

# United Cup

Sunday, 31 December 2023  
Perth, Western Australia, Australia

## Team USA

**Captain David Witt**

**Jessica Pegula**

**Taylor Fritz**

Press Conference

PEGULA-FRITZ/Boulter-Skupski

1-6, 7-6, 10-7

Team USA - 2

Team Great Britain - 1

THE MODERATOR: We have Team USA here. Congratulations on your victory today. If I could just hear from all three of you, David, then Jess and Taylor, your thoughts on the matches and just your overall mood.

CAPTAIN DAVID WITT: Yeah, it was an awesome day. Jess had a really tough match and she got challenged and had a chance to win and it was her first match of the year.

JESSICA PEGULA: No, not yet.

CAPTAIN DAVID WITT: Well, not of the year.

JESSICA PEGULA: Last match of the year.

CAPTAIN DAVID WITT: Yeah. Katie, played really well. She's seeing the ball and hitting the ball unbelievable, and Jess had a chance to win still. It was a good match, and can't be too discouraged.

Together came out and took care of business. The mixed was exciting. I mean, it could have gone either way. The whole super breaker, you never know. So it was a good day.

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, pretty much the same. I mean, I had a really tough match. It was quite the, yeah, first match back for the season, I guess. You know, almost three hours long. Brutal heat.

But she played great. I mean, she played unbelievable. I mean, I felt like I played pretty well. There's things I could have done better. But first match. We'll just keep trying to learn and improve.



Then Taylor took care of business, thank goodness. I thought he played great, was serving well. We were able to turn around that mixed match, which was really important. We're still undefeated in mixed.

THE MODERATOR: Taylor, your thoughts on the match.

TAYLOR FRITZ: Yeah, obviously a really tough match to start for Jess. Katie played really, really well, and still there was chances. Yeah, I feel like honestly it probably helped me play a bit better knowing that if we lose --

JESSICA PEGULA: You had to win.

TAYLOR FRITZ: -- that we needed it. I played really well. It's tough. When I play Cam, it can go, it goes either way. We've played each other so many times. We go back and forth a lot. So luckily I was able to play well and get the win.

Then same with the mixed, after a really bad first set --

JESSICA PEGULA: Lose serve twice. Why does that always happen to us? How are we losing your serve? It's, like, harder to do that like on purpose. I don't think we could do that if we tried.

TAYLOR FRITZ: But, I mean --

JESSICA PEGULA: We bounced back.

TAYLOR FRITZ: -- it's fine if you lose a set in mixed, it's irrelevant, you just play a tiebreaker anyway. We made it happen when it counted.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Jess, what do you feel made the difference? You're up 7-5, 3-Love, and the match turns around.**

JESSICA PEGULA: Uh-huh. I mean, it was tough. I broke her pretty easy, but I could tell she couldn't see. That one side was so bad with the sun. Doesn't matter where we were tossing it, it was so bad.

So, I mean, she broke me. New balls. She started swinging really free. You know, maybe if I would have made a few more returns, I think I could have hung on to that second set. She just started playing super free. You know, again with not getting broken, serving into the sun, and switching to new balls was a tough turnaround. I felt



like the momentum really switched.

That was a big moment but there's nothing you can really do sometimes. She didn't really drop her level much at all. So I wish maybe I could have stayed a little bit more focused on some points there in the second, but, I mean, she won the match. She was going for her shots. Didn't really matter how I was hitting. She was hitting better shots back. She was playing super, super free.

**Q. Taylor, what do you think made the difference that allowed you to get through in that singles against Cam? Physically, how are you feeling? I know you went out and played the mixed doubles afterwards. Any lingering concerns about the leg issue?**

TAYLOR FRITZ: Yeah, I think what really got me over the line was just the serve. I got an early break in the beginning of the match, I was playing really well, and then, you know, unfortunately I just couldn't serve out the set. Tiebreaker could have gone either way. I hit a really lucky shot pretty much to --

JESSICA PEGULA: Slice forehand.

TAYLOR FRITZ: Slice forehand. But I love my slice forehand, but...

