

SPORTS

Venus Williams shines over sister Serena

NEW YORK (AP) - With each dynamite stroke and dominating victory, Venus Williams looks more and more like the best women's tennis player in the world.

Except, that is, when she plays against younger sibling Serena.

While Venus routinely comes out on top, as she did Saturday night in the first U.S. Open final between sisters, the quality of their matches never lives up to the significance of the occasion.

"We both know that when we come out there, it's going to be two competitors competing against each other. That's just the way it is," said Venus, who's 15 months older. "When you walk out on the court, if you're not a competitor, you've just got to go home."

"There's nothing like winning a Grand Slam."

She should know.

By beating 19-year-old Serena 6-2, 6-4 in their latest lackluster encounter, Venus capped two weeks of brilliance in which she didn't lose a set en route to her second straight Open title.

It was also her second straight Grand Slam championship, after Wimbledon. She's now won four of the last six majors, plus two gold medals at the Sydney Olympics, over the past two years.



Serena and Venus Williams stand center court Sunday at the U.S. Open in New York's Arthur Ashe Stadium. Venus defeated Serena for the U.S. Open title, the first time in the history of a major championship that two sisters squared off in the final.

In the men's final Sunday, a rejuvenated Pete Sampras was bidding to extend his record of 13 major titles against first-time Grand Slam finalist Lleyton Hewitt.

Regardless of the pecking order in the women's rankings - Venus is No. 4, behind Martina Hingis, Jennifer Capriati and Lindsay Davenport - it's clear who

really is the top player right now.

Venus is 46-5 in 2001, with six tournament titles. She's 24-1 with three championships since her shocking first-round exit at the French Open, which is played on clay, the surface least conducive to her game.

Her ranking suffers because of a system that re-

wards those who play more often.

Hingis, for example, has entered eight more tourna-

ments than Venus this year.

Venus is at the vanguard of a new style of tennis, combining pure power with an impressive athleticism that allows her to track down opponent's apparent winners.

With their forehands and flair, Venus and Serena have helped reinvigorate women's tennis. Saturday's meeting drew 23 million TV viewers, making it the most-watched program of the night.

Yet, it wasn't beautifully played, much like their previous six pro matches. Perhaps it's because it's tough to look across a net at your sibling and summon the killer instinct required in sports.

Chris Evert, who won six U.S. Open titles in the 1970s and '80s, can relate. She hated playing younger sister Jeanne.

"It certainly wasn't a Grand Slam final, that's for sure, but I felt sick. I wanted to throw up on the court. It's an awful feeling," Evert said. "You're filled with so much emotion. I didn't want to beat her, but I didn't want to lose to her. I didn't look her in the

eyes. I just wanted to get off the court."

Venus and Serena played as though they felt that way, avoiding the smiles and fist pumps they normally display. They turned their backs on each other after points, and twice avoided making contact by walking around opposite ends of the net during changeovers.

Sisters Sledgehammer combined for 55 unforced errors and lost serve a total of seven times. And it's tough to recall a major championship won by a player who conjured up only seven winners.

Far from scintillating. Lackluster, even.

"I was happy to get free points, that's for sure," Venus said. "Then, on the other hand, if I was sitting in the stands and Serena was playing someone else, I would say, 'Come on, Serena! Just do this or that.' When I'd find myself doing that, I'd lose a couple points.

"And when I lost a couple points, I wasn't sorry anymore."

Jordan promises answer soon

CHICAGO (AP) - It's impossible to decide whether Michael Jordan is too old to come back to the NBA or too young to be wrestling with a midlife crisis.

"Nobody is pushing me," he said. "I'll do what I want to do."

Jordan promises an answer two weeks from now. Just two weeks ago, he told the Chicago Sun-Times his readiness to return was six- on a scale of one to 10. Tuesday, despite losing all four of the pickup games he played that afternoon, Jordan ratcheted his rating up to seven.

Fear not- unless you're one of those who fear for Jordan on this latest adventure. Despite sprinkling in a few disclaimers, the comeback tour for the ages (some would say aged) remains squarely on track.

There is no other way to explain the grueling workouts. Jordan remains every bit as committed as he was back in April, when he first admitted his workout schedule was more than just a weight-control plan.

The people around him haven't seen Jordan take a backward step since, despite cracking two ribs in one practice, and fighting occasional back spasms and recurring tendinitis in his right knee.

The people who play against him might say the same, except they're not supposed to be talking. And the ones that have talked, despite agreeing to Jordan's request for a

news blackout, talk less about a failure of will than conditioning.

"I can still hit my jumper," he said. "I can still draw a double-team."

Lately, though, it seems like he's being triple-teamed by doubt. There was a rush of sportswriters warning Jordan not to mess with his legacy or the storybook ending he crafted in Utah three years ago. Last week, good buddy Charles Barkley pleaded with Jordan to call it off.

That would be the same Barkley who vowed just last spring to come back alongside Jordan.

"He's the greatest basketball player who ever lived and he can't compete against that," Barkley said. "There's nothing positive for him to gain by coming back. ... He's chasing his own ghost."

Jordan replied, "I'm not going to get into a war of words with Charles. He's too witty."

When he hatched this comeback plan in April, Jordan was counting on big-time help. He talked about stealing Kobe Bryant in a trade, or convincing a free-agent like Chris Webber to move to Washington. He knows better now.

Jordan will have to make up the deficit between the Wizards and the rest of the league pretty much by himself. What he needs to find out is whether two more weeks of work are enough.

CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT ADULT HIGH SCHOOL



Adult Education Programs are open to anyone 17 years of age or older who does not have a high school diploma. Classes in all academic areas required for graduation, as well as occupational classes for career training are offered tuition free to eligible students. Students enrolled in regular high schools, ages 17 and older, who are credit deficient may enroll but should contact their high school counselor for advisement and admission. Additionally the program operates a full service GED testing center. Interest students should contact a counselor at one of the following times and locations to register for classes.

REGISTRATION IS OPEN

Registration Locations

St. Louis Site

2701 E. St. Louis Avenue, Las Vegas, 89104
Monday - Thursday: 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM
Friday: 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
799-8630 Ext. 331

Rancho High School

1900 E. Owens, N. Las Vegas, NV 89030
Room 160
4:30 PM - 8:30 PM (Monday - Thursday)
799-7000 Ext. 315 (After 4:30 PM)

Garside Middle School

300 S. Torrey Pines, Las Vegas, NV 89107
Room 805
4:30 PM - 8:30 PM (Monday - Thursday)
799-4245 Ext. 208

Hayden Pointe Apartments

2125 N. Las Vegas Blvd, NLV 89030
Tuesday: 9 AM - 11 AM
5 PM - 7 PM

Saratoga East II Palms Apartments

2895 E. Charleston, Las Vegas, NV
Thursday: 9 AM - 11 AM
5 PM - 7 PM