

SPORTS

Serena matches her easiest win over Venus in U.S. Open rout

By BRIAN MAHONEY
AP Sports Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Serena Williams kept booming big shots for winners, never allowing herself to feel sorry for the overmatched player on the other side.

So what if it happened to be her big sister?

The Williams sisters, long ago in careers that have spanned 20 years and 30 meetings as professionals, learned they had to view each other only as opponents — and in Serena's eyes, Venus is the best one she's ever played.

"Even though it's difficult, especially for me," Serena said, "we just do the best that we

can."

On Friday, it was perhaps the best she's ever done against Venus.

Serena equaled her most-lopsided victory against her sister with a 6-1, 6-2 rout in the third round of the U.S. Open.

Serena shook off an early ankle injury to win seven straight games and seize control in perhaps her most dominant performance since giving birth to her daughter a year ago Saturday.

The sisters' earliest meeting in a Grand Slam tournament in 20 years was over early, with Venus unable to do anything to blunt Serena's power, even after the fans that were part of Friday's single-day record crowd of 70,162 tried desperately to get behind her with pleas of "Come on, Venus!" early in the

second set.

"I think it's by far the best match I ever played against her in forever," Serena said of the match that lasted just 1 hour, 12 minutes. "But I don't know about ever, ever. It probably was. I played much better tonight than I have since I started this journey on my way back."

They hadn't played this early in a Grand Slam since Venus won in the second round of the 1998 Australian Open in their first meeting as pros, and only once over the next two decades had either won so decisively. Serena won by the same score in a semifinal victory in Charleston, South Carolina, in 2013.

"I think it's the best match she's ever played against me," Venus said. "I don't think I did a lot wrong. But she just did ev-

erything right."

Serena, the No. 17 seed, will face Kaia Kanepi of Estonia, who knocked out top-ranked Simona Halep in the first round.

Serena, who turns 37 next month, leads the series 18-12 with her sister, 11-5 in Grand Slam tournaments. But this one wasn't expected to be so easy, not with Serena still working her way back into form after returning to the tour in the spring.

But this was the type of tennis that has brought her to 23 Grand Slam singles titles, the ability to pound balls all over the court and chase down the rare shots that looked like they might get past her.

"Obviously that level is definitely where she's going to want to stay during this whole tournament," Venus said.

Serena pounded 10 aces to just one for Venus, the No. 16 seed who was perhaps a little drained after two tough matches to begin the tournament, including a three-setter against 2004 U.S. Open champion Svetlana Kuznetsova in her opener.

Serena had an easier time in the first two rounds, though that was expected to change Friday under the lights in Arthur Ashe Stadium. They had combined for eight titles in Flushing Meadows, six by Serena, and each had beaten the other in a U.S. Open final.

But there was no beating Serena on this night, and the discouraged look on Venus' face across much of the match indicated she seemed to realize it.

"I mean, she played so well, I never got to really even touch

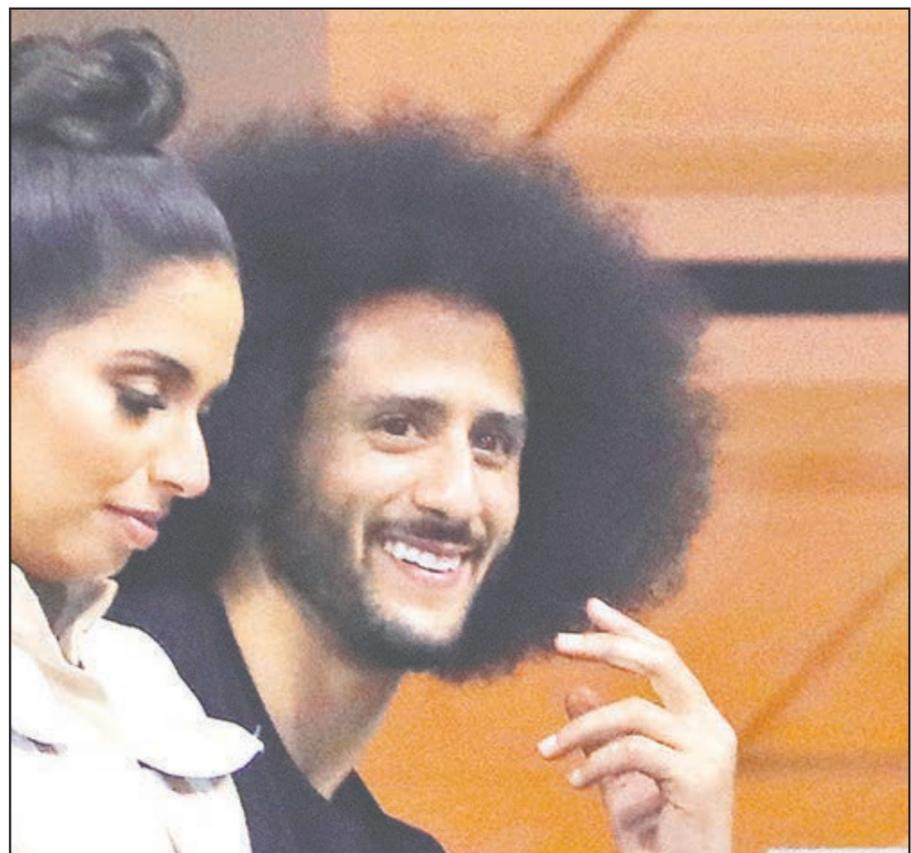
any balls," said Venus, a semifinalist at the U.S. Open last year. "When your opponent plays like that, it's not really anything to be upset about."

