

# BNP Paribas Open

Friday, March 7, 2025

## Jessica Pegula

Press Conference



J. PEGULA/M. Linette

6-4, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Jess, a day match but maybe felt more like a night match. Your thoughts on your performance.

JESSICA PEGULA: Definitely a night match, I would say. Didn't expect to play that late, but, you know, things change. Obviously the matches got kind of pushed back from last night, I guess.

Tough conditions out there. Just happy I was able to kind of adapt. Super windy, super cold. Kind of knew it wasn't going to be pretty. Again, glad I got the job done.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. I know you're very precise about things like your string tension. What's your assessment of the new courts here from your technical point of view?**

JESSICA PEGULA: Oh, my technical point of view. Honestly, I think they might be slower. Not really sure. I feel like maybe slightly bouncier, maybe slightly bouncier. Honestly, they don't feel that much different. They still feel super gritty and super slow.

I would say in the past maybe it would kind of grip more and kind of stop. I feel like here it maybe bounces a little bit. It's still like chewing up the balls really quickly, still kind of slow, gritty.

So I don't really think there's that much of a change, to be honest (smiling).

**Q. Did it feel just as windy as yesterday to you? That was brutal out there.**

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah.

**Q. Fans were bundled up out there too.**

JESSICA PEGULA: Yesterday I warmed up earlier, and it

was so windy. By the time we played our doubles last night, it actually wasn't that windy.

So tonight, as far as later, playing later in the day, tonight was definitely windier than when I played my doubles match last night. Super windy. Kind of like a direct wind right into your face, maybe a little bit going cross but mostly right into your face going one direction. One side you felt you were really with the wind and the other side you felt completely against.

You kind of have to adjust a little bit. It's always really tough and kind of frustrating when you feel like you have to play maybe two different ways on each side.

Yeah, it was definitely cold and super windy today.

**Q. Cincy is a tournament where you have had some success, reaching the final last year. They are kind of rebuilding that tournament from the ground up. Wondered if you're excited, looking forward to this summer to going back there and seeing all of that.**

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, very excited. I remember when I played the final, I was like, when are you guys starting? They're, like, literally tomorrow, like, right now, as soon as we can. I was shocked to hear that it was going to be ready for this year. I was, like, well, you mean a couple years? I saw the renderings. It looked amazing.

I think it's going to be awesome. I know the Navarro that owns the tournament does a great job in Charleston. So I, you know, wouldn't think it's going to be anything less than a great event. It already is a great event. I love playing Cincy, I love the Midwest feel to it.

So I think if they can kind of revamp all of that space and make it even better, it's going to be an awesome stop. And now it's a couple days longer. Adding more space for it being a joint event and a big event now will be great.

I'm super excited to see how it looks. If it looks anything like the renderings, it's going to be awesome.

**Q. In your champion's speech a couple days ago**

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**really you said to Mark, thank you for accepting the challenges every single day. Can you elaborate on that? It's been a year now. And kind of that relationship and how it's evolved over that time.**

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, we've definitely gotten to know each other a little bit more. I'm pretty sarcastic and dry so I think he's kind of gotten on to my humor where I think he thought sometimes maybe I was being serious sometimes when I'd say things (smiling).

But I think we've just kind of, me and him and also Mark Merklein are just kind of it's going to be a different challenge every day. I think that's something I've always been really good at, but I think the last year or so or maybe last year, beginning of last year, I was a little bit more easily frustrated. I think I was overplaying a little bit and just kind of super frustrated and kind of lost, like, the joy of maybe problem-solving and challenging myself throughout matches and every single day and kind of getting those ugly wins.

I don't think I was kind of doing that as well. So I think we've kind of gotten back to every day is going to be a challenge, just accepting that and kind of moving on and figuring out ways to win, knowing that it's not always going to feel great or feel perfect.

I think kind of getting back to that mindset and figuring those moments out, which are pretty much daily at a tennis tournament, is kind of what I meant by that. He's a super optimistic, positive guy. No issue for him really. I think it was just more along the lines of that.

**Q. Have you read the David Foster Wallace essay about playing tennis in windy conditions and the fun of the problem-solving?**

JESSICA PEGULA: No, I haven't. But the only reason I know about that is because I think he wrote about Michael Joyce, and that's how Mike knew him, and I worked with Mike for a long time. I actually haven't read it but I hear it's like an amazing...

**Q. It's totally cool.**

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, I hear it's incredible.

**Q. There's a collection called "String Theory" that's all of his tennis essays. There's some really good stuff in there. The stuff you said made me think of it.**

JESSICA PEGULA: Cool. I'll have to check it out. I know the name. I wasn't around then when he was, but I've heard his writing was pretty cool. I'll have to check it out.

**Q. I don't know if you've answered this. Did you watch Maddie's win live? I don't know where you were. Just watching that, just what was the takeaway from you on that?**

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, I think I woke up maybe, like, end of -- I was still jet lagged so I was still getting up pretty early, and I think I woke up maybe end of the second set or going into -- no, probably later that day. I think Iga's match I woke up end of the second and watched all the third. That was an amazing match.

Then I think in the final I maybe caught the end. I think I was sleeping a little bit later by then. But yeah, it was just an incredible, like, moment. I mean, I think everyone was just really happy for her.

I think growing up, kind of being touted as the next big thing since she was 13, 14 years old, I remember because I think I was a year older, and I was much more under the radar, but I remember all the pressure that she had from such a young age, losing that US Open final and not going the way she wanted, losing some big matches.

I remember when she lost to Sabalenka when she was up a set and 5-3 at the US Open, just all those moments. I think you always feel bad for the loser sometimes, even though you may want someone else to win or think someone else is going to win, you always feel bad for the loser, just because being a player you know how hard and tough that is.

So seeing her kind of go through all those moments and maybe second-guessing herself, whether she was ever going to get one, you know, seeing her win, it was just really nice. It was a really nice moment for her, especially post-wedding, being a newlywed and all these great things going on in her life.

I think she even said she kind of let go of the fact that she didn't need to win a slam to feel like she had a successful tennis career. I think just being happy in her personal life probably really helped her get to that moment of winning a title.

I think it was just a very nice, wholesome kind of inspiring moment, and it's cool. I think in women's tennis we have a lot of those stories now where you see a lot of different stories and different journeys from different players, and I think that's what makes it so interesting. Hers was definitely a nice one to see and something different to kind of start the year.

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