

# Mubadala Citi DC Open

Friday, August 4, 2023

Washington D.C.

## Jessica Pegula

Press Conference



J. PEGULA/E. Svitolina

4-6, 6-3, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Jess, you're through to the semifinal. How are you feeling?

JESSICA PEGULA: Whew, it was a tough quarterfinal. Definitely very humid today. Was a very physical and long, intense match.

Obviously I'm a little tired right now, but yeah, I'm really happy to have gotten through such a tough match.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. You mentioned the humidity. Could you explain a little bit about how that affects things, whether it's more physically and the exertion required, or also the way shots are affected?**

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, the humidity definitely can play a big role. The ball sometimes will get heavier. There is a lot of moisture in the air. It can make it harder to kind of breathe a little bit, feel like you're not really getting air.

I sweat quite a bit, so for me, I sweated through, like, my entire outfit. So, yeah, when I usually start using a towel, then it's humid, because I never use a towel and I used one today (smiling).

But I also think, yeah, it's tough. I think no matter how long you train in it, it's like being in pressure situations where your adrenaline is really high, where your nervous system is kind of, like, really going. It's hard with the humidity to kind of feel like you can breathe a little bit.

We were having really long points. There weren't a lot of quick points. It kind of just wears you down a little bit, especially as the match gets closer and tighter and stuff like that.

**Q. You mentioned in the post-match interview on court that you were a little bit tired after today. You**

**just mentioned of course that there were a lot of grueling rallies. How are you feeling overall physically as you prepare to play your semifinal tomorrow?**

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, I mean, I'm used to it. It's kind of nice to get a really tough physical match out of the way, especially when it's one you can win, going into the summer hard court series where we are going to have a lot more of those matches where you want to feel like you can stand up in the humidity and the heat.

Yeah, even though I'm a little tired, obviously I'm going to get some good rest through the rest of the day and tonight and be ready to go tomorrow. Yeah, just some days are tougher than others and you have to battle the conditions.

So, yeah, I feel good. I feel like even though I feel tired, it's nice to build confidence, knowing that you also won a physical match.

**Q. I just wanted to ask you a little more detail in that third set, I think it was that sixth game, the breakpoints, having to save five breakpoints. How demanding was that stretch, forget the end of the set, but kind of the middle of the set to keep going at that point?**

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, I think that was probably the game that took the most out of me, also when you're serving. I also feel like on that far side, I don't know why, but you feel like you're hitting uphill a little bit, maybe just the way with the courts are slanted or something.

You feel like you're kind of on the defensive a little bit more than the other side, for whatever reason. So it definitely made it really hard. But I knew the balls were getting kind of heavy, and I knew if I could just hold that game we would get new balls and I would feel a little bit better.

Yeah, it's tough when the balls get heavy in this humidity and you're serving, you don't get a lot of free points on your serve and it's hard to win those free points. You've really got to use your legs a lot more, get a little bit more height over the net, because everything starts landing shorter and it gets harder to make the ball. It also made the rallies a lot



longer because we couldn't quite hit through the court as much.

Yeah, I'm happy that I was able to get through that game and just survive a little bit and then get the new ball switch.

**Q. Considering the success you have had here in the past, what's it mean to you to win this today, tough three-set match, and then go on to the semifinals of this tournament?**

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, it's great. I mean, today I knew was going to be really tough. So glad I got to get through a very in-form player, as well. I think that will give me a lot of confidence.

Going into tomorrow, it's going to be a completely different match, probably different conditions. So I'll just have to adjust again, but I'm glad I'm able to put myself in a position tomorrow to possibly make another final.

Not just this year but also being here, it's pretty cool to come back here and always feel like I can play good tennis and have good results. So, yeah, it's fun to play here, so I'm glad I'm still around (smiling).

**Q. You were leading Elina for a majority of the deciding set. How difficult was it for you to close it out, especially kind of when perhaps your last Wimbledon match was a tough one in the decider set as well? What was your thought process going through that and trying to close out that set?**

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, I mean, it's tough, especially when physically you're starting to feel it. She was still playing good. She started serving really well there.

I felt like I wasn't getting a lot of, until the game before, I think the 5-3 game, where I had chances, so I was, like, Okay, I need to keep holding. But it felt like it kept getting harder and harder to hold.

I just told myself not to think about it. If I did get broken, whatever, you've got to try and break back anyways. I was really trying to focus on hitting my spots on my serves and just playing smart. But then also, I think, playing aggressive as well and making sure I kept stepping in when I could and picking the right opportunities, and luckily that worked out today pretty well.

Yeah, it's tough when, yeah, coming off the Wimbledon match, it was tough to close. I wasn't able to close. Then today, you get put in the same situation and you hope you can kind of turn it around. Yeah, some days it goes like that; some days it goes the other way.

Yeah, happy, definitely gave me confidence to be able to serve it out as well in the third.

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