

*Maria
Sharapova*



My Drift

Title: Maria Sharapova

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A friend emailed me saying I have written articles about football, basketball, baseball, the Olympics, horse racing, golf, bowling, pool and even ping pong, but nothing about tennis. He is a big tennis fan and was wondering what I have against tennis? Well, I played a little tennis in my younger years and followed it fairly close when America had good tennis players. I liked Jimmy Connors (in the 1970s and 80s), John McEnroe (in the 1980s), Pete Sampras (in the 1990s), and Chris Evert (in the 1970s and 80s). Now days, almost all of the good players are from foreign countries. That is except for Serena Williams who I never liked. In my humble opinion, she is fat, arrogant, and those outfits she wears (when they let her) are hideous.



Serena Williams - I Rest My Case!!



So anyway, last week I turned on the TV and couldn't find any good sports to watch until I tried ESPN2 and there was Maria Sharapova and Caroline Wozniacki (the defending champion) playing each other in the Australian Open. Both ladies are very attractive and good tennis players. I decided to watch and write about the winner. It was an exciting match, but in the end, Sharapova beat Wozniacki 6-4, 4-6, 6-3.



Maria Sharapova (Russia)



Caroline Wozniacki (Denmark)

Early Years



Nyagan, Siberia, Russia

Born on April 19, 1987, Sharapova is the daughter of Yuri and Yelena Sharapova. Her father worked in the construction industry, and both parents were avid athletes. They had met in Gomel, a city in the Ukraine that was near the Chernobyl nuclear reactor, the site of the world's worst nuclear accident in April 1986, just a year before Sharapova was born. When her mother became pregnant, she and Yuri decided to move east to escape the potentially damaging radioactive effects of the accident. They settled in Nyagan, Siberia, where Sharapova was born. Yuri found work in the Siberian oilfields, but the climate was too cold for them. They saved their money for four years and finally were able to move to Sochi, a pleasant resort town on the Black Sea in southern Russia.

Sharapova's parents liked to play tennis, and they gave her a racket as a toddler and began teaching her how to hit the ball. Because they could not afford a genuine child-size racket, they cut off the handle of an adult one for her to master instead. She proved a quick learner, and when she was six years old, they traveled to Moscow for a youth tennis clinic. One of the celebrity athletes at the event was Czech-born Martina Navratilova, a nine-time women's singles winner at Wimbledon. Navratilova

was impressed by Sharapova's skills and suggested to the parents that they contact the Nick Bollettieri Tennis Academy in Bradenton, Florida. This was a tennis-focused boarding school that had trained several future champions, including Andre Agassi, Pete Sampras, and Monica Seles.



Yuri and Maria

back to the Bollettieri Academy, and she proved herself so well on a tryout that she was given a full scholarship to the \$46,000-a-year school. The Academy was part of the International Management Group (IMG), a talent agency that handled the careers of entertainers and athletes, and its scouts recognized Sharapova's potential for future stardom.



Yelena, Maria, and Yuri

Around this same time, Yelena Sharapova finally received her visa and was able to join her husband and daughter, ending a two-year separation. But when Maria entered the Bollettieri Academy, she had to live in its boarding school. She later hinted in interviews that it was a tough, competitive atmosphere, and she was sometimes the target of bullying by the older girls. Her

days included regular academic classes and as many as six hours a day on the tennis courts in practice sessions. At the age of eleven, she signed on with coach Robert Lansdorp, who had guided the careers of Sampras as well as Tracy Austin, a two-time U.S. Open winner, and Lindsay Davenport, who won three Grand Slam events between 1998 and 2000. Sharapova also signed with IMG around this time, and this paved the way for her first deal with Nike.

Sharapova won her first junior championship title at the age of thirteen. Two years later, she made it to the finals of the Australian Open Junior championship, which was her best ranking in tennis to date.



Professional Career

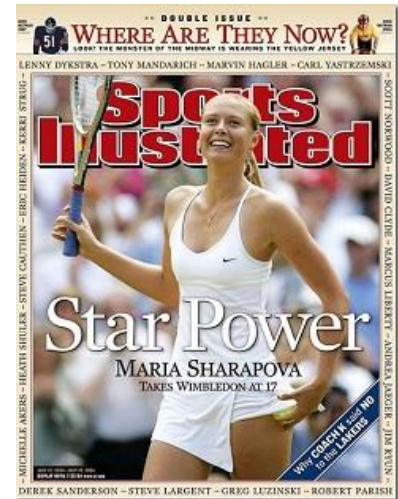
Sharapova made her professional debut in 2001 on her 14th birthday and played her first WTA tournament at the Pacific Life Open in 2002, winning a match before losing to Monica Seles. Due to restrictions on how many professional events she could play, Sharapova went to hone her game in junior tournaments, where she reached the finals of the girls' singles events at the Australian Open and Wimbledon in 2002. She was the youngest girl ever to reach the final of the Australian Open junior championship at 14 years and 9 months.

