

# Billie Jean King Cup: USA vs Belgium

Saturday, April 13, 2024

Orlando, Florida, USA

USTA National Campus

## Team USA

## Jessica Pegula

### Press Conference



JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, I mean, being able to watch most of her match yesterday, obviously I feel like it prepped me visually being on the court, getting used to seeing her ball, how she plays, what she likes to go for. Things I thought even Emma did well, she should have done, whatever the reasons were.

I think it definitely helped me prep. Just being out there and seeing her play, it kind of preps you a little bit more for when I was coming in today. I had a good idea of how to play. Luckily I was just kind of feeling it today, too. It made everything a lot easier.

**Q. Did you get a sense that she was maybe struggling physically, mentally after the short turnaround, not being used to playing that much tennis?**

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, playing that much tennis at a really high level between me and Emma is really tough, not just physically but emotionally. I feel like emotionally playing for your country, it can be draining, just the amount of stress, that part of it. Your nervous system is kind of overshot than what it's used to being.

I don't know if she was struggling. I honestly couldn't tell. I was just playing really well. There were maybe sometimes I saw she was using the ice towel. Maybe she was a little, yeah, not feeling her best.

At the same time she was still fist pumping and trying to win games and trying to play every single point. I just tried to keep the focus on my side of the court for the most part today.

**Q. When did you decide to pull out of Stuttgart and why?**

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, I pulled out of Stuttgart a couple days ago just because the turnaround is just too tough. I was thinking I could maybe go and play, but the flight situation wasn't great getting there. I'd have to leave tonight. I just didn't really feel like it was worth it. Plus it kind of extends my trip into Europe a week to 10 days earlier.

I just wanted to get a really good kind of week at home on the clay, back to clay, to prep for Madrid, Rome and

J. PEGULA/H. Vandewinkel

6-2, 6-0

USA - 3

Belgium - 0

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Much different match today than yesterday. You said yesterday you felt flat when you came out. You looked anything but flat today. What was the difference?**

JESSICA PEGULA: Well, I mean, obviously it was a much nicer day today. The conditions were much easier to play in. Yesterday it was really, really tough. It was so windy, got super chilly at the end of the match and into Emma's match.

I think sometimes I can just even the playing field. If you're not feeling great or a little nervous, those things can kind of heighten those emotions, which I felt like it did for us yesterday. But that happens.

We were laughing. Those are the best type of wins, those ugly, gritty wins. Yeah, I don't feel like the best tennis player in the world on those days. Then it really frees you up to get through the tough moments, to come out today and play really well.

It was massive for us to get that. Today it was play a little bit free, try to clinch, do what you can.

**Q. You said on court you learned from watching Emma's match last night. What did you learn that you took into the match today?**



French.

**Q. Yesterday we discussed the massive pressure you were under. Today you seemed to play with a little more freedom. Were you feeling less pressure today?**

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, definitely I think I was just feeling better all around for whatever reason, whether that was pressure or just us being up 2-0. I love being in a clinch position. I love being able to get that win. That can also be a lot of pressure. At the same time I try to embrace it the most that I can.

Just feeling much better today. I think the conditions suited me. A little hotter, a little faster. I was just kind of feeling it.

I mean, like I said, to get through those two really tough matches, not just myself, I really wanted to get it just for Emma's sake so weren't down 0-1 and putting that pressure on her, then her being able to get that really tough win, it helped relieve a lot of pressure for me today.

I thought we just did a great job as a team grinding out. It's 11 p.m., it's freezing out, there's not really anyone there, and we're still giving it our all as a team.

Again, happy to grind that out. Sometimes when you get through those really tough ones, it can kind of turn around for you.

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