It looked as if Serena could have trouble when, in the second game of the match, her right ankle turned awkwardly when Venus hit behind her on a shot. Serena stood near the baseline with her back to the court for quite a few seconds, then motioned to the chair umpire that she wanted to see the trainer at the next changeover.

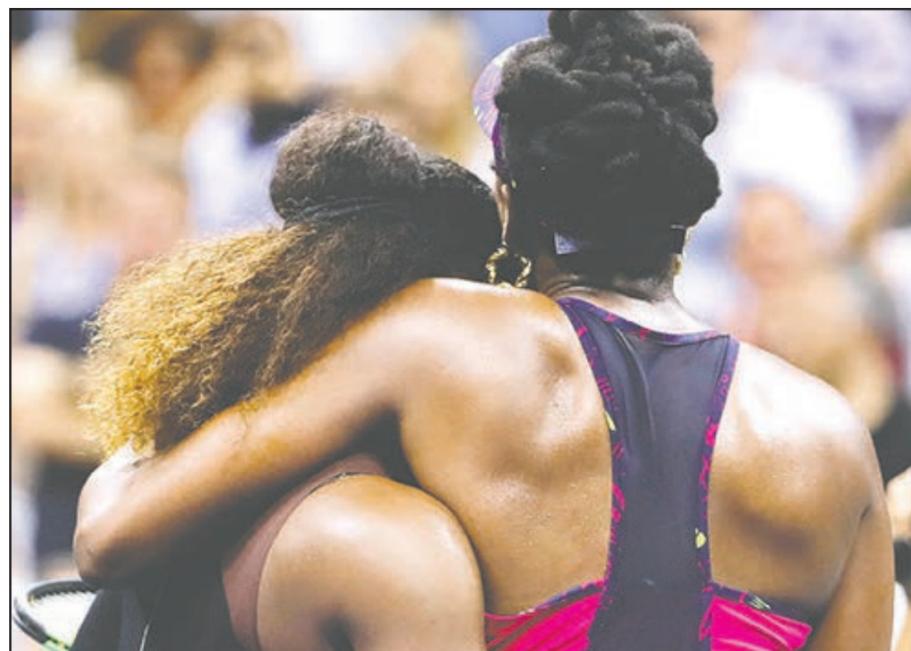
Serena had the ankle treated with a 2-1 lead, then broke in the next game, helped when Venus missed an easy swinging volley wide. She would break again for a 5-1 lead, then pound two aces in the next service game to wrap up the first set in 31 minutes.



Serena Williams, left, meets her sister Venus Williams after their match during the third round of the U.S. Open tennis tournament, Friday, Aug. 31, 2018, in New York. (Serena Williams won 6-1, 6-2. AP Photos/Adam Hunger)