Sharapova reached No. 6 in the ITF junior world singles ranking on October 21, 2002. In all, she won three junior singles tournaments and was runner-up at five, including two junior Grand Slam events. Her win-loss record in junior competition was 47–9. Her best results in the Junior Grand Slam tournaments were the finals of the 2002 Australian Open, finals of the 2002 Wimbledon Championships, third round of the 2002 French Open, and second round of the 2001 US Open.

Makes tennis history

In 2003, Sharapova made her first professional appearance at Wimbledon, but lost in an early round to Svetlana Kuznetsova, another emerging Russian player. When Sharapova began at Wimbledon in 2004, she was "seeded" or ranked by the Wimbledon executive committee as thirteenth among women players in the world. This meant that there were twelve other players with more wins, more experience, or considered to be better than Maria on the court, but she steadily advanced through

the quarterfinals and semifinals. She became the first Russian tennis player to reach a Wimbledon final since 1974, when a woman named Olga Morosova did so. She was to face two-time Wimbledon champion Serena Williams for the championship. Sharapova won the match and at seventeen years and two months, she became the third youngest winner in the history of Wimbledon, which dated back to 1877.



This win marked the first time since 1999 that neither Williams sister was holding a Grand Slam singles title. Sports Illustrated put Sharapova on its July 19, 2004 cover, and a week later featured a lengthy article on her rise to the top of her game. Writer L. Jon Wertheim called her "ebullient, bilingual and hyperconfident—not to mention tall, blonde and beautiful," and asserted she "had suddenly become, as Martina Navratilova put it, 'the best thing that could have happened' to women's tennis!"

Titles and Number 1 World Rankings

Maria Sharapova has won 36 singles titles and five Grand Slam titles (so far)—two at the French Open (2012 and 2014) and one each at the Australian Open (2008), Wimbledon (2004), and US Open (2006)—rank third among active players, behind Serena and Venus Williams. She won the year-ending WTA Finals in her debut in 2004 and has also won three doubles titles.

She has been ranked world No. 1 in singles by the WTA on five separate occasions, for a total of 21 weeks. She is one of ten women, and the only Russian, to hold the career Grand Slam. She is also an Olympic medalist, having won silver in women's singles at the 2012 Summer Olympics in London.

At age 31, Maria is still playing.

Recent Tennis Playing Pictures

Maria Sharapova is believed to be the most photographed tennis player (men or women) ever.



Yes, Maria Sharapova is a Screamer

Swimsuit Pictures

At 6 feet 2 inches tall and 130 pounds, Maria looks good in a swimsuit and has been on multiple magazine covers.



Well, I agree with that assessment – She does look pretty good in a swimsuit!

Failed Drug Test

On March 7, 2016, Sharapova revealed that she had failed a drug test at the 2016 Australian Open, which she described as the result of an oversight. Sharapova admitted to testing positive for meldonium, an anti-ischemic drug usually prescribed for heart conditions that was added to the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA)'s banned substances list on January 1, 2016. Sharapova was provisionally suspended by the International Tennis Federation (ITF) from playing tennis effective from March 12, 2016 for two years.

She later released a statement regarding the test explaining her use of the medicine: I received a letter from the ITF that I failed a drugs test at the Australian Open. I take full responsibility for it. For the past ten years I have been given a medicine

called mildronate by my family doctor and a few days ago after I received the ITF letter, I found out that it also has another name of meldonium which I did not know. It is very important for you to understand that this medicine was not on WADA's banned list and I had legally been taking the medicine for the past ten years. But on January 1st, 2016, the rules changed and meldonium became a prohibited substance, which I had not known. I was given this medicine by my doctor to treat a magnesium deficiency, an irregular EKG and a family history of diabetes.

As a result of the failed drug test, Nike and TAG Heuer suspended their relationships with Sharapova, while Porsche postponed promotional work. Racquet manufacturer HEAD stood by Sharapova, saying, "We look forward to working with her", and announced that they intended to extend their contract. They also suggested that WADA should prove scientifically why the drug should be banned.

