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## Oh, baby: Distracted Fleishman ousted

*'If I wasn't pregnant, I would've won'; 2005 winner forfeits match*

BY TIMOTHY GORMAN

TIMES-DISPATCH STAFF WRITER

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For weeks, Nataly Fleishman wasn't sure she would be able to defend her Mid-Atlantic Women's Open Championship crown at the Salisbury Country Club. **TENNIS**  
MATA

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Her husband, Seth, didn't want her to try. Furthermore, she didn't have the energy to practice after a full day of teaching tennis at the Norfolk Yacht & Country Club.

In the end, it wasn't her husband or her doctor or her opponent that forced Fleishman to forfeit her quarterfinal match yesterday to Blakeley Griffith.

Fleishman couldn't take her mind of her unborn baby, Shira, and that alone was the reason she chose to stop.

Griffith, a University of Tennessee senior, was up a set with the score knotted, 3-3, in the second set when Fleishman walked to the net and shook her opponent's hand.

"My energy just wasn't there," she said. "[Griffith] deserves credit because she is a good player, but if I wasn't pregnant, I would've won."

Fleishman, 27, was clearly more experienced. Glued to the baseline, she forced her 21-year-old opponent to run with a range of drop shots and spinning backhands. Griffith, who entered her first tournament in Midlothian, said she didn't know the top-seeded Fleishman was pregnant until she came to Richmond earlier this week. After shutting out her opponent (6-0, 6-0) in the second round, she just tried to tire Fleishman out.

"She has to carry a few extra pounds, so I figured the longer it went, the better," Griffith said. "If I didn't win a game, I made sure I at least carried it out as long as I could go."

An hour and a half after the match began, Griffith won an 8-6 tiebreaker to take the first set. Fleishman had been playing a full two hours before giving up. Fleishman, a former Old Dominion All-American, played professionally in her native Israel before enrolling in college

at age 21.

For the past three years, she's been teaching tennis clinics in Norfolk and lately it's been busy with as much as seven hours of instruction per day.

She planned to drive to Norfolk last night because she has to work this morning. But it was the competition that brought her to Midlothian in the first place.

As she sat courtside resting after her match, rain began to fall on the clay court in front of her.

She smiled.

"Maybe I should've held out a little longer."

## RESULTS

**Men's Open Singles:** Iriarti d. Snead 6-1, 6-0; McNamara d. Christiansen 5-1, ret.; Huey d. Milbrink 6-2, 6-3; Lynch d. Haywood 7-5, 6-2; Sean Steinour d. Einwick 6-0, 6-2; Spracklin d. Robinson 6-4, 6-4; Clark d. Sheldon: 6-1, 6-2; Courduneanu d. Martin by forfeit

**Women's Open Singles:** Human d. Gale 6-4, 6-4; Reichert d. Walsh 7-5, 6-4; Griffith d. Fleishman 7-6, 3-3 Ret.; Ojeda d. Wyeth 6-3, 6-0

**Mixed Doubles:** Nimitz-Wortham d. Gale-Kaczmarek 6-0, 6-2; Gale-Sheldon d. Atkinson-Bowman 6-1, 6-0; Scott Steinour-Walsh d. Nimitz-Ramthun 7-6, 6-2; Dearth-Pantele d. Girts-Lipstock 7-6, 6-1; Eckenrode-Oakes d. Corduneanu-Kaczmarek 7-6, 6-4; B. Reichert-K. Reichert d. Gee-Kristofak 7-5, 6-1; McNamara-Ojeda d. Griffith-Walker 7-6, 6-0

**Women's Doubles:** Harrington-Reichert d. Clark-Kretzer 6-4, 6-2; Gale-Kaczmarek d. Nimitz-Wortham 6-0, 6-2

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