



Underachieving Williams Not Likely to Change

As we get closer to the 2009 Rogers Cup in Toronto, some questions beg to be answered about Serena Williams:

1. Will Serena show up (she has said at this point she'll be there)?
2. If she does show up what kind of effort will she give?
3. What are the chances she'll be in top form and win the tournament?

Serena Williams is a fantastic tennis player, but she is also the biggest underachiever in sports history!

Two Sunday's ago at the annual ESPY awards in Los Angeles Serena won award after award and was on top of the world. Serena was once again recognized as one of the top athletes this decade and had the privilege of handing out hardware to many of the top sporting icons across the universe. It was a glamorous event and Serena was definitely in her element – she received more camera time than any other athlete and it wasn't even close!

Is there anybody out there who questions Serena's desire to be the best tennis player ever?

Yes, I do!

Serena loves her life outside of tennis and who can blame her. She is a celebrity with money to burn. She can ride off into the sunset and never hit another tennis ball as long as she lives! But is this the road she should take? Serena has never talked about retiring – but in my mind she is only a part-time player!

Should we be happy for her and let her continue on this path of mediocrity? She loves the glamour life and really has nobody close to her in terms of talent so there is no need to really dedicate herself to her sport. She is so good that she can continue to win major championships without really working for them. Is this acceptable or should someone (coach, parent, agent or sibling) be pushing her for more?

In addition to talking about Roger Federer and his record-breaking 15th Grand Slam title, we should also be celebrating Serena Williams and her assault on Margaret Court's record. But unfortunately, Serena will never break Court's record or ever get within striking distance. Serena needs a kick in the butt to change this laissez faire attitude.

The problem is, even after knocking off her sister in the Wimbledon singles final, Serena isn't anywhere close to Court's 24 Grand Slam singles titles because she is only a 4 tournament a year player. To win the majors you have to win the lesser events on a weekly basis – as is the case with Tiger Woods!

At age 27 — the same age as Federer — Serena owns just half as many major titles (11) as Steffi Graf, the greatest women's player of all time. That's a terrible shame – she should have 16-20 Grand Slams by now, but she doesn't because she's not motivated to do more. A slimmer, trimmer Serena would have averaged 3 majors a year – conservatively, let's say 2 a season over a 15 year career and she's the leader by a landslide.

With a proper trainer, a dietician, a sports psychologist and the desire of Tiger Woods, Serena would go down as the best female tennis player of all time – no doubt, end of story!!

Serena's athletic talents are unmatched – she is by far the best tennis player in the world today – the problem is she is not motivated to do more because getting to 25 major titles is not a goal of the younger Williams sister.

With a reduction in glut, a little less butt and a smidgen more guts, Serena Williams would easily be the most recognized female athlete ever. Yes, she is that good. There are no weaknesses except for a frame that is 40 pounds overweight. Today's top athletes are in prime physical condition – Tiger Woods, Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal, Sidney Crosby, and Lance Armstrong. It just proves how good Serena Williams really is because she is winning major championships with a handicap – she is chunky!

Serena can't play her best tennis week-in-and-week-out because her physical condition is poor. A major championship consists of 7 grueling matches over a 14 day period – with many rain delays in New York, Paris, Melbourne and London this often means playing back-to-back matches with no recovery time – and this has often been too much for Serena to conquer with her poor fitness!

You can call me unfair. You can even scream that I'm sexist. But just know, before you come knocking on my door, that this is just my opinion.

Serena is to Women's tennis what Roger is to Men's tennis except for one thing: Serena's peers are miles behind, while Roger's competitors are in the rear view mirror! Serena doesn't have an equal like Roger Federer has Rafael Nadal!



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But there's an inescapable truth about Serena Williams: She's an underachiever – hard to say after winning 11 major championships – and, in my opinion, definitely the biggest underachiever in the history of sports. I dare you to find anyone more deserving of this unwanted title!

And all the people making excuses for Serena and rationalizing her failure to totally dominate women's tennis are the very people uninterested in seeing women rise to a level of equality with men.

Serena Williams has all the ingredients to be Michael Jordan, Jim Brown and Muhammad Ali rolled into one made-for-TV package. She is quite possibly the most gifted female athlete in our lifetime. When you watch her up close you realize how dominant she can be and how she should be dominating the game like nobody, including Graff and Court, in the 100 plus years of the sport.

Unfortunately for all of us, she lacks the courage and desire to fulfill her destiny. Again, very tough to say considering all of her success but it is so true!

Martina Navratilova was in a similar position in the 70s and 80s – then she got her act together, lost 30 pounds and totally dominated women's tennis for 10 years. Weight is a major issue for these super-star athletes and if you want to be considered the best in your sport for many moons you must look the part and right now Serena's shape is more like a pear than an hour-glass.

She'd rather eat; half-ass her way through non-major tournaments and complain she's not getting the respect her 11-major-championships résumé demands.

She complains about being ranked No. 2 in the world when she's not bitching on Twitter or on her blog about new rules that forbid Wimbledon players from eating in the locker room. Isn't it funny how she was the only one to find this rule 'ridiculous?'

And you probably think I don't like Serena. You're wrong. I love watching her dominate the sport – I want her to get to 25 majors or even 30. She's the main reason I watch women's tennis. She's fascinating. Her power and skill are breathtaking.

Serena simply isn't obsessed with tennis perfection. She seems to play the game solely because she's good at it. Not because she has a burning desire to be the best there ever was. That is her choice!

And it's my right to rip her for choosing to be a celebrity tennis player rather than a single-minded tennis assassin.

If she chose the latter, it would be front-page news every time she lost a tournament. She'd complete the Serena Slam — winning all four majors — every other year. She'd be the most popular and powerful female athlete of all time.

Think about it. At 5-foot-9, 145 pounds, Serena would be unstoppable on the court, on the cover of every magazine still in circulation and downloaded on the Internet three times more often than Anna Kournikova.

Serena has limitless potential. Tennis is the platform that could open doors for her and other women. Her parents raised her to speak her mind. She's bright.

She could break the glass ceiling for female athletes and become the transcendent superstar who connects globally. She could join Oprah and Madonna. Serena could be an impossible-to-ignore advocate for any position she supported.

Serena's greatest feat, when it's all said and done, might be avoiding establishing herself as the greatest tennis player of all time.

And this is a colossal waste of talent – a real shame in my opinion!!

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