

July 9, 2008



An interview with:

LINDSAY DAVENPORT

ROSIE CREWS: Good afternoon everyone. Thank you for joining us for our World TeamTennis conference call with Lindsay Davenport. I'm Rosie Crews with World TeamTennis.

First, I want to welcome Lindsay Davenport back for her eighth season with World TeamTennis. Lindsay, thrilled to have you back.

This year she's playing with the Newport Beach Breakers. It's her 8th season. She hasn't played with the Breakers since 2003. She was with the Capitals last year. She's playing two matches this year: one tomorrow night (July 10) in Newport Beach, a home match, and then Saturday (July 12) on the road in Sacramento.

Q. Can you talk a little bit about the demands of coming back to the tour now having a 13-month old child and some of the oddities that that has entailed.

LINDSAY DAVENPORT: Yeah. You know, it's so different now than when, you know, I played for all the years previously. The demands are a lot of time obviously.

You know, I want to give a lot of time to practicing and getting ready and working out, but the reality is I have a son that's with me almost all the time. His well-being is the most important.

We've had incidences where the pilot will put on the landing sign and my son will, you know, poop through his pants. I'm sitting there holding him and we're trying to figure this all out.

I mean, crazy stuff happens when you have a baby, and traveling with him obviously makes life more interesting.

Q. How is your knee, first of all, from Wimbledon?

LINDSAY DAVENPORT: It's doing pretty good. I've still been following my doctor's orders and still have to be on limited activity. Obviously I've got a big summer ahead, so I've got to kind of be careful with it.

I want it to heal 100% before kind of delving back in full-time. So I'm kind of doing my rehab and trying to get it better. So far it's responded well, but I haven't tested it too much yet.

Q. What is the diagnosis exactly?

LINDSAY DAVENPORT: The diagnosis is just an old knee that's played too many tennis hours. That's just it. Nothing looks crazy on any of the scans.

So for the doctors that I saw at Wimbledon and my doctor here, it's basically right now about resting it and trying to get it better.

Q. At the Olympics are you playing singles and doubles? And who will be your doubles partner?

LINDSAY DAVENPORT: Yeah, I'm excited about Beijing. It's been a while since I've been back. I'm playing singles and planning to partner the doubles with Liezel Huber.

Q. Is she an American citizen, though?

LINDSAY DAVENPORT: She is.

Q. I know you were chosen by Newport Beach in the Marquee Player Draft, and I was just wondering if you had any choice where you were going to play and if you wanted to play closer to home.

LINDSAY DAVENPORT: I didn't have a choice. You know, I kind of go where they tell me to go. Obviously living here in Newport Beach it probably makes the most sense.

But having said that, I've had wonderful

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experiences over the years with many different teams. Last year I had such a great time in Sacramento. I think six weeks after my son was born I played up there, and everyone was so gracious and wonderful.

I would have been happy to play for Sacramento again. This year it worked out where Newport drafted me, so unfortunately going to Sacramento is kind of the enemy on the other team, which will be a little bit weird.

Q. I was going to ask if you had any mixed emotions playing against Sacramento.

LINDSAY DAVENPORT: I do actually. They were so great to me last year. Everyone, you know, the owner of the team, all the players, the fans were really great.

So, yeah it's, hard. But like I said, it's a business. I go where the bosses of World Team Tennis and the teams tell me to go.

Q. I was just wondering if watching all the top seeds exit Wimbledon after the first round, do you think that when you get to back to playing at either the Olympics or the US Open that you have a huge mental advantage over the younger players?

LINDSAY DAVENPORT: You know, I don't know about that. It was certainly hard at Wimbledon. I was so disappointed that of all the times of the year my knee acted up it on the grass season. I feel like grass a probably my best surface. A lot of girls don't like it. Would have been interested to see how I could have done being healthy.

I don't know what the edge is on the other girls. I don't try to pretend to know what other girls are thinking. Sometimes I feel like I have an edge because of my experience and my past success, and other times I feel like young player are really fresh and eager. Kind of depends which ones and their personalities.

