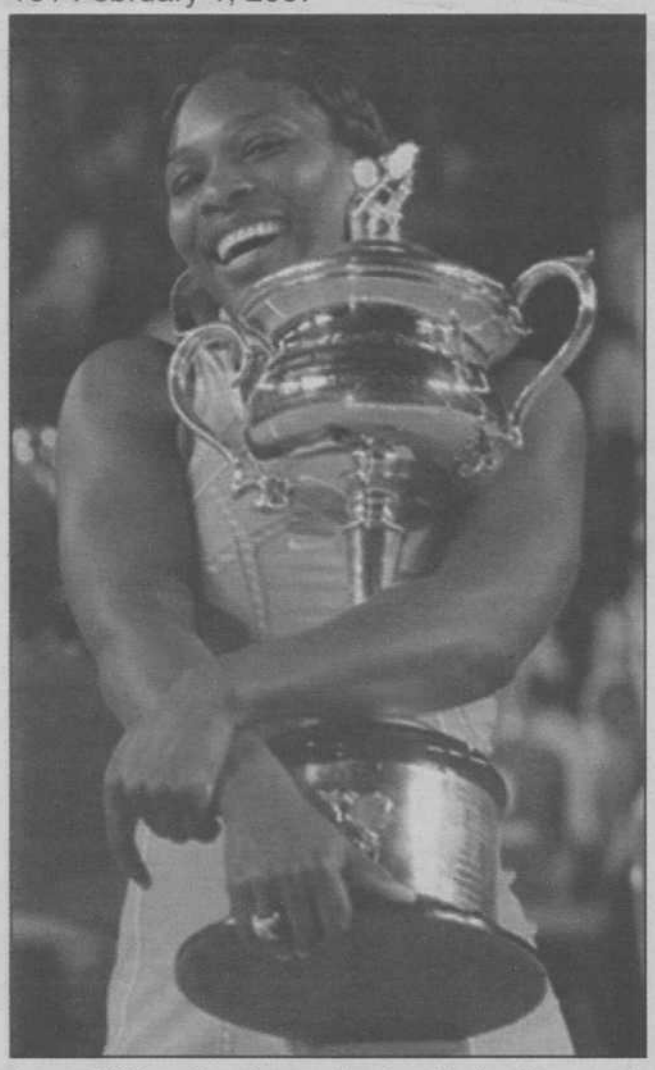
# Serena hits out at weight critics



*Serena Williams hugs her trophy after winning the women's final match against Russia's Maria Sharapova at the Australian Open tournament in Melbourne on Saturday.*

MELBOURNE - Australian Open champion Serena Williams has hit back at critics who said she was too fat going into the first Grand Slam of the season, using colorful language to defend her body shape.

After proving them wrong by winning the trophy, thrashing top seed Maria Sharapova in the final, the 25-year-old Williams said people who thought she was unfit did not understand her body.

"It was outrageous," she said of the criticism about her weight.

"I was looking in the mirror today and my waist is still 28 inches. I think it's all because I have a large bosom and a large ass. I have a large ass and it always just looks like I'm bigger than the rest of the girls," Williams said.

"I've been the same weight for I don't know how long, and I could lose 20 pounds, and I'm still going to have these knockers, and I'm going to have this ass, and that's just the way it is."

Williams lists her weight in the Women's Tennis Association official guide as 61 kilograms (135 pounds).

She said she had been fit throughout the tournament but suffered a number of health problems that affected her early matches.

"I'm definitely fit. I was fit for this tournament from day one. I ran into a lot of bumps. I had the worst blisters you can imagine. I got sick. I had stomach problems," she said.

Serena Williams reaped the benefits of her astounding run to the Australian Open title at the weekend when she rocketed up 67 spots in the WTA rankings to 14th.

Williams's ranking took a nosedive over the past year after injury curtailed her schedule to just four tournaments in 2006 and she arrived in Melbourne ranked 81st.

# Winning streak grows to seven

SAN DIEGO (AP) - Tiger Woods resumed his improbable pursuit of Byron Nelson with a result that was all too predictable. Woods caught up to the pack with an eagle, buried the hopes of his final challenger with a birdie and closed with a 6-under 66 on Sunday to win the Buick Invitational for his seventh consecutive PGA Tour victory, the second-longest streak in history.

Nelson set the record in 1945 with 11 in a row, a record long thought to be out of reach.

But the way Woods is playing — no worse than second in stroke play anywhere in the world since July — that might no longer be the case.

Woods won six in a row in 2000, a streak that Phil Mickelson stopped at Torrey Pines. But against a cast of challengers short on experience and victories, the world's No. 1 player met little resistance in winning the Buick Invitational for the third straight year.

Woods doesn't consider this a true winning streak because he lost once in Europe and twice in Asia since September. But it still counts in the PGA Tour record books.

Woods' streak resumed after a nearly four-month break from the PGA Tour, when he won by eight shots in the American Express Championship outside London on Oct. 1. He skipped the season-ending Tour Championship and the season-opening Mercedes-Benz Championship, then learned that his wife was pregnant for the first time.

One thing that hasn't changed is his golf.

The PGA Tour winning streak dates to his victory in the British Open last July, and Woods is now 124-under par during that stretch.

Woods was headed for the Dubai Desert Classic on Sunday night, and he was not sure if would play his next PGA Tour event at the Nissan Open on Feb. 15 in Los Angeles or the Accenture Match Play Championship in Arizona a week later.

Woods finished his recent triumph at 15-under 273 for his 55th career victory, the fifth time he has started a new season with a trophy.

"To somehow sneak out with the win is a cool feeling," Woods said.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