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JANKO TIPS ARE VICTORIOUS

BALANCING BRAIN AND BRAWN

BY CHRIS ODDO



AT-A-GLANCE

Born: June 22, 1984
Birthplace: Belgrade, Serbia
Height: 5'11"
Weight: 183 lbs
Coach: German Dirk Hordorff
Court Preference: Slow hard courts and clay
2006 College Graduate: Sports Management
July 4, 2010, wedding guests: Novak Djokovic, Nenad Zimonjic, Viktor Troicki
Post-Retirement Plans: Have a large family and a dog



Janko the Persona



WHAT'S INSIDE THE HEAD OF TENNIS PRO AND COLLEGE GRADUATE JANKO TIPSAREVIC?

Plenty.

A unique breed of athlete, Tipsarevic chooses reading the scholarly offerings of Kant, Nietzsche, and Dostoevsky over handling a PlayStation joystick.

"Beauty will save the world," the words attributed to Russian writer Dostoevsky are inked on Janko's arm in Japanese characters. "I was going to have it [tattoo] done in Russian, but it didn't look good," says Tipsarevic. The message is believed to symbolize the intersection of humanity, culture, art, and religion. But does it inspire Tipsarevic to win tennis matches? On the contrary, he says, "no."

Janko learned years ago that philosophical literature had the potential to adversely affect his career. "I realized that I was reading too much, starting to doubt myself, life, my profession, and tennis."

Today, following nine years of circuit experience, the 26-year-old has a balanced perspective on court and no longer is prone to bouts of existential angst. "I was taking books too seriously. I am a little bit older, and I realize that you should never ever – no matter how right the author is – read a book and completely change your life."

The diverse Serb digests 19th century prose one moment, then engages in contemporary social networking platforms, Twitter and blogs, the next. Tweets taught us that Janko's beautiful new wife, Serbian TV host Biljana Sesevic, loves him for his cocktail-making prowess, and that his favorite drink, "Liquid Cocaine," is a mix of tequila, absinthe, and vodka. "If something interesting happens, I'm gonna post it out there, but if it's not interesting, I'm not gonna say it," says Tipsarevic.

Janko is analytical, but dark and gloomy he is not. Despite his philosophical tendencies, his off-court behavior reveals a happy-go-lucky guy who enjoys sharing his journey with a growing stable of fans.

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▶ Janko Tipsarevic [SRB] celebrates after defeating Andy Roddick [USA] at the 2010 U.S. Open in New York, 3-6 7-5 6-3 7-6 (4).

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On his glasses:

"I'm not playing with them [glasses] because I look more cool... I have prescription – minus 1 and I don't see really good, when objects are far from me and it's not really easy to return a 200 km/hr serve with my sight if I don't have glasses."

Novak Djoković, Nenad Zimonjic and Viktor Troicki of Serbia hoist Janko Tipsarevic after beating Radek Stepanek of the Czech Republic 3-0, advancing Serbia into Davis Cup final for first time. Belgrade, Serbia, Sept. 19, 2010.

Tipsarevic the Player

Bespectacled Tipsarevic has his sights on the ATP's Top 20. He made giant strides last year beating each of the three Top 10 players he faced, defeating Andy Murray in Dubai, ousting Andy Roddick in the second round of the U.S. Open, and removing stalwart Tomas Berdych on the first day of Serbia's Davis Cup semifinal against the Czech Republic. "When you play top guys, the most important thing is to stick with them until 4-4, 5-5 because they do choke."

The crowning achievement of Janko's 2010 Summer Season, however, occurred in Belgrade, where he beat Radek Stepanek, clinching Serbia's first trip to a Davis Cup final. Sinking to his knees in jubilation, a celebrating Tipsarevic had demonstrated an ability to win under stress.

"Tipsarevic was the hero of this magnificent victory," said compatriot Novak Djokovic. "He proved that he is a real champion and kept remarkably cool under great pressure."

Janko routinely plays in the shadow of the Serbian No. 1, but rather than complain, he uses his good friend's success as motivation.

"I *am* jealous of Novak," says Tipsarevic in an earnest tone. "I hate him, but in a positive way. Because at the end of the day, I come to my room and I say to myself, 'if he can do it – if he can be No. 3 in the world – I can be No. 10.' There is this positive thought in my head which is making me better."

As a child, Janko participated in both tennis and football and eventually had to choose one sport as a career. "I picked tennis. In the end, it's not such a bad idea [laughs]." **T**

Favorite book: *On the Genealogy of Morality*
Friedrich Nietzsche

On his headphones: "House music DJs: Axwell, Sebastian Ingrosso, Steve Angello, Freemasons"

Favorite adult beverage: "Liquid Cocaine," a mix of tequila, absinthe, and vodka

Latest additions: Maté tea, Cheesecake Factory, and House Music

Best friends on Tour: Feliciano Lopez, Oliver Marach, and Rainer Schuettler

Three people he'd love to share coffee with: Nietzsche, Al Pacino, and Salvador Dali

Best intellectual conversation: Wife, Biljana

Favorite players to watch: Roger Federer and Justine Henin

Tournament he most wants to win: Wimbledon

Tennis is great because: "If you lose on the Wednesday, you have another guy waiting for you across the net on the next Monday."



Leslie Billman