Q. Are you surprised a little bit by the amount of success you've had since coming back from giving birth? Because you already won two tournaments and every tournament you play you seem to look like you fare really well. I think the record is now 21-3 since coming back. Did you expect to do so well so quickly?

LINDSAY DAVENPORT: I didn't at all. It's been pretty remarkable. I can't even put into

words exactly how kind of excited I am and a little bit shocked as well.

It was funny, because obviously over in London I was really disappointed. My husband was so funny, because I just felt like I had been practicing so much for Wimbledon and the summer, and I was obviously disappointed.

He was funny because he said, Jeez, you should be being disappointed if you had come back after having a baby and you couldn't win a match. He's like, You're playing part-time and you're ranked whatever, in the 20s somewhere, you won all these titles.

He's like, that's huge accomplishment. I guess it was kind of funny, because when people make their comebacks you never know how it goes or if you're a different player after not playing for a year and what the results will be.

So I try to look back fairly realistic and know that it's been over my expectations what I've accomplished so far. Obviously there's been a few disappointments along the way, but for the most part it's been an incredible experience.

To be able to share it now with my family is pretty crazy.

Q. Has it been almost a bit of a surprise to you that you've outlasted some of the top players in the game like Kim Clijsters and Justine Henin, basically players that both have retired and now you're still here and going to the Olympics and winning tournaments?

LINDSAY DAVENPORT: Yeah, it's impossible - if I had looked back five years ago or whatever amount of time - to think I would be the one playing at 32 and all these other players not playing.

I've said that I've been sad that Kim and Justine are no longer playing. I think they were two of the best players to have played really young. Girls do quit at such a young age, but I think that's kind of the nature of the beast now with our career.

The girls start so young, and it's hard to kind of hard to keep your head in the game for an extended period of time. I was lucky. I had a few breaks in my career. I felt like I had a really balanced life. I've always enjoyed playing and competing, and I'm lucky to say I've never hated tennis or wanted to get away from it.

So I hope some that same situation doesn't befall some of the other top players that

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are playing now that are young and kind of in the prime of their career and that they stay active.

Q. Does it help as you're getting into a big summer to have a couple events that are kind of team events with the World TeamTennis and the Olympics? Does it kind of change the focus slightly psychologically? Does that help?

LINDSAY DAVENPORT: I think so. I've always loved team events. My parents always thought I would have been better suited to a team sport. But, you know, being a participant of Fed Cup, TeamTennis, the Olympics have always been some of my best memories of my career.

For me, very rarely do I get to play an event in my hometown, Newport Beach, and especially get to play with teammates. TeamTennis has always been so much fun. A lot of times there's so much pressure and it's so serious on us. It's nice to have a competitive outlet and still have teammates and fellow players in the bench and the crowd getting into it.

I'm looking forward to it. Very rarely do you have fun on a big stage. Should be fun Thursday and Saturday night.

Q. Is Jagger to the point where he can understand anything about the fact that either you're practicing or you're playing, or does he observe at all what you're doing out there? Or can he?

LINDSAY DAVENPORT: I mean, I don't know what's on his mind. He's a funny little boy to read. He understands tennis because he's at practice with me every day for pretty much about the first hour before he goes home to nap.

He always sits there and watches. You know, he can't follow the ball because it goes a little too fast, but he'll follow the ball -- like every three shots. As he's turning his head he's a little slow.

He holds a racquet, crawls around the court, and throws balls. I think he knows the sound of tennis and all of that, but I don't know exactly if he knows it's a job and that we're in different cities. Who knows what goes on in a 13-month old mind.

Q. How is your preparation different for a World TeamTennis match versus a regular weekly tournament?

LINDSAY DAVENPORT: Well, it's different because you obviously have your

teammates around and you get to practice with them. For me, they're just coming back from I think St. Louis today, so hopefully I'll catch up with them later today or tomorrow. You have a coach around and you get input put from other players the coach about what you need to do or what your opponent is doing so well.

That's so rare in tennis. So often it's me out there and my own coach and yourself, where in a team event you get to warm up with your partner and you have to work together to make sure the end result is the team success.

Q. If somebody said to you right now you can have a gold medal at the Olympics or a US Open title, what are you going to take and why?

