

Serena Into The Last Eight At Olympic
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BEIJING: Serena Williams had to pull out all stops in her third round match at the Olympic Games here in Beijing. She was playing Alize Cornet from France who is a rising young player and Serena knew not to take the 18 year old lightly.

This was their third meeting but only the second time they had actually played each other and all matches were this year. Serena beat her in Charleston but then had to withdraw against her in Rome.

On this occasion Serena had to rally back from a set down to score a 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 victory in one hour 54 minutes.

"I was just making so many errors, and I wasn't practicing like that at all," said Serena. "It came to a point, I think I hit a backhand in the net, and I had just had enough. Before I knew it, I just got even angrier.

"(But then) I started serving better. I just wasn't getting enough first serves in. I think I started just playing more smart out there, and I think that was able to help me out, keep more balls in play. The fact that I'm really fit was able to help out, as well."

Being fit is certainly a major plus. After a day when the weather conditions took a slight turn for the better that resulted in a slight drop in the humidity levels and with that the temperatures, things moved back up again and day four of the tennis event was once again oppressive.

This is the first day when play has started at 4pm. There are no more morning sessions; if you remember Serena played her previous match at 10.30am which is a bit unusual for such a major name. However she said it was not something that troubled her. But then playing later in the day is not something that frustrates her either and one would think that the conditions might be a bit better under a night sky.

In her next match she will take on the fifth seed Russia's Elena Dementieva and she's ready. They played in Moscow last year and Dementieva won on that occasion by playing an "unbelievable" match.

"I mean, I would hit a net cord, it would barely go over the net, she would run it down. Hopefully I won't have to play that Dementieva. But if so, I'll be ready," said Serena.

Two aspects of these Olympic Games have stood out for Serena. One is to do with the crowd and the other is the staging of the Games.

The crowd play every point and every stroke of a rally. They feel so bad for a player who hits a fault and then get overwhelmed when a rally is being played.

"I noticed that today in the long rallies, they were living and dying with each point," said Serena with a laugh. "I thought it was kind of funny. It's good, because usually I get so angry, like, be quiet.

"Actually, I was playing TeamTennis this year, and the crowds were so loud. I didn't even know it would be a good warm up for this, but it was a great warm up for this. Now it actually makes me get excited they're so into the point. It's actually kind of cool. I like it."

She has certainly been impressed with how the organizers have hosted the 29th Olympiad. Serena has maintained throughout the time here that it has been impressive but she said it again. She had made the comment about that to someone on the U.S. team.

Serena said: "Beijing is doing a fantastic job with the Olympics. I'm really impressed. I'm glad that I'm able to be here and experience it 'cause it makes it that much more better."