

# Miami Open presented by Itaú

Sunday, April 2, 2023

Miami, Florida, USA

## Coco Gauff

## Jessica Pegula

### Press Conference



GAUFF-PEGULA/Fernandez-Townsend

7-6, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations, ladies. A great two weeks for you guys in doubles and a continuation of your partnership. Just talk us through your thoughts on the match and how thrilled you are to get this title here in Miami, which is a very important tournament for you guys and your home state, as well, especially Coco.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, we're super excited. This tournament is one of those tournaments that you grow up watching, and I think it feels even more special than some of the other 1000s we won. Doing it in front of our family, it means a lot.

I'm glad that we were able to have that result, especially, you know, I think our quarters, final match, we weren't looking like we were going to be in this position but we hung in there. Today honestly I don't think we could have played a better match.

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, same, pretty much. Excited that we were able to win kind of like our home tournament.

Yeah, it feels weird. Like she said, we have grown up watching this event so much. Yeah, James Blake, tournament director. I don't know. It's a fun 1000 definitely to win. I think it's a little extra special for us.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. Coco, you mentioned the double day that you guys had before. Talk a little bit about was the delay helpful, given initially kind of, Jess, where you were physically probably when that initial match with Mertens got suspended at 3-1? Did it help kind of getting a little bit extra rest? How difficult was that day to turn things around?**

COCO GAUFF: I think it was helpful. I mean, it was like later in a day. I mean, she had a long week and, you

know, she got a little bit of extra rest.

I think also the way that the court was playing that day was super slow, and I don't know if that's good for us. So I think definitely it helped when we got to play in the hot, sunny day.

And also, at that point, Jess was still in singles too. I mean, personally, me, I was shocked that she stayed there. She's a trooper. I was, like...

JESSICA PEGULA: She was packing her bags, like, I'm outta here. I was like, It's not canceled.

She's like, We are gonna be. I'm outta here.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I was ready to go. But it definitely helped, I think (smiling).

**Q. In terms of just today's match, Jess, can you just talk through that first set? Seemed like a handful of points really decided it. What was the key, especially playing a team of two lefties? That is pretty rare.**

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, it makes it very tough to get used to their serve. I think it took us, honestly -- the second set we started returning much better. Luckily I at least started making some returns at least to break back to get it to that tiebreak at the end or else we would have lost the first set and who knows.

I think we were all serving very well and serving and hitting our spots. Yeah, it just makes it tough playing two lefties. We have played a couple of lefties the last few matches, but still, it doesn't make it any easier seeing the ball come at you differently, especially both of them. It makes it very hard.

We knew that was going to be tricky going in, and I think we were able to adjust a little bit just in time to kind of turn that match around, but I think once we started putting more returns in the court, we started pressuring them a lot more.

**Q. Jessica, is this as tired as you have been at the end of a tournament?**

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JESSICA PEGULA: I don't know. Toronto I lost the semifinal, and then 30 minutes after a three-set match with Halep we went out and we won Toronto. That was also very tiring.

No, it's definitely been difficult. Obviously the match with Potapova was really physical. Then being in doubles and having a tough match against Rybakina, as well. I mean, I'm tired but I'm okay.

Again, doubles, it's half court. I feel like I can still play a good level even if I'm a little tired, and I'm used to it, and if anything, I'm conditioned to it now, so it's not too big of a difference.

**Q. Can you both talk about obviously just the rapport that you guys have when it's off the court and obviously together when you guys are playing together obviously on the court too?**

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I mean, on the court we obviously have good results. I think that kind of helped us off the court, too. I mean, I didn't really know Jess that well until we started playing together. I mean, I always tell my team this and my coaches, I will play another doubles with someone I don't really get along with off the court. Because singles is very stressful enough. You don't want to play with someone that you don't like. (Laughter.)

Yeah, I think that is a plus. I mean, Jess, you guys all know she's such a nice person. I don't think anyone has anything bad to say about her. For me, on the court, I know I can get emotional. She's always there being positive and telling me, It's okay, go for your shots. I think it's nice having someone in your ear telling you that.

**Q. We have been watching you prepare for your matches from up in the media center, and so the grass lawn, it's all visible. You have quite a different approach to the way you prepare for matches. It might have to do a little bit with your tiredness, Jess, this event?**

JESSICA PEGULA: I do less?

COCO GAUFF: No, I think it's always like that every tournament. I do more hopping around, and you do more like band stuff, I feel like.

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, I do a lot of bands. We have very different warmups. We were playing a lot of games out on the lawn. As the week goes on, my warmups get...

COCO GAUFF: Shorter and shorter. And also, to be fair, she's playing singles, I was out early so I kind of have to

keep my physical condition up, because doubles doesn't do enough for me. So I needed a better warmup. A lot of times I'm doing core in warmup and maintenance stuff.

I think her warmup looks hard. I just am doing more hopping and running.

JESSICA PEGULA: They're very different. Also sometimes I'm in the gym, and I don't do much until I come out in the field and then I only do a few things.

They are just different. Yeah, I don't know. Today I didn't really warm up.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, she didn't warm up today.

JESSICA PEGULA: I'm like, Oh, it's already time. I was standing there, All right, whatever. I'm like, If I'm not warmed up by now, Jesus, I'm fine. Like I'm not going to --

COCO GAUFF: Mentally, it's so annoying doing a warmup three times a day. We have to do it before the warmup, again before the match, and if we have doubles, again. By the time of second warmup in second week, you're done with the warmup. I was playing Spikeball most of the time.

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, I actually resorted to trying to work on my soccer skills or playing football or something, just because it was more mentally stimulating than having to do -- also, we came from Indian Wells where we played a lot of matches too. So literally doing a warmup once or twice a day for a month straight will send you over the...

COCO GAUFF: It's important. Sometimes I miss when I was a kid where I didn't warm up at all.

JESSICA PEGULA: You should warm up. That's the end consensus. You should do your warmup. We're just tired of doing the warmups. We have very different warmups I think was the beginning question.

COCO GAUFF: I think it mimics how we are emotionally. She's more cool; I'm more fiery. It works for our personalities.

JESSICA PEGULA: Got that question down.

**Q. Obviously it's a big month in sports in America right now, obviously with March Madness.**

COCO GAUFF: LSU just won. First thing I did when we got to the bench. I turned on ESPN. She's like, What are you watching? I was like, LSU.

And they won. Everybody thought Iowa was going to win,



but LSU. Never doubt NOLA.

FAU, and Miami lost last night. I woke up this morning, I was like, It cannot be another L for South Florida today. Please, we have to win. I didn't want to say that to Jess, but I thought, are we in this curse with them or not?

JESSICA PEGULA: No, there was no curse. I don't believe in that.

COCO GAUFF: Obviously we won. We redeemed them. This was for you, Miami, and FAU.

JESSICA PEGULA: I did watch, the FAU game was tough.

COCO GAUFF: That was tough.

JESSICA PEGULA: We're starting to lose it (smiling).

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