

BNP Paribas Open

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Jessica Pegula

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Jess, welcome back to Indian Wells. You're coming off a great week in Austin. Talk about how you're feeling and how pleased you are with your last week.

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, obviously always good to come to Indian Wells after winning a tournament. I felt I played some really good matches there. Different week, different conditions, so hopefully I can use some of that momentum coming into this week, and just excited to kind of get going here.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Jess, you're one of three Americans in the top 5. There are 17 in the top 100. You've won 7 of the 14 WTA events collectively. Why now and why, how?

JESSICA PEGULA: You mean for American tennis?

Q. Yes.

JESSICA PEGULA: I mean, that's a great question. I don't really know exactly why now, but I just think that our depth is pretty incredible. I think it has been, though, honestly, for a few years now. I think we're just seeing more Americans maybe in the top 10, obviously top 20, for sure. That's definitely a big change.

You know, having Coco and Maddie win slams over the last couple of years as Americans is huge for women's tennis or for women's tennis in America. I don't know if maybe that's kind of inspiring to maybe some of the lower-ranked Americans to do really well or the younger generation.

That's just been really incredible. I'm happy to just kind of be a part of that group, to be a part of that group for the last couple years now, it's been really cool.

It's nice to see, you know, we don't have to hold the fort down by ourselves. We have a lot of help, which is nice.

Q. With your great perspective on the game, who's the next terrific player that we should be watching out for?

JESSICA PEGULA: Oh, good question. I think there's a lot of really good young players. I mean, I know Noskova has been I think a really good player. Obviously she did really well really quickly. I think Clara Tauson is also a really good player. I think those two obviously have shown what they can do.

Obviously Mirra winning Dubai. I mean, it's incredible what she's been able to do at such a young age. I think she's gonna win a lot of tournaments and a lot of matches for the next ten years.

But it feels weird because she's kind of been on tour a little bit. But she's so young. I mean, I think all those types of girls. I mean, then you've got some Americans that have qualified here, Clervie, I know Ashlyn Krueger has been having a really great year. I think all those girls. They're all early 20s, if that. Some of them might not even be 20, which I think is crazy.

I think that's definitely going to be the next crop of I think top 20, at least, good players for sure to come. I think they're going to do a lot of damage this year as well. I think we'll see them kind of popping in and out and breaking through at some big tournaments.

Q. What is it about Mirra though?

JESSICA PEGULA: I just think she's, one, like, her build, she's fairly tall but moves really well. I think she has a really good serve for someone at such a young age. I think her just court sense, ability to compete. A lot of things. A lot of things you can't teach are already really strong and she's only going to get better.

Being with someone as well as like Conchita is probably really great for her. I think everyone respects her a lot as a coach, and obviously as a former player. So that combination I think will go a long way.

Q. From your multiple perspectives as a tennis player, long-standing member of the player council, and knowledge of other successful American sports leagues, wondering if you can say a few words about



the WTA rebranding, what you see as the process, potential, and your expectations for it.

JESSICA PEGULA: I think it's nice to see a little refresh. It shows that I think we want to kind of take advantage of the era that we're living in as far as women's sports really, not just tennis, but I feel like having a big jump this year whether it's basketball or soccer or anything like that. I think it's kind of been the moment a little bit the past year.

So I think it's nice to see that we're kind of refreshing it, rebranding, kind of trying to take like the initiative in that sense of us being the top women's sport. It doesn't just come from just the players but I think telling their stories as best as we can. We're so lucky that we have an international sport where you have all these different types of stories of different players from all over the world.

I think that's kind of the message they're really going to want to send and connect with those fans and take advantage of all the amazing athletes that we have on tour.

I think as far as a rebrand, it's just a nice refresh to grab people's attention and kind of launch into maybe a little bit of a new era for the WTA and for women's sports.

Q. Off-topic question. Sleep, as a tennis player, obviously crossing time zones a lot and then you have things when you're playing early one day or late the next day, how much of a challenge is that, is dealing with sleep in your daily life? What are some of the methods that you use to cope with that?

