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## Former ODU star Fleishman takes state title

### *16-year-old Seredni's power game is a nonfactor in SunTrust final*

BY JOHN PACKETT  
TIMES-DISPATCH STAFF WRITER  
Saturday, August 7, 2004

When she won the women's singles title of the SunTrust State Tennis Championships two years ago, Nataly Cahana Fleishman couldn't accept the prize money because she was still an amateur.

Fleishman, the top seed, was more than happy to accept the \$1,000 check yesterday after her 6-0, 6-2 decision over second-seeded Chrissie Seredni at Raintree Swim and Racquet Club.

"My husband was saying, 'Don't come home if you don't win,'" joked Fleishman, head pro at the Norfolk Yacht and Country Club. "He always says, 'You can sleep in the garage.' That's a good feeling, when you can take the money, that's for sure.

"This will certainly help us, in the situation we're in now [being newlyweds]."

Fleishman, 25, won the first nine games of the match and was never threatened by Seredni, 16, who was trying to become the youngest winner of the tournament since Jessica Steck claimed the title at 15 in 1993.

A former No. 1 player for Old Dominion University, Fleishman fed Seredni a steady diet of soft slices and moonballs, frustrating the teenager into a stream of unforced errors. Whenever Seredni tried to come to the net, Fleishman passed her or induced a volley error.

"I just knew I shouldn't hit hard because that's what she likes," said Fleishman, who had beaten Seredni in much the same manner in the Central Virginia Invitational final in Lynchburg in June.

"She likes to hit winners. If it goes in, it goes in. If it doesn't, it doesn't. She doesn't do anything else. When she was on and hitting winners, I can't do much about it. The only option for me is slicing, high topspin, changing the rhythm, moving her around."

Seredni's only chance to climb back into the match came when she held her serve in the fourth game of the second set and had Fleishman down 15-40 in the next game. But the native of Israel claimed the next four points to take a 4-1 advantage.

"That game I was telling myself, 'Nataly, you can't lose this game,'" Fleishman said. "It's so different, 4-1 or 3-2. I was like, I had to win it. I was hanging in there, and in the end it paid off."

Seredni managed to erase three match points in the seventh game and broke Fleishman's serve for the only time to make it 5-2. The Richmonder saved another match point in the next game, but her ninth double fault ended the one-hour, 10-minute match.

"I just never played the way I can play," said Seredni, who turned pro last month and received \$500. "She wouldn't let me. She never gave me the same ball twice. Mixed it up. Sliced me. Lobbed me. Never let me hit a good, hard, flat ball. I never felt like I got into any rhythm."

In the women's doubles final, Fleishman and Julie Kaczmarek, the No. 1 seeds, defeated the second-seeded duo of Rachel Gale and Lindsey Wyeth 6-3, 6-3. Fleishman and Kaczmarek split \$1,000.

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## Spanish spice in final *Casquero, Bernard have talking points for state title match*

BY JOHN PACKETT  
TIMES-DISPATCH STAFF WRITER  
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At one point during the men's semifinals of the SunTrust State Tennis Championships yesterday, Daniel Casquero and Jose Bernard had a brief conversation in Spanish.

**MEN**

STATE TENNIS

Casquero is from Spain and Bernard hails from the Dominican Republic, so they had no trouble understanding each other.

In today's 11 a.m. final, chair umpire John Royster could have a problem arbitrating any dispute between the players, since he would need to brush up on his Spanish skills.

"I actually don't know the guy, but realized he spoke Spanish today during his match," said Casquero, the top seed and a 6-4, 6-3 winner over No. 4 David Emery of Fairfax at Raintree Swim and Racquet Club.

"At the very beginning of the match, I told him, 'You speak Spanish, right?' because I told him something in Spanish and he understood. It's good, you know. It's not always American players in the final. It's kind of funny, knowing that it's in the States.

"But as long as we play good and people have fun watching us, that's what really matters."

Bernard, the No.8 seed from Manassas, earned his spot in the title match with a 6-2, 6-1 victory over second-seeded Sears Driscoll of Richmond. Bernard had ambushed third-seeded Brent Wilkins in the quarterfinals and appears quite capable of giving Casquero some problems.

"He hits a very heavy ball," Driscoll said. "He had me running from the first game. He drop-shotted me three times in the first game. I didn't have the legs to get set up for his ball. He just wore me down. He's very smooth and covers the court pretty easily.

"When he sets up, he can really do a lot with the ball. He's big at the net. I couldn't lob him in the wind. He made it look easy."

Casquero had a much closer match with Emery, a transfer from Virginia Tech who plays No.11 singles for James Madison. Casquero ran Emery ragged with drop shots and lobs, constantly sending him scampering around the court.

"I knew it would be tough," said Casquero, a former player for Virginia Commonwealth. "He's a college player and in good shape. On a day like today, it was very windy and drop shots against the wind are a really good shot. I used it even more today than usual."

In the mixed doubles final, the fourth-seeded team of Nataly Cahana Fleishman and Scott Steinour upset the No.1 duo of Margie Walsh and Sean Steinour 6-2, 6-3, giving Fleishman a sweep of all three titles.

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