

Mubadala Citi DC Open

Thursday, August 3, 2023

Washington D.C.

Jessica Pegula

Press Conference



J. PEGULA/P. Stearns

6-3, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Congrats on your win tonight. Can you please just walk us through the match.

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, it was a good win. Kind of a weird match. Conditions were kind of tough. As you guys can see, it rained really quickly afterward. Yeah, it was tricky. It was swirling there in the stadium. The balls felt kind of heavy.

Usually we're used to playing here when it's hot and sunny, so it was just kind of a different match. Yeah, glad I got through a tough opponent.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. You play Svitolina next. I know you spoke about her after the match, but just talk about playing someone that you haven't played in a while, but now she's come back to the tour almost as a brand-new player. How do you approach that matchup?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, it's gonna be a different match probably than the previous times I have played her. I can just tell from watching her matches, yeah, I feel like she has a new perspective. So many things going on in her life.

She's kind of come back and reset really nicely. She's been competing really, really well and playing, like, very fearless. It's definitely going to be, I think, different.

Yeah, we'll see. It's going to be a tough match. She's been playing at a high level, and I feel like she hasn't really missed a beat much coming back.

Q. I know you're used to it, coming to a tournament and not playing till Thursday in the week, but I think you said on Sunday that you really just need matches now to be thinking through things and stuff. How do you manage your schedule then when matches are

what you need but you maybe have four practice days before? What do you focus on in that time?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, I was here for, like, a week. I flew in Thursday last week (smiling). I came in a little early, though, because one of my best friends lives very close by, so I got to hang out with her this weekend, which was fun.

But, yeah, I'm glad that I did, because the balls are a ball I have never played with before. It definitely took me a few days to, like, adjust my tension and get used to the conditions. So that kind of worked out.

I know it's a smaller draw and I got a bye, but I actually kind of like either playing Wednesday, Friday, all the way through or Thursday all the way through. I think it's better for the fans.

I think it kind of shortens and condenses everything more towards the weekend, which I think is better for people who work and have jobs and have to plan things out, and sometimes tennis can be frustrating for fans, I think, because you don't know the schedule, you don't know when people are playing, on what days, et cetera, et cetera.

I actually think it's nice. I'd rather, coming from playing a lot of two-week events this year, it's kind of nice to be just like, all right, you got through four or five days to really play the best you can and then you're done. I don't know. I like it.

Q. You've won this tournament before, but what are you trying to get out of this weekend in terms of looking ahead to the US Open and hard court?

JESSICA PEGULA: Well, I mean, definitely want to win the tournament. That's why I'm here. But at the same time, first tournament on hard in a little while, so you definitely, I felt like, want to get your movement and footing down.

Like I said, the balls here are different than what we're going to be playing with. I felt like even though it's



challenging and I'm trying to figure out how to get used to them and play through it this week, at the same time, we are going to be switching balls next week so it's not a huge deal.

And in that aspect, I think, yeah, just trying to deal with that mentally, like, not getting too frustrated with the conditions or the balls or anything like that. I think working through and problem-solving those things builds confidence. Ideally that's what I want to keep building all the way up until the Open.

Q. A lot of the players have mentioned these conditions in D.C. here being similar to that of the US Open, but obviously this week is a little bit cooler. I was just wondering if that has any sort of impact and alters your preparation at all for the Open?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, I don't think anything feels similar to the Open unless you're at the Open. And also the weather changes so much there, as well. It can be really, really hot. It can be cooler, like today. Depends on what court you're playing on, who you're playing, and the conditions can really change dramatically.

But I think that's everywhere every week. It will be different obviously for the girls playing with an Extra Duty ball. I'm curious to see how that will maybe, I don't know, be different this year than what we are used to the last few years.

But, I mean, yeah, I think we are used to adapting, and I think that's the thing is you just have to adapt to the conditions and not let that overtake your game and frustrate you to where it's affecting everything else.

So, yeah, that's kind of just what I'm trying to work through this week.

Q. You said on Media Day you were focusing on just improving little by little as you go along. What improvements and what areas in your game are you looking that for? I know you said you and Coco are going to be back playing doubles in the US Open. Will you play Cincinnati and Canada too?

JESSICA PEGULA: We are signed up to play Montreal and Cincinnati and US Open. Depends. But, you know, those are 1000s, big events. I think we will probably still try and play those.

Actually I think we won Toronto last year, so I guess we should play, defending some points (smiling). I don't think we played Cincinnati last year. I think that's when she turned her ankle.

Yeah, as far as I know, we are playing (smiling). I should probably ask, though.

What was your first question?

Improvements. Yeah, I'm always trying to improve everything. I think moving forward, returning, stepping in on the second-serve returns, using my legs, I think, kind of using my footwork to get myself up in the court.

Then always my serve, trying to get my serve patterns down. Just, like, there are so many little things. When I come in, working on short volleys, working on swing volleys, working on depth, working on moving in at the right time. There are always all these little things.

The way I think about it is not be afraid to try some new things when I'm practicing, whether, not new, but hit a second-serve return and come in. I'm not trying to drastically change anything or work on anything to, like, this crazy huge difference, but I think trying little things here and there and I think that's how you build confidence little by little.

Those are some ideas. Slicing, coming in, going for a short volley. If that works, it's great. If not, okay, you're working on it. It's just trying different things and not being afraid to try them, but at the same time obviously still keeping your focus and your strategy on what you need to do against your opponent as well.

Yeah, just working in little things here and there.

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