

One Year Later Playing with Serena



Novak Djokovic and Serena Williams getting ready to have fun with the media at Key Biscayne.

The last time I was at the Ritz Carlton Key Biscayne, I was practically carried out on the shoulders of shocked spectators who had just watched me hit a trick shot over the #1 player in the world. So, why would I want to go back and ruin my reputation and reduce my status to mere mortal?

It was like asking a Blackjack dealer for one more card after you hit 21. I already had the luckiest event of my life happen a year earlier, so part of me didn't even want to go back for more. But when organizers of a fundraiser on Key Biscayne asked me if I wanted to play a few points with the pros, I couldn't say no. I was one of about a dozen members of the media given the opportunity.

The previous year I hit a lucky shot over Novak Djokovic and the video went viral and the news story went world-wide. (Click on "Ray Collins Trick Shot" and you'll see it.)

On this day, I was to play with Serena Williams against Djokovic and Ana Ivanovic—all have been, or still are, #1 in the world. (Serena and Novak went on to win the Sony Open across the street days later.)

After Serena and I were introduced, her first concern was playing the deuce-side of the court. Frankly, I was surprised she really cared that much during this small-time exhibition. Luckily, I prefer the ad-side, but I would have given her either side she wanted. Chivalrous? No, just in awe of what she's accomplished!

Djokovic served me the ball and the point was in play. They were being gentle with me, and I didn't have the nerve to haul



Ray Collins and Ana Ivanovic

One year after hitting the trick-shot seen around the world against **Novak Djokovic**, *Totally Tennis* Columnist and "Voice" of the Sarasota Open and the **One by One Totally Tennis Exhibition Series**, **Ray Collins** went back to Key Biscayne for another try. Ray was paired with **Serena Williams** and played a few points against **Djokovic** and **Ana Ivanovic**. To see the actual points, including last year's, click on **Ray Collins Serena Williams Novak Djokovic**.

off and hit my hardest down the middle. Chances are they would have gotten it, but I also didn't want the point to end too soon. I would like it to last as long as they would let it continue!

Eventually I hit a lucky lob off the baseline causing it to skip and jam Djokovic, who put up a lob that sailed wide.

The next two points didn't go as well. I tried to lob Ivanovic on my return, but it went wide. Djokovic quickly served me a third point, and a good rally ensued.

As we hit back and forth, Serena said, "Come in, Ray," meaning, "get your rear up to the net like any good doubles player!" I was so pleasantly distracted by her learning my name that I didn't follow instructions: Lovely Ana hit a ball at my feet as I stood, flat-footed, at the service line.



Ray Collins and Serena Williams vs Ana Ivanovic and Novak Djokovic

My fifteen minutes of fame were up before they even started. I told Serena I should have followed her advice, she laughed, I laughed less, we high-fived and I returned to my life.

(I was standing near Djokovic later in the event, and was tempted to ask him if he recalled the behind-the-back shot from the previous year, but part of me didn't want to find out he had forgotten.)

I'm hoping to go back next year again and improve on 2014, but I doubt I'll ever top 2013.

The sequels are never as good.



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