



## **Eagle Fustar player Jelena Pandzic returns with win at the Palmetto Pro Open**

After rolling to a 6-2 victory over in the first set of the singles championship match at the Palmetto Pro Open on Sunday, Jelena Pandzic appeared poised to defeat Alexis King and win the first tournament she had played in since the 2009 Australian Open.

The players held service through the first three games of the second set - King leading 2-1 - when King broke Pandzic's serve twice and won the set 6-1, setting up a final set showdown.

And in the 10-minute break between sets, Pandzic said she felt overcome with an ill feeling.

"I'm not sure what happened to me," Pandzic said. "I just felt really, really bad. I didn't know if I was going to be able to go at the beginning of the third set."

Though it was a topsy-turvy battle through the first six games, Pandzic recovered and went on to win the third set 6-2 at the Palmetto Tennis Center and a 6-2, 1-6, 6-2 victory.

"I'm really not sure how I got through it at the beginning of the third set," said Pandzic, who was once ranked as high as high as No. 136 in the world. "I just kept battling and got through it."

Pandzic was serving in the first game of the third set and found herself down 0-30 before winning four straight points to hold service. The second game went deuce, but King managed to hold on to her service as well.

There were three deuces in the third game and when King, who is on a comeback of her own after having a baby last year, won the game to go up 2-1, it appeared she had

held her service. However, Pandzic broke back in the next game to regain the service advantage.

The fifth game was 30-30 before Pandzic won the final two points to go up 3-2.

The sixth game proved to be the turning point, however. King, once ranked as high as No. 343, won the first three points on her serve, but she never got the final point to tie the set at 3-3. Instead, she double-faulted twice, including for the game-ending point, as Pandzic won five straight points to go up 4-2.

"That was just a mental lapse on my part," King said. "I was not focusing in the way I should, and I let it get away from me. I was up 40-0 and you have the mentality that you have a point or two to give. You have to go after it though and finish the game off."

Pandzic held her serve in the next game and broke King again to win the match.

"Winning this is great for my confidence," Pandzic said. "It lets you know that all the hard work you put in to get to this point was worth it, and you want to work harder to get better."

Pandzic, who was recovering from a back injury that caused pain in the calves in her legs and had to win three qualifying matches to even make the PPO field, plans to play in the U.S. Open later this summer. She has a special world ranking of 160 that she can use to enter eight tournaments this year. The special ranking is available to players once ranked in the top 300 who had to take time off with injuries.

King, who also made the field as a qualifier, is looking forward to bigger and better things in the future as well.

"The French Open was going on this week, and I'm hoping I will get an opportunity to play in it next year," she said. "I've got a lot of work to do to achieve that though, a lot of practice and a lot of fitness work."

In the doubles final, the No. 1 team of Alexandra Mueller and Ashley Weinhold defeated Nicole Melichar and Alexandra Leatu 6-1, 6-3. Mueller and Weinhold didn't lose a set in their four matches.

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