

Sania should be back on Indian courts this year

Sania Mirza has made light of her much-publicised remark not to play in India by publicly stating for the first time that she is likely to be seen on an Indian tennis court this year. She will probably play in the Sunfeast Open in [Mumbai](#) in October.

Sania said she had never missed any tournament at home in her tennis-playing career except the [Bangalore](#) Open in March. She had skipped the tier-two Women's Tennis Association (WTA) event saying that she was tired of the controversies that chased her every time she stepped on to a court in India.

'It seems likely that I will play again in India this year,' Sania, India's number one and most written and talked about Indian woman tennis player, told IANS in an exclusive interview.

Excerpts from the interview:

Q: Before talking about Wimbledon, tennis fans will be anxious to know when will you be seen on a tennis court in India again?

A: I have played in every tournament conducted in India for the last 10 years in which I was expected to play, right from the junior days, except for the WTA event in Bangalore in March. It seems likely that I will play again in India this year.

Q. Coming to Wimbledon, are you happy with the draw as you are likely to play a top-ten player only in the third round?

A. It is a reasonable draw as I have done well last year to be seeded and that makes sure that I don't run into a top-32 player in the early rounds at a Grand Slam tournament. But as a tennis player, it would be premature to talk about the third round at this stage.

Q. How do you assess your fitness and form since you are entering Wimbledon after only a couple of weeks of returning to the circuit following a wrist surgery?

A. Form and fitness are obviously not at the highest level but, under the circumstances, I am as well prepared as I could possibly be.

Q. How is the wrist after surgery, have you completely recovered from the injury as you had to play in Birmingham and Netherlands taking pain-killers?

A. I still feel pain in some movements of the wrist but that is likely to remain for a few more weeks until the 'new wrist' gets adjusted to handling the impact of the ball and the complex movements of tennis strokes. I still need painkillers at times, but the good news is that the damage to the wrist has been repaired by the surgery and in due course of time, the pain should disappear.

Q. You had a reasonably good Wimbledon last year, having entered the third round. What are the expectations this time around?

A. I prefer to take one match at a time and my first goal will be to try and win the first round (against

Colombian Catalina Castano)

Q. You have been setting targets to achieve greater heights, but the injuries have come in the way. What is your realistic target for this year?

A. I have to first see how my wrist behaves during the next few weeks before setting any targets. It is always difficult to comeback after an injury and straightaway get into the groove.

Q. Do you have a travelling coach with you?

A. Sven Groenveld works with me during the Grand Slams and other major tournaments. My father (Imran Mirza) works in tandem with him and takes care of me for the rest of the time.

Q. What's your physio Renuka Pinto's role now that you have injury problems?

A. I think she has done a great job in getting me back to competitive tennis in two months after surgery.

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