

BNP Paribas Open

Saturday, March 7, 2026

Jessica Pegula

Press Conference



J. PEGULA/D. Vekic

4-6, 6-2, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. What's your take on the match?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, interesting match. I think playing the first match for me, night match on center, a little nervous, conditions are a lot different. It was a little tiny bit breezy out there. Cooler night. I think it always takes some getting used to.

I don't think we played, like, the best level for the first set. It was a little sloppy, I think, from both of us, missing some easy balls and easy shots, missing a lot of returns and stuff like that.

I think after that I was able to kind of, I don't know, free up, get the early break and get that hold kind of at the start of the second. I think that really helped kind of just flip the momentum for the rest of the match. Then we had some really good points, and I thought it was actually a good level after that.

Q. As much as you have played and won, you come into the tournament for the first match and you lose the first set. Is there a still feeling of panic at that point?

JESSICA PEGULA: Definitely. I was thinking about, wow, this would not be great if I lose. I was like, well, maybe I can get out of the sponsor thing I have to do tomorrow.

My brain is kind of going, and I think I've played so many matches and had some really good three-set matches lately where I also was like pretty comfortable knowing that I could turn it around.

I think I kind of flipped the switch pretty quickly. I switched, like the ball is kind of flying on me, so I switched to a tighter racquet. That kind of gave me a little bit more freedom to feel like I could go for my shots, and I think that kind of helped.

Yeah, I think I'm just comfortable in those situations. I mean, there is always, yeah, there's always a little bit of panic, but at the same time, I have been dealing with those matches for a while, and maybe not as much panic as it used to be.

Q. Can I ask about the architecture council and what the main things are you want to get out of that?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, I mean, the goal is to try and prioritize the schedule in the calendar for next year. As soon as next year, hopefully.

I think our goal is just to problem-solve and to try and figure out some ways to do it. I think Valerie has done a really good job as far as just getting tons of feedback from a lot of players, us included. And just kind of throwing a lot of ideas and seeing where there are some areas where we can quickly change.

I think that's something that within the WTA we have had to get better at is changing things quicker and not taking years and years for things to kind of evolve.

So she's really shown that initiative very quickly just by forming the architecture council. And I think also it kind of shows that she wants to make change because I think she's putting it out there, putting pressure on herself, like, hey, I have made this council, this is priority, this is our goal, if we don't get this done, it doesn't necessarily look great.

So I actually kind of like that she's been very out front with it, just, hey, this is what we're going to do, this is our goal. We're getting asked about it a ton in press, and we're going to try and hopefully make some changes to make everyone's lives a little bit easier, I think, hopefully by next year in the calendar.

Q. Speaking of pressure, I wanted to ask you as a tennis player, over the course of your career, at what point -- because it's a word that's used so much. For you, is pressure playing in a Grand Slam final, was it when your ranking wasn't so high, was it somewhere



in between?

JESSICA PEGULA: To me, I have always felt the most pressure on myself when maybe I'm not winning a lot of matches and you've lost a lot of close matches. And I think that when you start to kind of question your confidence a little bit in those moments, that to me is where I always feel the most pressure.

Your mindset maybe isn't the best. You're kind of being really tough on yourself. Of course you get nervous in a Grand Slam final or a semi and in a Grand Slam at any point, but as far as pressure, I always feel like it's pressure that I put on myself, and that's usually when I'm not playing well, I don't feel like I'm improving. You can kind of get hard on yourself.

That to me is always kind of pressure, more of the pressure that I have felt.

Q. Could that be at any point? Is it relative?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, last year, last summer, I was just talking about this, I wasn't winning very many matches, I had a lot of points to defend. I wasn't really worried about points to defend, because to me if you're a top player, you have points to defend all the time.

Looking at it that way is not great, but I didn't have maybe the most amazing clay swing. I was hurt a lot, I had a neck injury, managed to play okay at the French, lost a heartbreaker there to go to, I think, to the quarterfinals. And Wimbledon, yeah, didn't go great.

Then I took a couple which I thought were bad losses for me before the US Open, and I was kind of sitting there going, like, kind of not having great practices, getting really frustrated. To me it was kind of me putting a lot of pressure on myself, like, why am I not playing better, why am I not getting better, I'm putting in a lot of work, but it's almost like it's making everything worse.

I think, like, that to me was a moment where I put a lot of pressure on myself, and I kind of had to step back and go back to the drawing board and look at, okay, what are some things I can control? How do we also maybe not overpractice, don't make everything worse, don't overthink.

And then luckily I was able to turn it around just in time for the Open.

Q. Back to the tour architecture council for a minute, I don't know what it's comprised of. Is it drawn from different tiers of the rankings, player council, or how is it put together?

JESSICA PEGULA: It's myself, Maria Sakkari, and Victoria Azarenka. We were taken from player council as part of the tour architecture. I was kind of named, what, the chair or something? I don't know. I was given a fancy name.

I'm really not doing much more than I was already doing. I think it was just more prioritizing, naming kind of a top player.

I'm also on council as someone that hopefully myself can help bridge the gap between the players and the tournaments, as well. Yeah, that's pretty much it.

Q. Do you think that something will come of it? There's been a lot of initiatives on the tours over the years that haven't really gone anywhere.

JESSICA PEGULA: No, I agree, and I think that's why I'm interested and I'm happy to be part of it and to be a voice, but I like that Val has kind of put it out there as a very big initiative for her, as far as she just got here on tour and I do think this is something she really wants to see change, because again, I also think it comes back a lot to her putting pressure on herself to get it done, because I think if she's able to, that says a lot about her coming in just as far as she just got here a couple months ago.

I think that would be a big win for her amongst the players. I think it would be a big win for player council members who are working hard to get this done and be the voice of the players.

You're right. I think it's fun to talk about it now, but, you know, if there is no action, then it's kind of pointless, but hopefully we don't get to that point.

Q. Is there a timeline that you could see changes next year?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, I think we're looking to hopefully implement maybe a couple of things for 2027.

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