

Guadalajara Open

Friday, 21 October 2022

Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico

Jessica Pegula

Press Conference



J. PEGULA/S. Stephens

6-2, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Jess, pretty straightforward score. How did you find it out there?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, the score seemed I guess easy, but I felt like the conditions today for both of us, the ball was definitely flying a lot on us for whatever reason.

I could tell she felt maybe a little bit off or wasn't on her game. I just tried to play smart and not let her work her way back in the match. I'm happy I did what I had to do to get the win.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. You are going to face Victoria Azarenka. She has been doing great tennis in Guadalajara. I want to ask you about this game. Then in Canada you played against Simona Halep. Today we have bad news about her, a thing of doping. What can you tell us?

JESSICA PEGULA: First on the Vika point.

Yeah, of course, Vika is a great competitor. She's still a great player, especially on hard courts, especially on fast hard courts. I'm not really surprised she's doing well here. She had a really tough win today against Coco. I'm sure that gave her a lot of confidence.

I played her several times, so I know no matter what, she's always going to battle out there. I really like how she competes. No matter what, it's going to be a tough match.

As far as Simona, yeah, I played her in Toronto this year. She won the tournament. I know the news today obviously wasn't great. I don't really have much of an opinion. It's ongoing, provisional, and they're going to investigate it. Until then I don't really have much of an opinion on it.

Q. In the last 14 games you have 11 victories. What is the key to have a lot of victories and a successful

year?

JESSICA PEGULA: I don't know (smiling). If I knew, I would bottle it and sell it to somebody or know what to do what it takes.

I think being healthy is definitely one thing. I felt pretty healthy the last couple years, which I think has allowed me to improve and play a lot of matches and gain a lot of experience and gain a lot of confidence. So that always helps.

But I think I'm just not letting myself get frustrated in the moment. Like, I was not feeling great today. Even when I woke up, I wasn't really feeling great, wasn't in the best mood.

Every week there's always going to be a day where you don't feel well, something is bothering you, where your game doesn't feel right. I think I've learned to deal with it on those days the best I can, not let it frustrate me to the point where I still can't win the match. I think that's pretty much what I've improved on as far as winning a lot of matches.

Q. Another match, another win. Has the tournament been for you what you expected it to be?

JESSICA PEGULA: What do you mean? Like fans, conditions...

Q. Yeah, everything. How have you been feeling so far?

JESSICA PEGULA: I think I'm handling the altitude a little bit better than I thought. I was a little nervous coming from San Diego with, like, one practice day. My past experiences playing in altitude did not go very well. I don't think I played in altitude for like four or five years, so... I think I'm handling that better.

As far as the tournament, it's been great. I feel like the fans are having a lot of fun. I've got to play on stadium. I get to play on grandstand today. It looks like a fun court. I'm excited to play on grandstand playing doubles.



Yeah, the fans have been I think the most surprising. I heard from other players that the fans are really great here. It's been nice to experience how much they love tennis and how much they love all the players. Just seeing their support is special.

Q. After this victory, you will be No. 3 of the world. What do you think about that?

JESSICA PEGULA: That's pretty awesome, right (smiling)?

Yeah, I definitely didn't think... Going into the last couple weeks, I think my goal was to try to secure myself to be hopefully end-of-the-year top five. I know there's maybe still some things that can happen. I know we still get points at the WTA Finals. That was kind of my goal.

I don't think I could catch really Ons, but I knew I could at least do well enough to get to 3. That was a goal, the highest part of the goal. Yeah, super happy I'm able to pull through with every match, especially being down match points the second round.

Yeah, I don't know. It's really exciting. I don't know. I don't really have words. I feel like once this tournament is over, I'm going to be able to breathe a little bit and enjoy it more at year-end Finals.

Yeah, it's just a lot of hard work, definitely a lot of hard work, a lot of matches, a lot of grinding. I didn't almost come here. I'm glad that I did and it paid off.

Q. What do you believe is the difference in your tennis this week in Guadalajara and the last week in San Diego?

JESSICA PEGULA: Actually there is a little bit of difference with the conditions. I feel like you have to play a little bit smarter. The serve here, I feel like it helps your serve if you serve big. At the same time, you can also miss a lot of serves because the conditions fly a little bit.

I think in San Diego it was a little heavier. You definitely weren't able to hit your serve as hard. It was a little humid, a lot of fog in the air.

I thought I was actually playing a lot more aggressive in San Diego because the ball wasn't flying. I got here and kind of had to make an adjustment in the Rybakina match.

Usually I like to take second serves, hit them and come in. Here it's not really easy to do that. If you are kind of off a little bit or second-guess yourself, the ball definitely flies.

Just little things like that.

I think playing certain points smarter, serving smarter, all those things to kind of decrease your errors, unforced errors, is really important to help yourself win free points.

It definitely was an adjustment. Again, I'm glad I was able to figure it out and hopefully continue to do that tomorrow.

Q. Is your priority to focus on singles and do your best or do you have the goal to go through both?

JESSICA PEGULA: Well, I think we're both competitive. You say one thing or think one thing, but once you go out there, I think your competitive spirit, you still want to win no matter what.

Obviously this tournament we were still debating because we didn't really need to play doubles. We almost did it just to help us get used to the conditions, be able to play. We knew it wasn't a must-play for us or a must-win.

I know she had a tough match today. She wanted to play. So hopefully we can get through that, have some fun. Again, it's the last WTA. We can hopefully end it on a good note, regardless, having fun out there before WTA Finals starts.

Yeah, I'm sure she's not feeling great, but she wanted to play. I'm sure we're still going to go out there and want to win.

Q. Speaking about Coco and doubles, what kind of encouraging words would you say to her, a more experienced player?

JESSICA PEGULA: I've been where she's been. I know how she feels. Again, she's so young. She has a lot more matches where she's going to be on the other side of it, then on the losing side of it. That never changes no matter what.

I've had a couple of those losses, and I know it's just not easy. She was upset obviously that she wanted to win. It was a close match. I feel like she's always got good spirits, got good people around her, her team is always super positive.

I'm sure she's going to be upset a little bit, but I think she'll get over it pretty fast and realize what she accomplished this year is incredible for how young she is, everything she's been able to do.

Advice to her would be just like, Chill out, you're really young, you'll be fine.

Hopefully again we can go out there and have fun and play doubles. I'm sure she'll be feeling much better.

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