



MARTINA: PLEASE! ZIP IT UP

Bill? Bill McAtee? Are you still up there in the booth?

We're approaching the end of the opening set between Justine Henin and Nadia Petrova, and I haven't heard from McAtee in some time. Of course, how could anyone hear from him? Martina Navratilova was in the midst of one of her frequent and annoying non-stop monologues.

At one point I wanted to scream, "For God's sake, Martina. We love you. But zip it up for two minutes. Please!"

Every point turns into some arcane tennis lesson that makes marginal sense to those of who play the game and probably absolutely no sense to those fans who don't play but who are tuned in because they want to see this match. And everything is an instant critique with her.

I suppose none of this should have surprised me. Navratilova for decades has been one of the most talkative, long-winded and garrulous people in tennis. She has an opinion on everything and those opinions aren't limited to a sentence or two. Everything she says turns into War and Peace.

It wouldn't be so bad if Martina would say what she has to say and then clam up before the next point is played, but no such luck. She's going to drone on and on when we'd all just like to have some quiet moments while the next point is played out. And half the time I can't understand the point she's trying to make.

With her highly successful career in tennis, she could be a very good analyst, but she needs to, for example, sit down and listen to John McEnroe or Patrick McEnroe -- listen to how they understand the use of the word "economy" in commenting. They pick their spots and they don't, as Navratilova does, try to do an instant critique on every shot in the match.

OK. The first set is over and Henin is on the way to the semis. I think I'll go back to watching this match. But I'm turning down the sound. No offense, Bill. You do an absolutely solid job on the play by play. But my head is spinning with the constant blah, blah, blah coming from Navratilova. IT'S DRIVING ME NUTS.

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