JESSICA PEGULA: Best slice forehand in the world.

TAYLOR FRITZ: That's what I like to say.

Even the one I hit at that 5-All point was, you know, like a 1-out-of-10 shot, so I just kind of got lucky to get that, to get that set.

Yeah, the leg was bothering me a little bit. I kind of went into the match very sore from workouts I had done previous to the tournament. I didn't really expect to be sore four days later (smiling).

But I think I just strained something, did something to it when I was running for some of the dropshots, but it started loosening up as the match went on. My serve kept me in the second set, because it didn't bother me at all, the serve.

Yeah, loosened up, I was able to get a break, and then just serve it out. The second set I was barely winning points on his serve, but I knew if I just stayed in with my serve it only takes that one game.

**Q. Taylor, are you confident that you'll be able to back it up tomorrow against Alex?**

TAYLOR FRITZ: Yeah, I think the fact that I was able to feel better towards the end of the match and then play the mixed as well, and, you know, the most important

thing is it doesn't affect the serve at all. I feel pretty confident I can work on it a lot tonight and then have myself feeling pretty good tomorrow.

**Q. Another guy you've played a lot recently in Alex, how do you feel going into that one? Obviously a new season and you guys have played each other a fair bit lately.**

TAYLOR FRITZ: Yeah, it's going to be a tough one. It's always a battle. We were talking the other night at dinner, I was saying the two people that I probably battle with the most, like whenever we play each other, it's always a close match, is Cam and Demon. I get both of them to start the year.

Never played him in Australia. I know that will be a whole nother task to it, but I'm excited to play him.

**Q. Jess, I suppose the win today was great and also for to the fans and media-wise it sets up a live tie against Australia. Winner pretty much goes to the quarterfinals. How is that feeling amongst the group now?**

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, it was obviously huge we won today and gives us a lot of motivation going in for tomorrow. It's going to be some really, really important matches. We know that. So we'll try and get ready as best as possible for tomorrow, and try and go out there and get the job done.

**Q. I'm not going to ask about the Olympics, don't worry, but in terms of turning around the mixed doubles after that first set, what are you guys telling each other? It's very easy in that moment to feel like everything is running against you on the day. But what do you think was the key to turning it around?**

TAYLOR FRITZ: I mean, I feel like I'm the one that's, like, it's not that big of a deal, even though we just lost 6-1, but I'm, like, listen, I got broken twice.

CAPTAIN DAVID WITT: Wasn't there, like, three deuce games?

JESSICA PEGULA: I think, I mean, I think in that format and that scoring, you know it can swing so quickly.

TAYLOR FRITZ: I got broken twice, so we lost the set by two breaks.

JESSICA PEGULA: We were getting broken every time didn't help. I felt like they were playing also super-high level to start off, and we had a feeling if we could just keep it close that it would switch eventually, which it did, and we were able to win some key points there in the second and the third.

Yeah, you know, we strategized a lot. Playing two back, playing up, changing the I, just trying to give them a different look, is what we really tried to do.

TAYLOR FRITZ: We found what really kind of worked for us. Yeah, first set, 6-1, but I was, like, I got broken twice. I think I can manage to, like, not let that happen again in the second, and it's now already just with me holding my serve it's a close match now.

JESSICA PEGULA: I think we started finding our volleys and our movement a little bit better. We had to work our way into it, for sure.

**Q. Jess, I fully appreciate you, as any other professional tennis player, would be in a situation of not taking anybody lightly as an opponent, but what are your thoughts on coming up against Ajla, considering she hardly played in 2023? Yes, she won a title just before here, but your thoughts going into that match.**

JESSICA PEGULA: Well, I mean, I know Ajla, I've known her for a long time. Obviously she can play at a super-high level. I think she likes the conditions here as well, probably likes the court. I definitely am not taking her lightly. I know that, you know, she got the first match out of the way and she's probably going to be ready to come out and play well.

I have played her many times. We always have pretty tough matches, and yeah, definitely not taking her lightly. I know she can beat top players. Nothing new.

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