

Mubadala Citi DC Open

Saturday, August 5, 2023

Washington D.C.

Jessica Pegula

Press Conference



M. SAKKARI/J. Pegula

6-3, 4-6, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Jess, tough result tonight. Can you please share your thoughts on the match and also your week here in D.C.

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, it was a really tough match. I mean, Maria played very good right from the start. She was playing so aggressive and really not making a lot of errors. Playing good defense, I felt like doing everything well, serving well, returning well. To me, she was playing lights out there for a while.

I was lucky to even be in a third set to get back in it, which I'm proud that I competed well and I did give myself a chance. But, yeah, too good today from her. I think she just honestly played like a really, really good match.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Great comeback being down a set and 4-1. Maria, she has had trouble at the semifinal stage in the past. Was that kind of something you were aware of? If you knew that, did that possibly give you confidence knowing that you could possibly get yourself back into the match?

JESSICA PEGULA: I think not so much thinking about the semifinal thing. I think I was more thinking that every time I play her, I feel like sometimes she can be up and playing really good, and then sometimes her level can kind of drop or she can get frustrated.

I kind of just telling myself, like, okay it's got to stop at some point. Maybe not, but if that's the case, too good, as well. I was able to play a couple good points, and I just kept telling myself, Just try and stay in there and we'll see if she goes off. I think she did kind of drop her level there for a little bit and got frustrated.

Beginning of the third set also I had a few chances I felt like maybe if I could have broke her it could have swung

that way again. Then she was able to win a couple of good games, break me, and then she played, again, a really high level to close it out.

I think that happens with a lot of players, not just her. I think I was more thinking about that aspect, not so much, you know, her record in semis or whatever.

Q. If I could ask, because you're so familiar with Coco's game, if she wins this semifinal, how do you feel like she and Maria match up? I know they have played a lot before, but what do you see there?

JESSICA PEGULA: I think Maria, does she have a winning record against her, I think? That will be a tough test for Coco. I'm sure Maria, though, will be nervous, wanting to win a tournament for the first time in maybe a few years, breaking through at this level. Coco, the same (smiling).

I think there will be a lot of nerves, and we'll just see who plays best. I think, you know, if you're serving well it obviously helps. But I think it does, I don't know, could give an edge to Maria, knowing she likes to play Coco or has a good record, but then also, at the same time, maybe knowing that she has that record might make her more nervous (smiling).

I don't know. It kind of just depends on which way you look at it. But Coco seems like she's been playing really well. Serving well and obviously moving well, like always. That can make it very tough with how she can extend the points.

She really makes you, you know, have to win the match. She's not going to give you a lot of free points.

Yeah, we'll see if she wins, but it will be a good match.

Q. You played a lot of great matches this week, a lot of good tennis for you. What are some of the positive takeaways you want to continue on as you head into next month in Montreal?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, I thought I competed well. Every match I thought I didn't get too frustrated even when



I could have.

I didn't feel like I was playing amazing, but, you know, I felt like I improved from where I started kind of practicing the week before. I was not feeling good at all (smiling). So I'm glad that I was able to kind of get myself out of that funk and at least feel like I'm in a little bit of a match rhythm now and playing rhythm. Usually that's how you want to feel going into Montreal.

Hopefully I can use that to again play some tough matches and hopefully keep the momentum going.

Q. You have played Maria a bunch in the past. Was there anything she did differently at all? When you're facing somebody that you know knows your game, because you have played that many times, do you make an extra effort to try to do something different just so that they're not playing the same you that they have played so many times?

JESSICA PEGULA: Um, yeah, I think we all try and do something different, but we also kind of know our games, as well. We know what we do well and maybe what we don't do well.

I think that she was playing super-aggressive today right from the start. I have seen her play aggressive, though, and not make the ball as much. Today it seemed like everything was kind of going in for, you know, the first set and a half.

So I think that's what she wanted to do. I wanted to play aggressive, as well, but I felt like she was just doing it a little bit better than me today, or maybe I was just making too many errors when I was trying to be aggressive and she wasn't.

So I played her, yeah, I think when I'm attacking and I'm returning really well and serving well are the days that I have beaten her where it's maybe playing a little bit faster. I think other times where she's beaten me, it's maybe a little bit slower, little bit bouncier where she can use her kick serve and her heavier forehand and get to more balls.

I think the conditions also play a role in it, you know, what kind of caters to your game and doesn't cater to your opponents.

Q. Just another quick Coco question. Did the two of you practice together singles at all this week?

JESSICA PEGULA: We practiced, yeah, Saturday, the day before the tournament, or during quallies basically that weekend. We practiced on center.

Q. When you are playing doubles together, do you practice singles more than you would at a tournament like this that you're not a team?

JESSICA PEGULA: I would say we usually practice singles more, and then doubles we always just end up warming up together a lot if we are playing doubles, especially if we're out of singles and we both are just looking to warm up for doubles. We will warm up together a lot then.

I would say we practice more singles. Sometimes in the longer two-week events, if there is a couple days off, we will do some more doubles practice.

Q. Not your first time in D.C. Obviously a past champ. What was your impression this week being a 500 level for women and men? Overall what are your impressions this week?

JESSICA PEGULA: It's great seeing it be a 500. The depth and the field here was great. Super tough. I think the fans, at least in my experience, have always loved watching the women play here. To get to see an even bigger and deeper field is probably great for tennis here and great for the event.

I think we're all very grateful that, you know, it's the first joint 500. You know, it's nice being on the East Coast, being able to travel to, whether it's Montreal or Toronto, Cincy, and then US Open.

I think it's great that it's back on the calendar and it's joint. Hopefully we can get that up to equal prize money, as well. I think it will just help the event improve every year.

Some girls that haven't played here before, so they really enjoyed it and didn't realize how much the fans really love the event. I think that's really nice, knowing that the fans are really behind the event, especially the women here.

That's ideally what we love to play when the fans are great. That's been something really nice to hear from some of the players that haven't been here.

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