LINDSAY DAVENPORT: Oh, gosh you're so brutal. Um, okay, I would take either, but I think at this particular moment maybe the US Open. I feel like -- I mean, the Olympics is huge, and it was a huge turning point in my career and probably the biggest achievement for my family.

But for me, the US Open is where it all started. My first Grand Slam. Played back there in I think in 1991, which is obviously too long ago to remember. But I feel like my career started for me back there, and it would be nice to obviously have a moment of another rousing success.

I won there ten years ago, so it would be nice to kind of walk in those shoes again.

Q. The last two years you played there, '05 and '06, both quarters. You have to look back to 2000, that tremendous run that you had finally losing to the sister, after beating Serena and losing to Venus. Can you talk about your thoughts going into the US Open, and are we likely to again say this is your last? Not that you haven't said that before.

LINDSAY DAVENPORT: For the fourth time, yes it's my last (laughing). Just kidding. The memories at the US Open, there are so many that it's really hard to figure out which year what happened. Ever since they moved into Arthur Ashe Stadium I've had a lot of success and a lot of great matches, unbelievable memories, a lot of tough losses. But I loved it getting off of Armstrong and into Ashe, and I've always said that.

Who knows? I'm 32 years old and I have a son. I've had some injuries. It's been a long career. Who knows what'll happen. I'll hopefully



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let you guys know if that's the case.

Q. Looks like you're doing some World TeamTennis before the California hard court swing. What are your thoughts about the future of some of those tournaments?

LINDSAY DAVENPORT: Yeah, I mean, obviously being a Californian and being in my neck the woods I want to see all the tournaments thrive and be successful here in California. I also understand that tennis is an international sport, and to have five events in one state or whatever it seems like a lot.

You know, it's tough with the tournament in la Costa here this year. It was one of my favorite. Stanford and Carson are other favorites of mine because of their location and how great of an atmosphere it for me to play in.

I hope that something can be done to save them and keep them going and keep them being successful. I know the tour will be working towards that end goal.

Q. What do you make of those who choose to skip the Olympics to concentrate on the US Open series and the US Open. There are a few Americans that are doing that.

LINDSAY DAVENPORT: Yeah, I totally respect that. I did that in 2004. It was a conscious decision to put all my eggs into one basket and go for the US Open. I think for players, and tennis players in general, we are really lucky in our sport we have so many huge opportunities. We have four Slams a year with the Olympics every four years. We have Davis Cup and Fed Cup.

Sometimes something has to sacrifice, and I think the players that are skipping it have participated in an Olympics before. They're at different stages of their career, and at different stages there are different priorities. I totally understand the reasons.

Q. You were a series winner in '04. Is the key playing a lot, or is it just playing well at the big events?

LINDSAY DAVENPORT: I think obviously consistency will pay off and doing well, but as anyone will tell you, you got to win the titles to get all the points and have the success roll into being successful also at the US Open.

So I think the key, if I had to choose between one, would be to win, be the won standing at the end of the week with the trophy.

Q. I was just wondering why it was important for you to play in the Olympics again.

LINDSAY DAVENPORT: Well, for many reasons. I mean, one of which my father was an Olympian. '96 in Atlanta when I won the gold medal and wasn't supposed to, it was a breakthrough kind of pinnacle to my career at that time. I've always regretted skipping 2004, not because of my tennis, but just being an Olympian again.

It was my huge goal coming back from having my baby. I really wanted to be in Beijing and a part of my country and the athletes and the success hopefully that the country will share. I'm proud. I'm proud to represent tennis and be an American and hopefully try and bring some medals back.

Q. Do you have plans to have anymore kids?

LINDSAY DAVENPORT: If it was up to my husband, yeah, we would be in that stage. I have my hands full right now with one 13-month old. Absolutely we definitely want more kids. Seems to be a little bit easier for the male. My husband wants four. Right now we're happily parents to one child, and we'll see what the future holds.

Q. What's the Olympic experience like that's different from slams? Have you ever played in Beijing before?

LINDSAY DAVENPORT: I have twice at the tournament and. You know, on a side note, that will represent some challenges for athletes competing outdoors. It's extremely tough to breathe when I've been there in the past. I've heard that they've tried it clean it up. We'll see.

