

Serena Charges Past Henin And Into The Semis
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By Craig Gabriel

MIAMI: The crowds had rolled in. Sitting under the hazy sunshine they knew it was the highlight match of the day. Serena Williams against Justine Henin for a place in the semifinals of the Sony Ericsson Open. Not too many matches get bigger than this encounter.

This was a repeat of last year's final when Serena came back from match points down to score a monumental win and her fourth crown at the Crandon Park Tennis Center. In just 79 minutes Serena charged through to win 6-2, 6-0.

The match ended on the third match point when Henin hit her fifth double fault. It was the most one sided result she has ever had against the Belgian and it snapped a three match losing streak against her.

The result has allowed Serena to sneak ahead in their head-to-head series to 7-6.

"The first set was 42 or 43 minutes and usually with a 6-2 score line it's 25 minutes," said Serena. "We definitely had a lot of long deuce games and a lot of games (but) was I surprised at how easy? No, it was just ... it's wasn't easy. It was just the fact of me making the right shots at the right time."

Serena had cut down on her error rate and she said that she "has been practicing like a champ". She said that in this match she finally started to play the way she has been playing in practice.

The Sony Ericsson Open has been a wonderful hunting ground for her. She feels as comfortable here as she does at Wimbledon where she likes the grass courts.

"I don't know why I do well here," she said with a grin. "Maybe it's something in the water."

She says that she has been practicing hard and a lot more but this tournament is not her sole goal. Serena says her goal is for the future. Her goal is long term, to have less injuries and to remain focused.

"I have been saying tennis is my priority and I feel that it is. Hopefully my results will finally start to show what I've been practicing and working on so diligently," said Serena.

In the semifinals she will take on Svetlana Kuznetsova or sister Venus. At the time of writing that match had not started. If it is Venus, the last time they played was last month in Indian in the semis there and Serena won.

"Obviously I want her to win, I clearly want her to win, she's my sister," said Serena. "I want her to do well, but I'll have to deal with that when it comes."