

Sharapova Says Fed Cup Should Change Dates

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Maria Sharapova in the Russian team uniform

PARIS — Defending French Open champion Maria Sharapova called for a change in schedule for the Fed Cup on Wednesday, saying playing ties after grand slam tournaments was "pointless."

The Russian showed no ill effects from a cold as she swept past fellow Russian Fed Cup team member Vitalia Diatchenko 6-3 6-1 on Court Philippe Chatrier to reach the third round.

She will face tough Australian Samantha Stosur next and the world number two said the next day and a half would all be about maintenance and recovery as she tries to plot her way to a third French Open title in four years.

Sharapova skipped Russia's Fed Cup semi-final against Germany last month — a decision that proved wise as she enjoyed a strong run in Madrid where she reached the semi-finals and in Rome where she claimed the title.

She is committed to the Fed Cup team, however, and played in the quarter-final against Poland shortly after reaching the Australian Open final.

The 28-year-old said it can be a hassle though.

"It's more the timing of the events that are just really unfortunate," she told reporters. "I have been very vocal about it. I don't think anyone that's making the Fed Cup schedule is thinking about the players that go far in grand slams.

"They don't understand or appreciate how much mental and physical strength it takes to get to that.

"To schedule a Fed Cup match right after a grand slam; it's just pointless, in my opinion.

"I had an amazing time playing this year, and I want to play in the future, but the schedule just does not give me any chance to do so. As much as I want to be part of it, it's just — it's really a hassle."

She even suggested the Fed Cup should not be held every year. "I think it would be much more successful if it actually had a legitimate schedule and maybe not every single year."

There was only a scattering of fans inside the stadium as Sharapova took to the court on Wednesday, but after getting into her stride she overpowered the 91st-ranked Diatchenko.

See the photo gallery: [Russia's Sharapova Beats Diatchenko at French Open](#)

Stosur will be a tougher proposition though, having stretched Sharapova to three sets in the fourth round last year.

"She's always a tough opponent. She enjoys playing on clay, benefits a lot from this surface," she said of the 2010 runner-up. "But I have a pretty good record against her."

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