

Miami Open presented by Itaú

Saturday, March 25, 2023

Miami, Florida, USA

Jessica Pegula

Press Conference



J. PEGULA/D. Collins

6-1, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Jess, can you please share your thoughts on the match today.

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, I thought I played really, really well. I thought it was a really solid match. I came out really, I don't know, feeling it kind of.

I think she wasn't maybe playing her best, and I kind of was playing a pretty high level to start. Then she definitely started playing better in the second set, which I expected her to because she's a really great player.

I was happy I was able to close that out in a tiebreak.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. With all of the hoopla around the tournament early on with celebrity meetings, commuting, how pleased are you with how you've managed the first few days transitioning to the business end of the tournament?

JESSICA PEGULA: That's definitely something that's hard to balance I think at first. A little bit more comfortable staying at home and driving here. I think it's less stressful, at least energy-wise, emotionally, getting home. Being able to stay home is always nice. That's definitely helped.

Yeah, there's been a lot of celebs here, which has been fun. I love seeing that for tennis. I love seeing people wanting to come out and watch. I think that makes Miami Miami. I like the atmosphere. I think it's a fun vibe.

But, yeah, happy to get a couple wins and kind of work my way into the next part of the week.

Q. Talk about how it is commuting to a tournament versus being driven around.

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, I have to stay on top of myself. Even laundry, I'm doing laundry at home. It's just weird because I'm used to going to the courts, doing my laundry,

picking it up. Then I am like, Oh, shoot, I need to wash my match outfits. Like at home things pile up, all that stuff, so...

In a way, it's nice to relax, but at the same time it can't feel I think too relaxed. I think I've done a good job of staying in my routines, making sure I'm doing everything, being well-prepared coming to drive here.

I like driving personally. I think it's less stressful for me than, like, sitting in a car, because I also tend to get carsick, as well.

Yeah, it's kind of a nice drive coming to and from the courts. Yeah, it feels like a job, like commuting, like I'm commuting to work every day. It feels a little bit different than at a hotel.

I think any time I can get to be home, I definitely, yeah, don't take that for granted, and I appreciate being able to stay here when other people can't go home at other tournaments.

Q. You enjoy driving in Miami?

JESSICA PEGULA: I love in Boca, so I'm like 40 minutes on the turnpike. It's, like, straight usually, knock on wood, tomorrow there's never any issues. I would much rather do that, which I think is farther.

But, yeah, I would not want to drive from Brickell to here. Not even moving anywhere, no, I would not like that.

Q. This time 12 months ago we were starting to get into the phase where everybody was trying to chase down a single player with what Iga was doing. This year it's a bit more spread in terms of players who are pulling away. You're part of that pack. Does it feel any different? Is it still the same mentality?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, it's always to me the same mentality. I don't think it really matters who's winning or who's losing because you're starting yourself in a draw, and you have to win your match. You have to win the next one and the next one and the next one, et cetera.



Yeah, obviously there's more hype around Iga because she was, like, on a win streak, doing all these things. That was kind of her big, like, on the hard court swing, like really dominating.

Yeah, it's a little bit different, but at the same time you see Sabalenka and Rybakina doing the same thing kind of back and forth. I think there's always going to be someone. That just shows the depth in the women's game, that anyone can step up and kind of take over. I think that's really cool that we have all these kind of big players, star power in the game.

I think it gives me confidence, as well, that that could also be me. If I could really go deep here, that would be awesome, yeah.

Q. Looking ahead, facing Magda. Talk a little bit about her, getting to know her as well with players council...

JESSICA PEGULA: I'm actually pretty good friends with Magda. She trains a lot here in Boca. We practice quite a bit. We do some stuff together, as well, like off the court.

She's very soft-spoken, very polite, very nice. I think she's so sweet. It's cool to see, I was so happy for her in Australia because, I mean, I always thought, like, she should be top 30. I think she's a really good player. She always competes really well. She has a really solid game. I know she's had some injuries as well. She had a tough couple years.

To see her break through at a slam, I thought it was so nice because I think it was just so well-deserved to someone like her who is a good person, she works hard, stays in her world. There's no drama with her. Like, she just comes to work and works. To see her getting rewarded like that I thought was really nice.

Also working with her on player council has been really cool because she obviously has seen her points of view coming from Poland, coming from someone that wasn't ranked as high, now she's moving up, kind of the struggle she faced when maybe she was ranked lower or injured or hurt, stuff like that.

Yeah, it's been fun getting to know her. We're pretty good friends. She had a great win today. She is playing well this year. She had some good wins this year. So it's definitely going to be tough. We know each other's games very, very well. We just practiced the other day, as well.

Q. Back to you mentioned this feels like your home tournament. You talked about how you've been to the stadium before for NFL games. How different does it

feel seeing it dressed up for a tennis tournament, Formula 1 happening here?

JESSICA PEGULA: It definitely goes under a little transformation come around this time of year than when I'm usually here during football season. The hallways still feel quite similar, it's just obviously there's an NFL game going on.

I think it's a cool, I mean, atmosphere. I think it's pretty cool to have a tennis stadium inside of the stadium. I think it's something we don't usually get to see, so I think it's something different for this week.

Again, kind of adds to, like, the Miami vibe, the flair a little bit. I like having the field out where everyone is playing games and relaxing, warming up. I think it's a nice contrast coming from Indian Wells, which we all know is amazing.

It's more Miami. I think it's fun. I live close to here. I'm used to the conditions. Everything kind of feels like home to me. Driving back and forth...

But, yeah, obviously football, it's a little bit different. We usually pull up, like, the same area and walk in.

Yeah, I've been here quite a bit. Usually the only games I get to go to are, like, the Miami home games. For the Bills it's an away game. Yeah, I do the same thing. I drive to Hard Rock Stadium and I get to walk through the hallway, I go up to the suite and I watch.

Q. In terms of playing for quite a few months as the top-ranked American, doing this Sunshine Double, is being the top-ranked American everything it's cracked up to be, what you thought it might be?

JESSICA PEGULA: I don't know. Again, I think it's one of those things that once you accomplish it, it's kind of like I wouldn't want to say it's, like, checked off, but you did it, and then there's another challenge. Then how do I become No. 2, win this tournament, get more titles? There's always something else that you're chasing.

It has been very rewarding and fun, though, to hear it announced before every single match. I think it's so much fun. Especially in the States, you really see people respond to that. Even No. 1 women's player. I'm like, No, I'm the No. 1 men's and women's player in the U.S.

It's just fun. I think it's a cool thing that I get to say and I get to hear. People really obviously respond. People that don't even watch tennis, when they hear that, it's like an automatic, Oh, wow, you must be really good. I think that's really cool.

I think it's gained a lot of respect throughout the tennis community, tennis fans, even ex-players, people that work the events. Yeah, it's surreal. It's bizarre.

I'm kind of like 'next goal'. I want to accomplish the next thing. But staying the top-ranked American is something I want to keep doing. That's also another goal.

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