Following a hearing on 7 and 8 September 2016, the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) panel found that Sharapova was not entirely responsible for taking the drug meldonium (since her Russian doctor had prescribed it for 10 years) and they reduced the sanction imposed from 24 months to 15 months.

Women Tennis Players Who Grunt, Scream and Shriek

The "grunt-o-meter" is a hand-held device that's supposed to keep female tennis players in check when it comes to excessive grunting and shrieking on the court. However, the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) has come out and stated that there is no rule against grunting and shrieking. So, the current generation of women's tennis players will not be affected by the "grunt-o-meter."

The 5 Loudest Grunters and Shriekers in Women's Tennis today are:

5. Angelique Kerber (Grunt-O-Meter Score 7): Sounds like she's getting ready to throw up every time she grunts.

4. Caroline Wozniacki (Grunt-O-Meter Score 8): Her unique two-part grunt sets her apart from the rest of the pack.

3. Serena Williams (Grunt-O-Meter Score 10): Serena's patented grunts belong in the WWE.

2. Victoria Azarenka (Grunt-O-Meter Score 11): Azarenka sounds like Ric Flair whenever she hits a tennis ball.

1. Maria Sharapova (Grunt-O-Meter Score 18): When it comes to tennis and screaming, no one else comes close to Maria Sharapova.

Yes, our gal Maria is a great screamer!!

The first women tennis grunter was Monica Seles who could certainly grunt and make loud noises on serving or playing other shots. Monica played in the 1990s before the “grunt-o-meter” but most tennis experts think she would give Maria a run for her money for being the loudest grunter/screamer.

Why do the best women tennis players grunt and scream every time they hit the ball? Pay attention now – you are about to learn a little known tennis secret! Most people think grunting and making loud noises allows them to concentrate better and hit the ball harder. That’s not the reason at all. A pro tennis player can tell how hard their opponent hits the ball by the sound coming from the racket at impact. Some can even tell what spin was put on the ball by the sound coming from the racket. Well, are you getting the idea here? When a player grunts or screams, the opponent can’t hear anything but the grunts and screams. This could give the noise maker a slight advantage. Many tennis officials and non-grunters want loud noises outlawed.

Some More Personal Information and Interesting Facts

Net Worth - Sharapova has an estimated net worth of \$135 million.

Nickname - 'The Siberian Siren'

Russian Citizenship – Maria Sharapova, the highest paid female athlete in the world, will never give up her Russian nationality to become a U.S. citizen, despite living here since she just 7 years old. She says the "rich culture" of Russia helped shape her and gave her a competitive edge.

Houses – Sharapova owns houses in California and Florida.



Manhattan Beach, California.



Bradenton, Florida

Is Maria Sharapova Married? No, she has never been married and has no kids. However, she has been engaged multiple times and had many boyfriends. But, don't get any bright ideas – I'm pretty sure she hangs out with a different circle of people than me and most of my readers.

What City does Sharapova like the best? Outside of Russia and the United States, she just loves London.

Hobbies and Interests? Modeling, Singing, Dancing, Watching Movies, Sleeping.

Favorite Color - Pink, Yellow.

What does Sharapova's Signature tell me? Since I'm a Certified Handwriting Expert, it tells me a few things.

A stylized, cursive handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long, sweeping tail.

- Objective and a little introverted.
- She is a sensuous person who likes rich foods.
- Doesn't forget things that have happened to her.
- She is smart and learns things quickly.
- She has a lot of pride in her accomplishments.
- Desires refinement and has writing talent.

Favorite Food - She enjoys Russian and Thai food.

Charity and Causes - Maria Sharapova Foundation Inc. is committed to helping children around the world achieve their dreams. She has also donated a lot of money to Chernobyl-related projects.



Sugarpova is a premium candy line that reflects the fun, fashionable, sweet side of international tennis sensation Maria Sharapova. A long-time candy lover with a surprising sweet tooth, Maria has created her own candy business to offer an accessible bit of luxury interpreting classic candies in her own signature style.

Maria Sharapova was the flag bearer of the Russian team at the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games in London (2012).



It's been some time now since Maria Sharapova made news for something positive, though *Unstoppable* may change that. Penned with the help of journalist Rich Cohen and released in 2017, Sharapova's book is an illuminating account of, as the subtitle has it, her life so far. The memoir begins and ends with its author's experience of the doping debacle. *Unstoppable* is about everything that made Sharapova the kind of unflappable competitor who wouldn't let a 15-month service interruption, or the very vocal disapproval of her peers, come between her and her ambitions. This book is about a controversial champion, a portrait of the athlete, and a uncommonly driven young woman.



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