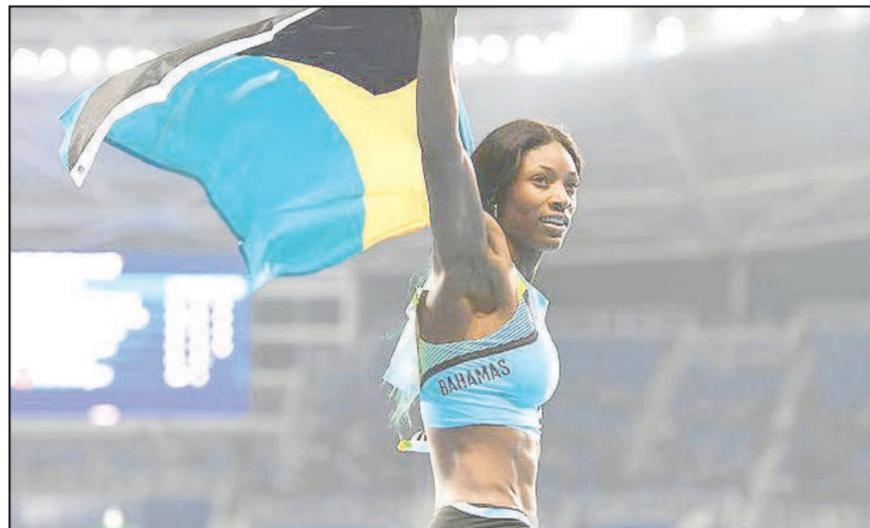
Colin Kaepernick watches Serena Williams play Venus Williams during the third round of the U.S. Open tennis tournament Friday, Aug. 31, 2018, in New York.



Serena Williams, left, embraces her sister Venus Williams after their third-round match at the U.S. Open tennis tournament Friday, Aug. 31, 2018, in New York. (Serena Williams won 6-1, 6-2.

SPORTS SCOPE

By FRED STURRUP



SHAUNAE MILLER

Shaunae carries on Miller sports tradition

First published April 25, 2017.

During the early 1940s when Leroy Miller was growing up in the Berry Islands and showing athletic promise, he had no idea of the prominent line of quality performers in track and field he would produce.

Bahamian families steeped in sports excellence include the Rodgers (Andre, Lionel, Adrian, Roy, Randy); the Fords (Wenty, Eddie, Mario, Linda, Wardy, Kevin); the Isaacs, Norths, and Archers.

Well, another family belongs in that elite circle.

In adding a down memory lane touch to World Relays III, I focus today on the Millers.

It's been virtually a secret that Leroy Miller did some sprinting and was good in his own right. He started a sports journey that would include up to the present, three additional generations of quality track and field athletes.

Some readers might have guessed it by now.

Yes, Leroy Miller was the great grandfather of the awesomely talented Shaunae Miller, the reigning Olympic 400 meters queen and one of the most notable athletes in the world. Today, Shaunae carries on the Miller sports tradition in a big way, with her little broth-

er Shaun, he of the CARIFTA high jump gold medal fame, following on her heels.

Six of Leroy's boys were outstanding track and field athletes, namely Hardy, Leslie, Cleveland, Don, Rudolph and Terry.

Hardy was a gutsy, rugged, sprinter who was a tough task for opponents, consistently, in three events, the 100, 200 and 400 meters.

Younger brother Leslie, (he, also, of political fame, the one we know as the Potcake), was the first international 400 meters elite performer for The Bahamas and also a national long jump champion. Leslie's greatest claim to fame is cracking the 47 seconds barrier in the 400 meters.

Don was exclusively a triple jumper, one of note. Rudolph, Cleveland and Terry were middle distance runners primarily. However, Cleveland and Rudolph also stood out significantly when road races were major sports/social events during the 1960s and 1970s. Rudolph, Cleveland and their ilk, set the stage for the Marathon Bahamas era.

A granddaughter, Rochelle, could have in my view, been as world known as Shaunae, had she continued. Rochelle was a gifted distance runner who seemed capable of excelling at middle and long distance run-

ning. Up to today, no other Bahamian female distance runner has, in my personal opinion, demonstrated her level of potential.

At the third version of the International Association of Athletic Federations (IAAF) World Relays that concluded Sunday at the Thomas A. Robinson national Stadium, Shaunae's popularity and reputation were in full evidence.

When she strode around track she captivated the universe. On Friday when the formal IAAF/Local Organizing Committee press conference took place, Shaunae was asked about the special ingredient possessed by Bahamians. She spoke to the heart/desire of Bahamians in competition.

The same characterized the Millers throughout the years.

As Shaunae and Shaun (as the present standard bearers of the Miller track and field legacy), write their chapters in Bahamian sports history, for posterity sake, I make the connection to the patriarch. The talent line started with the late Leroy Isaac Miller, formerly of the Berry Islands.

Continued best wishes Shaunae and Shaun!

(To respond to this column, kindly contact Fred Sturup at sturup1504@gmail.com.)