

Western & Southern Open

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Cincinnati, Ohio, USA

Jessica Pegula

Press Conference



J. PEGULA/M. Trevisan

6-7, 6-2, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: (Question about last week's matches compared to today's match.)

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, actually, physically and mentally I feel good, but conditions are definitely different. It feels much different than last week. So I think I'm proud I was able to kind of adjust and find my way through it today, because it's definitely playing much different and feels much different, and I just didn't have a lot of time to adapt.

But sometimes, you know, that's what happens, so I'm glad I was able to figure it out today.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. You had to stop playing, similar to what happened in Wimbledon. How did you finish the match?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah. I was, like, Oh, God, here we go. No, I just wanted to keep focused. At the same time, it was a break for her too, and you never know how someone's going to play after that, but I just wanted to come out and just not give away any free points after having a break and make her feel comfortable.

So I'm glad I was able to get that break there, even being down 15-30 and actually played a couple of really good points after that.

It's always tough to deal with situations like that. I was just honestly just worried. I hoped he was okay, because usually someone passes out or it's a quick kind of, oh, they have some water, they fainted, they're okay. But that seemed to be very long.

Then when they brought out the stretcher, I was, like, Oh, no. Is he okay?

You kind of change your perspective as in we are playing this tennis match, and maybe someone's life is maybe not going great.

Yeah, it's hard to deal with that. It was a very awkwardly long break. Seemed like it was long enough where you could kind of get cold but not long enough to rewarm up or anything. It was just very awkward.

Q. Coming off of your last WTA 1000 win in Guadalajara, went straight to Fort Worth. Here, what lessons did you maybe learn from last fall that you could apply?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, I don't know. It feels different obviously going into Finals. That was, like, the end of the year. So I think at the same time I put so much effort into winning Guadalajara and kind of closing out my year. Also a very emotional win.

I think that week when you kind of, I don't know, let yourself go and you relax, and then you kind of lose that edge, I feel like that's kind of what happened to me in the Finals. I was more just happy to be there and for my year to be kind of over, because it was such a long and stressful year, especially on the personal side. I think that's why it was much different.

Here I feel like I still feel pretty fresh. I actually feel good. Have my physio here, trainer here. Yeah, physically I actually feel okay, and mentally to get through that helped a lot.

Q. The conditions, the adjustments, I think people were saying in Canada the balls were fluffing up. Here the fluff is...

JESSICA PEGULA: Gone, yeah.

Q. Is that because of the grit in the court?

JESSICA PEGULA: I have no idea. Like, I don't know. We have also heard that sometimes people get balls from different manufacturers. Sometimes they can feel different based on where they are made. They react to the conditions differently. They react to the courts differently.

I have no idea, but they are, yeah, very different, just to



give insight into what we are all kind of thinking. We are all, like, What the hell?

It's not that they are necessarily bad. It's just the contrast last week to this week in such a short span just doesn't give you a lot of the time to adjust. We adjusted, at least for the women changing to Extra Duty, we had to adjust last week, and now it's, like, Okay, now we have to adjust again because they're playing completely different.

The men, it's the same. Yeah, just another week with the frickin' balls that everyone loves to talk about (smiling).

Q. (Question about Medvedev's comment on the balls.)

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, and also because the court is fast. So it feels like even when I was up 3-0, I felt so on edge, and we have seen it a couple times already this week of people kind of having a huge lead. Because it feels like as soon as you kind of let up or second-guess or just don't move your feet, or I don't know what it is, you feel like you're one second away from spraying every ball or, like, playing really good tennis.

So I don't know why that is, but I guess to, like, what he said, yeah, it's if you just kind of don't, I don't know, focus for a second, it's, like, all of a sudden you spray three balls. You're, like, Okay, what? Then you have to find it back again and try and get into a rhythm.

That's what I felt like, especially today, where there's not as much but a couple of swings in my match where it was, like, Okay, I got up 2-0, and then I was 2-All, and I almost lost that game. But then I was able to win the set. Then I went up 3-0, and then I lost two games and there were some tight games there.

I don't know. It feels like you're on edge because you're not really sure what the balls are going to do.

Q. Next year with the calendar change, for a top player, the different commitments that you have to do, maybe not playing 250s...

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, it will definitely change a little bit. I think we all have got pretty used to it, or not used to it, but we're trying to get used to it this year with the changes.

I think we're all just going to have to adapt. We are all going to have to figure out what works for us, because it's not going to be the same year that we are used to.

