they can't because they are overweight. Everybody has a different story. I will see.

I think it's very interesting life afterwards.

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**M Safin - 08 17 09**

**Q. What will your band be called?**

MARAT SAFIN: No, thanks God, I rather not to play anything than to play this way.

**Q. I know you went on a big mountain climbing expedition a while back. A year from now you're not gonna be playing tennis. Any other hobbies that you can elaborate on that you'll be doing to get away from the game?**

MARAT SAFIN: At least I can do the things that I want to do. I don't have to go to Australia, so I can go to South America and spend some time in Patagonia. I have plenty of time. I have plenty of things that I -- I never go to Hawaii, because we have only two months of rest. One month you have to practice, so we have nothing to do.

We cannot allow ourselves to ski, to learn something new. We can't do basically anything for 12 years.

**Q. This is a totally different topic, and you may have no opinion. I'm wondering, in recent years, have you noticed players making more use of the injury time-outs? Is this an issue for you that has bothered you? It seems sometimes there are injury time-outs when people are mainly tired. Is it unfair for an observer to wonder?**

MARAT SAFIN: Of course everybody is -- well, when you are a kid and you have these kind of things happen pretty often. When you're playing under 12, under 14, somebody has to go urgently to the toilet at 5-All in the third set, you know. (Laughter.) These kind of things happen.

I don't think it's happening right now so many times. Sometimes, a lot of people struggling with injuries. That's true. But I cannot say that maybe they're doing it on purpose.

I think we're already just so grown up and so professional, so it doesn't give you anything extra. It doesn't really make a huge difference.

**Q. It doesn't affect the mentality or the momentum?**

MARAT SAFIN: Maybe once or twice it happens, but ten out of -- one out of ten maybe, yeah. Normally, no.

**Q. Were you happy with your first serve percentage tonight? Seemed a little low, 55%?**

MARAT SAFIN: That's pretty high for me. For the last month I've been serving pretty bad, lower than 50%, so for me, 55, it's a breakthrough.

**Q. Yesterday in here your sister said that she senses that you respect her a lot more than you did a few years ago. That true? And if so, why?**

MARAT SAFIN: Well, I always respect her, but now she's a grown up and she knows what she's doing. She's playing great tennis and she's No. 1 in the world. It has nothing to do with that.

I respect her for what she achieved. Not for anything else. She's still my sister, and I still can -- I don't know what she meant.

**Q. She said that she felt when she would tell you when she was younger that she was gonna be a top 10 player that you didn't take her seriously, and she has proven to you that she was serious.**

MARAT SAFIN: Good for her. If you were looking from the other side, if I was telling her that she has to be -- she gonna be No. 1 in the world, maybe she would have so much pressure that maybe she would never achieve that.

There's the people that would say, Okay, she's next No. 1, so it's -- it would be tougher for her than if nobody expected from her to do anything.

**Q. Did you ever feel as if she was trying to be your shadow or she wanted to emulate you, to be like you, or do you feel like she was always her own person?**

MARAT SAFIN: I think she was -- first of all, we didn't spend too much time when we were young, so she had her own way. Coming from the same family we have some things pretty similar, but the rest, she was doing her job and she's completely opposite of me and she knew her way and she knew what she wanted. She had nothing to do with me at all.

**Q. You've had your motivational ups and downs in your career. What do you think keeps someone like Federer so motivated all the time?**

MARAT SAFIN: Being a fanatic.

**Q. About what?**

MARAT SAFIN: About tennis. In a nice

way. I think you have to really love what you're doing. You have to love it and you have to be a very great competitor, otherwise there is no -- I cannot understand him.

Even though he's on top of his game, and the tournaments he's got, he wanted to be the best of all-time, so he achieve. Obviously he gonna go for it and try to win a couple more. He's playing great tennis and he enjoys it on the court.

He's a player. He's a real player deep inside of him.

**Q. More than a lot of other people that are playing?**

MARAT SAFIN: Well, he has more ability than others. Maybe a lot other players. Like Murray, he's a player. You can see that he knows what he's doing on the court and he knows exactly at what moment what's he gonna do, and he reads the point pretty well.

Same. They're pretty similar to each other. Federer probably he has a nicer technique, but the rest is very similar to each other.

**Q. But Murray is young 20s and Roger is 28.**

MARAT SAFIN: That is what I'm saying. They love to play and participate in the game. It's like they enjoy the moment. They enjoy being on the court.

Some people, they have more stress and they're not really enjoying and they're not really having fun in the tough moments.

But them, they enjoy it. The tougher it is -- like Nadal, for example. Same thing.

**Q. Were you describing yourself as maybe someone that finds it sometimes stressful and doesn't enjoy those moments always?**

MARAT SAFIN: Well, I'm not -- I don't like any sports. For example, I would not play soccer. I would not play hockey. Basketball I hate. I never watch any sports on TV. It's amazing, and I'm a tennis player.

But I don't like it, the competition. For example, if I have to play soccer against neighborhood, I will play for ten minutes and then I get bored. I'm not a player.

**Q. How did you last this long at this level?**

MARAT SAFIN: It's a miracle, huh? It's a miracle.

**Q. Do you have any goals for the rest of this season other than to just enjoy it, as you said? Do you have any on-court goals?**

MARAT SAFIN: Oh, no. It's just to enjoy. Try to enjoy. We're coming to a very stressful three months. We have to travel to Asia, and then we have a lot, three or four tournaments in Europe. Gonna be pretty busy.

Basically we're playing every week, so it's gonna be pretty busy.

**Q. What's your last event?**

MARAT SAFIN: Bercy.

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