The difference is you're part of something so much bigger. I mean, you go play the US Open and obviously all the focus is on tennis. For me it was refreshing to go to the Olympics and see all the other athletes that don't get a chance to be in the limelight 365 days of the year with their sport really rise to the top.

It was a great moment waiting for the opening ceremonies with all the other athletes from your country. You go around and meet all these people from different walks of life, different sports, different abilities.

But yet you all have a common trait and

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bond that you share. I love the experience of meeting other athletes and seeing their success kind of unfold as the Olympics went on.

Q. What time of year did you play there? Was it summer when it was hot and the air was bad?

LINDSAY DAVENPORT: The couple times I've been there it was September, so right at the end of summer. Yeah, it's amazing, especially on a tennis court. You can see how in the beginning of the day until the end of the day the dirt that kind of piles up on the hard court. All of a sudden you're getting ball marks as the day goes on.

Q. Are you kind of excited to play for the Breakers? They're kind of having an Orange County kind of feel this year with yourself and Kaes Van't Hof who grew up in Newport Beach, and also Trevor. Is it just kind of exciting for you to have a local feel to the team?

LINDSAY DAVENPORT: It's so great. I mean obviously I'm thrilled to be playing for Newport Beach. But I think it's great we have a lot of hometown people involved. I mean, Kaes, I met when he was five or six years old. His father of was my coach for ten, twelve years or so. I even played in a tournament with him, so to be now playing with his son obviously makes me a little bit older than I want to be.

But it's fantastic. I mean, I followed Kaes' career for years. To see him now kind of trying to break through on the pro tour is so great. There are so many connections to tennis and pro tennis in Orange County. I'm really thrilled that we have a showcase for that. I'm thrilled that they're using some local products. Trevor's obviously has been part of Orange County tennis for years.

So I think it'll be fun. I hope that we get a lot of people out there and excited about the locals that are playing for them.

Q. As someone that has been playing World TeamTennis for so long, is it something to be proud of just that you're kind of a veteran and keep coming back to it?

LINDSAY DAVENPORT: I think that that shows how much I've enjoyed playing over the years. It was Kaes' dad, Robert, that got me to play first in 1993. He was such a veteran and avid player of World TeamTennis and real big believer.

It took me one season to figure out that was my kind of event and that I really enjoy the team aspect. I'm super happy and proud that there's a team in Newport Beach. I'm thrilled to be a part of it. The last time I was a part of it was 2004.

I hope to continue in some ways over the years to be a part of it, whether that's playing or whatever that capacity can be. Obviously I'm a big believer in it.

Q. I assume you watched the Williams sisters play in the Wimbledon final. How surprised were you that they're back in the final again? Do you look at them as your big targets at the Open?

LINDSAY DAVENPORT: Well, you assume a little wrong (laughs). I have a 13-month old that wakes up pretty much at 6:45 on the dot, so I got to see the first half hour and that was it. I wanted to see more, but we were crawling around and stuff.

But as the first couple days of Wimbledon were over, I was not surprised to see them back in the final. When they're focused and they're playing their best, and especially on grass, I don't think that there are a lot of girls that can challenge them.

Some of the few big names dropped out early. It seems, in my mind, to be a clear kind of path to the final for them. Everything I've read says it was the best tennis they've played against each other, which is fantastic. The ratings were up.

I think at the US Open if they stay healthy and stay eager they're always the ones to beat.

Q. Who else do you really respect, I should, say going into the Open?

LINDSAY DAVENPORT: Obviously Maria, I'm fairly confident that she'll turn everything around after Wimbledon. She obviously doesn't take well to losing early. I'm sure she's working hard. She won the Open and knows what to take there. The courts play fast and I think that suits her.

I think Ivanovic will rebound as well. Really tough after the French Open to come back at Wimbledon, so I know this summer she'll bounce back. She has a big game, so the courts will help her.

Jankovic is always a wild card player that will make everyone play. I don't think she likes the

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really fast courts as much as some of the bigger hitters. We'll see how she does handling those surfaces.

ROSIE CREWS: Thank you all for joining us.

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