

Billie Jean King Cup

Saturday, 16 April 2022

Team USA

Jessica Pegula

Press Conference

D. YASTREMSKA/J. Pegula

6-3, 6-4

USA - 2

Ukraine - 1

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. What were your thoughts on how you played in the match?

JESSICA PEGULA: I mean, I played okay. I started playing better at the end. She came out firing there for a bit. It was really tough to find my rhythm. I thought she played great. I thought she was just really going after her shots kind of with nothing to lose. Most of them were going in.

I mean, I'm glad I got to fight back there in the second and not go down without a fight. Yeah, just too good from her today.

Q. How do you problem solve with a player like her, when she's hitting?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, I mean, it's tough, especially on these courts because it's so fast. You don't have a lot of time to really try different things. Maybe if it was a slower court, it's different.

I mean, I think it just comes down to competing, digging your heels in, getting a couple extra balls back, not giving away too many free points, like missed returns. Serving better, serving better locations. Trying to get ahead in the point first against her is really important. She made that tough to do today, so it's a tough situation.

Q. You got your first win yesterday. A quick turnaround. Did you feel any mental fatigue, especially knowing if you win this you clinch for Team USA?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, I mean, I would have liked to

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clinch. That would have been nice. It would have been nice for the two girls to play doubles as well, play a doubles exhibition.

It's not a big deal. Talked to the team. No pressure, go out there and play your best. At the same time we have your back. Shelby is going to come in and she's going to play.

Yeah, I feel confident with my team. I don't think I felt really any pressure. But it was a quick turnaround which is kind of weird because also I was first today. Definitely different.

I don't know. Just new experience, I guess.

Q. The weekend as a whole, what are the biggest takeaways?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, it was definitely a new experience for me. It was challenging and nerve-wracking yesterday for me. Today felt a little less nerve-wracking. It was interesting to fight through that experience and try to figure that out. Glad I got the win yesterday.

Honestly we just had so much fun this week as a team. I thought it's been a great experience. Glad I played. Glad I stepped up as No. 1 when I could.

Still upset about today, but at the same time it happens. Just learn to figure it out for the next time. Definitely cool to be the No. 1 player for the team. To get the win yesterday was really special. Also the crowd is pretty great, too, today.

Q. She's ranked in the 90s. She used to be much higher. What does that say about women's tennis that somebody can hit those kind of levels with that ranking?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, I think you see it now all the time in women's tennis. Constantly you're seeing girls break through, girls have good weeks. I think the depth right now is really, really tough.

Some people may think it's not consistency at the top, but I think it's just the depth is so much harder. From the first

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round, it's never an easy match.

She can play really well. She played really great yesterday. Yeah, it's just tough. You have to be focused every single day because you don't know what's going to happen. Anyone can play a good match any day. Yeah, she's obviously much better than her ranking.

Q. Some of the serving problems you had today, is that just the pressure you feel from her return? You're going for a bit more?

JESSICA PEGULA: No, I think I just served shitty (laughter). I mean, she did return well, but I served like crap, so... That didn't help.

She punished me for that, as well. It does go both ways sometimes, yeah.

Q. What's your sense of the overall vibe of the week? Pretty interesting to see a U.S. home tie with that kind of balance in the crowd.

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, exactly. It definitely was more, yeah, balanced I think. There was a pretty good Ukraine section today. There's more people today, probably because it's Saturday. Seemed like the top seats are pretty full, as well.

I thought it was still a great atmosphere. I had a lot of fun. Like I told Shelby, I said, The crowd, it's a little bit more rowdy today. Have fun with it.

It was cool. One of the last points where I hit the lob over her head, it was a really great point, just to look over and see everyone freak out. That's the moments that you play for. Even though I lost, it was worth it for that moment, which is pretty cool.

Q. With match point, you scrambled, hit the lob. Kind of felt like the match could have turned there. Then she comes out and serves. Did that surprise you a little bit?

JESSICA PEGULA: Maybe a little bit. Yeah, I mean, I thought I would get some chances in that game. She seemed like a little tight.

Yeah, she served great. Also the game before that, before I held with the match points, I thought I was going to break her there as well. She hit some really good second serves right on the line. Sometimes there's just nothing you can do about that. She played great.

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