

Some you Win and Some you Lose

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Anatomy of Disappointment

Svetlana Kuznetsova and Anna Chakvetadze set a new standard for a women's semi final match at the U.S. Open. Unfortunately, it was as low as two top players can probably go at this point in a major tournament on the pro tour.

In the beginning, it was all about Svetlana and her inability to strike the ball cleanly, generating 21 unforced errors as opposed to only 6 winners. In the process, Kuznetsova yielded eight break point opportunities as compared to the two that Chakvetadze offered in return. The 20 year old Anna capitalized on four of those points, while Svetlana won her two chances. Chakvetadze eventually took the first set 6/3.

The second and third sets were the mirror opposite image with Svetlana's early disinterested play being flawlessly imitated by her fellow Russian. In sets 2 and 3, Anna hit a measly 11 winners versus 37 unforced errors presenting Svetlana with nine break chances. The 22 year old Moscovite took advantage six times of these gracious overtures by her opponent.

The final score of 3/6, 6/1, 6/1 in favour of the number four seed Kuznetsova might have lulled those reading the box score to assume this was a competitive match. In truth, both players treated the blue painted playing surface of Arthur Ashe stadium as if it were a deep pool of water and they were terrified of diving in.

The chair umpire should have been equipped with a pith helmet, a whistle and binoculars to scour her line of vision for which player would tank first. There was no offence and volleys occurred only when absolutely necessary as evidenced by the statistics.

In the first set it was 3 steps forward in anticipation of a put away for Svetlana, 1 for Anna. The second set was 5 for Kuznetsova, 1 for Chakvetadze. In the less than stimulating deciding set, the count was 5 versus 4 respectively. In playing 148 points, the approaches by both players combined for a grand total of 19 net volley attempts against a required equal number of passing shot attempts.

Spectators waiting to see these players give it the old college try were to be denied today. No fighting spirit was exhibited by either contender. In truth, both players had the body language of spent warriors from the outset and seemed passively indifferent as to the eventual result on this supposedly rare occasion, a Grand Slam semi final meeting.