

# Russian Tennis Head Apologizes to Serena Williams

October 24, 2014



Serena Williams of the U.S. reacts as she plays against Simona Halep of Romania during their WTA Finals singles tennis match at the Singapore Indoor Stadium, Singapore, Oct. 22, 2014.

The head of the Russian tennis federation has written to U.S. star athlete Serena Williams to apologize for comments in which he referred to her and sister Venus as "the Williams brothers."

Shamil Tarpishev made the derogatory remarks last Friday while appearing on popular Russian television show *Vecherny Ugant* (Evening Urgant), adding that the Williams sisters — who together have won 13 Grand Slam doubles titles — were "scary" to look at.

The former Boris Yeltsin coach later apologized for the comments, saying they "were wrong and could be construed as discriminatory by the public."

Speaking Thursday, Serena Williams said she had yet to hear from Tarpishev but confirmed Friday that she had received a written apology, the Associated Press reported.

Tarpishev, who has headed the Russian Tennis Federation since 1999, was fined \$25,000 and suspended from involvement in the international Women's Tennis Association (WTA) tour for a year over his comments.

Serena Williams, currently ranked world number one by the WTA, is widely considered to be one of the greatest female players ever, having won 18 Grand Slam singles titles and four Olympic gold medals.

She recently suffered her heaviest loss in more than 15 years after losing 6-0 6-2 to Romania's Simona Halep at the WTA finals in Singapore.

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