I think once everyone -- this year I think everyone just

wasn't ready, and I think next year people will be maybe more accustomed, maybe have a better training plan or schedule mentally, physically on what they need to do to be fresh for a lot of these big events that are going to be two weeks.

But I haven't really been playing many 250s this year anyway, so I feel like it's not going to change much for me, which I guess is a good problem to have, but yeah, so I think it will feel the same.

Q. Kasatkina said she thinks that 250s will be badly affected by it if top players can't play them. What's your perspective on that as a council member?

JESSICA PEGULA: I guess we will find out next year and the next couple years (smiling). I think the problem is, like, the 250s, there is already very little money, very little points. It's not really getting anyone anywhere.

Like, it's not, like, some have better attendance than others; some don't. There are still exceptions for top players to play the 250s.

So it will be, yeah, we don't really know. It will be interesting to see how it kind of evolves over the next couple of years, and yeah, I don't know. We will just have to see how it goes.

I mean, I hope it goes better. I hope it's not a negative-affecting change. Hopefully with more 500s too, it will create more chances for girls to play also at a higher level.

Q. Ohio is known for the Graeter's ice cream. Do you have a favorite flavor?

JESSICA PEGULA: I had before maybe once last year, once the year before, whatever. I don't know what flavor though. I have no idea. What's yours?

Q. I like the black raspberry chocolate chip.

JESSICA PEGULA: Oh, is that the famous one, the main one? That sounds really good (smiling). I've got to try that. Yeah, I've got to try that.

Q. Sliding on hard courts, have you ever tried to slide and what do you think of it?

JESSICA PEGULA: I laugh, because a couple of years ago, I was, like, I'm going to slide on hard court. My coach is, like, Oh, my God.

I think we were here. He's, like, Can you not try and slide



in practice before your match? I'm, like, I can do it (smiling).

So I do sometimes slide. Am I like Iga? Definitely not. I don't think I slide as much into my shots, like, I can't do the running-for-the-dropshot sliding. I wish I could do that. If I do it, I could probably do it on a practice court, but it doesn't really come, like, instant for me to do it a match, so I just don't do it. And obviously I'm not going to run up to the dropshot and be, like, Oh, I need to slide to look cool or whatever.

But, yeah, and it also depends on the shoes, I think, as well. Some seem to be easier than others. Maybe a little more worn down. Also the court. The court is super gritty for me, yeah, no chance. Maybe on a slicker court.

Q. Why didn't your coach...

JESSICA PEGULA: He's, like, Why do you need to learn how to slide? You're going to hurt yourself in the middle of this tournament.

I'm more, like, No, I can do it. I'm going to prove you wrong.

I kind of did get to a point where I was sliding a little bit. He's like, Okay, it's not bad.

It's something I have to think about and do. It's not instant for me. Like, some people are in and out sliding, sliding. I don't know. I don't think I'm, like -- it seems to be more like the really fast-twitch people, and, I don't know, I don't have a lot of fast twitch (smiling). I'm working on it.

Q. We are pushing hard for the growth of tennis in Latin America, particularly us in Costa Rica.

JESSICA PEGULA: Awesome.

Q. What message would you give a young tennis player in Latin America...

JESSICA PEGULA: Oh, wow.

Q. ...to pursue their dreams in WTA?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah. Well, Costa Rica is beautiful, an amazing country. I actually went there on vacation last year with my husband. We were, like, We need to go back. The people were amazing. That was so awesome.

Yeah, I would say just don't be afraid to dream too big, and that it's a very, very long journey. I think even to show how I have gotten better at a later age than most, that there are

always times for you to work on and improve and get better. Always just try and keep improving a little bit each day. You know, not get caught up on the small things or losses or, you know, the bad days, because it is a very long journey.

But there is always time where you can turn it around, as well. Just to keep working. Yeah, just don't be afraid to dream big.

It's pretty amazing when you see girls come from countries where tennis isn't that popular. They are all amazing stories. That could definitely be them one day where maybe their country it's not that popular. You see it happening more and more.

Q. Like an Ons Jabeur?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, exactly, Ons. Even in Brazil, I feel like. There hasn't been a ton of top players. I think Sherif also from Egypt.

It's pretty amazing when you see girls come from, that there is no tennis. You're, like, How did that even happen? Yeah, that's inspiring. They should use that as motivation, as well.

Q. Pura vida?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, exactly (smiling). My husband and I kept saying that to each other nonstop, as a joke. We'd get frustrated. We were, like, Pura vida. Pura vida life. Like, everything's fine (smiling).

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