JESSICA PEGULA: It's definitely something I prioritize more as I've gotten older. I realize I feel like before I never really did anything, and then you start realizing how much it affects you a little bit more than when you were 18. I definitely didn't pay attention to a lot.

It's really tough. I think the jet lag crossing time zones is so tough on the body. I think making sure you have enough days to know how you adjust.

For me, I've been to a lot of places, and I kind of know places that I do well adjusting and places that I don't. Some kind of can just be harder than others.

I think it's good because you're playing so many weeks that sometimes if your sleep is not great one week you can kind of get through it. You have a lot of adrenaline, you're playing a lot, whatever, you're training, stuff like that. But I think as the weeks go by you say, like, you want to catch up on sleep, you don't really have time to do that when you're on tour.

I think you have to be very conscious of sticking on it, knowing if you're playing two to three weeks and possibly traveling in between then. Just to not get run down and not get sick. Obviously if you're not sleeping as well you're susceptible to getting sick, injured, hurt, you're just maybe not paying attention as much. Just a lot of stuff like that.

I think it's become really important, especially as you see a lot more of, like, the research that they've done on it over the last few years and how important it is to athletes.

It's definitely something I try to prioritize, although I'm kind of a night owl so I'm working on going to bed earlier.

Q. It's been some time since an American woman won at this tournament. What would that mean for you or so many of the other American ladies to be able to bring that trophy this year?

JESSICA PEGULA: It would be awesome. I think it would be nice to see an American win such a big tournament that's in the States. You know, we've gotten that with the US Open, but maybe not as recent here.

I think it would be awesome just because there are so many massive tennis fans that come to this tournament. I think this is one of the tournaments that fans, it's kind of on their bucket list. Even though it's not a slam, it's definitely up there as kind of being a prestigious tournament to win.

So to get an American to win it I think would only grow that exposure of tennis in the U.S. which would be really, really cool. Just because we're in the U.S., and I feel like the whole town and city here just kind of revolves around this event, especially during these couple of weeks.

They are just very avid tennis fans. Yeah, it would be awesome. It would go a long way for our sport in the U.S. and maybe not quite as big as US Open, but I think it would have that same feel, same exposure.

Q. Are there sort of skills and tools or particular shots that you think you need now to succeed in the game that you weren't necessarily focused on five, seven years ago when you were coming up?

JESSICA PEGULA: I would say, I don't know, I think movement definitely. I think all the girls, most of us move really well.

I felt like maybe, I don't know, ten years ago, if you didn't move that well, it was, like, oh, well, you hit the ball well so you could kind of get away with it. So to be consistent at a lot of these tournaments, you have to move pretty well on all surfaces and throughout the weeks with the conditions.



You know, if it's a little bit slower, the points are longer, you have to be able to cover the court.

I think stuff like that, definitely probably movement is something, not that I never worked on it, but it was just something that I think has become much more important.

I would just, yeah, I would say that and maybe, like, coming in, a lot of like the cat-and-mouse-type points, slice, dropshots, I think that goes a long way. Especially maybe now that the courts are a little bit slower, I think you have to find different ways to kind of win the point. You know, those points happen a lot more often than maybe you think, so probably just a lot of those little intangibles.

Q. Just picking up on a few of the questions here, talking about the number of Americans in the top 10, 20, 50, and also the young names that are coming up, as well, how do you think that can help, other than just winning a title, a big title, how can that sort of momentum be translated into getting more people through the gates in the States, especially the younger generation?

JESSICA PEGULA: I mean, yeah, people in the U.S. are very patriotic as far as if you're an American, I think they want to watch you. Especially people or fans that come that maybe aren't true tennis fans or don't follow a lot, but I think, even for me, if I didn't watch that much, I'd want to go watch someone that's from the same country, and that's an American.

I think that goes a lot way, especially in a country where we have so many other dominant sports, and I think to grab people's attention, they're always going to want to gravitate towards the American they can relate to and kind of get on the same side with.

You know, the fact that we have that depth I think is going to help tennis fans in the U.S. a lot to kind of get behind the sport and, you know, find their American to root for, because there is definitely a lot of us.

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