

Roland Garros

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Jessica Pegula

Press Conference

I. SWIATEK/J. Pegula

6-3, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Jessica, can you start by telling us a little bit about your match earlier today.

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah. Really tough match against Iga. I thought I was hitting the ball well, striking the ball pretty well, but, you know, had a few chances on her service games where I felt like maybe I didn't put enough returns in the court.

But all in all I thought, again, it was just a couple points here and there and she's the best in the world right now of keeping pressure on and not giving you a lot of those chances and that's just kind of what it felt like today.

Q. Congratulations on your tournament.

JESSICA PEGULA: Thank you.

Q. I just would love your sense of where you feel your game is, where you are, particularly the last couple months. It seems like quite a trajectory going up.

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah. No, definitely going up. Really proud of myself the last really couple months on the clay in Europe. It hasn't always been my strong point, but I definitely, you know, I was very successful the last couple months and really proud of myself for that to put in a lot of hard work and grinding in Europe. It's usually tough for the Americans sometimes.

So I'm definitely proud of myself. I think really there's nowhere to go but up. Even this year I lost in Ash in the quarters of Australia, and then I lose to Iga here, which was more like a final, but, you know, it is what it is. And I think it's just showing my level's right there and obviously players like that, they've hit a different level where they're winning, and I hope I can get to that level at some point.

But I think as of right now, I'm definitely very proud of myself and happy that my game is definitely getting better and competing well and all that. So, yeah, nothing bad to say at all.



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Q. I wanted to ask you about at the end of the 3-All game in the first set, the final point there, you dropped, hit a dropshot --

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah. It was a double bounce.

Q. Okay. Could you see that or somebody told you?

JESSICA PEGULA: It was really close, but, you know, even as a player sometimes you can kind of tell when you hit it. I hit a really good dropshot and it was against the wind, and I was like there's no freaking way she got that. I was, like, seriously?

But it wasn't like I didn't think she got it. I was just, like, Jesus, is she that fast? Like, I hit that perfect.

I looked at the chair, and he was like, you know, he didn't call it. You can't say anything. And the problem is once they make their decision you can't go back and change it.

Because it was the end of the set, I think, so they showed the replay on the board and I was like, I kind of looked at him, and I was, like, It was a double bounce. And he was like, Really? I didn't see that.

And I was like, Oh, well, they just showed the replay. It was a double bounce.

But, you know, what are you going to do? You can't go back in time and change the call. So sometimes it's hard because they're judgment calls by the umpire and even if I fought tooth and nail, he can't just all of a sudden call it was a double bounce.

So it's just one of those unfortunate situations. I wish we could somehow replay it and review it because it was literally on the board two seconds later, and I'm, like. And then that was a huge point. I'm not saying I would have won the game or would have won whatever, but I think against Iga and players that are playing very well is that, like, those little, one point is super important. So it was a little, you know, unfortunate situation.

Q. It's not guaranteed but good chance you'll be top 10 after this tournament. Pretty close to guaranteed. What would that number mean to you? It's kind of a symbolic number in tennis for sure.

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah. It's, it will be amazing. I mean, yeah, I don't know the point count or whatever.

It's been kind of funny because even after Australia, I was moving up. And then Danielle made finals, and then she passed me as the No. 1 American. And I was, like, Gosh, every time I feel like I'm doing well, like, someone else just comes in and, like, does a little bit better. And I'm like -- so it's nice to know that at least I'll be top 10, hopefully. I mean, knock on wood.

But it's just an amazing achievement. I really, it's not that I didn't think I would get there. It's just when it happens, like, you can't believe it. And it's a pretty cool thing, I think, with tennis where you can say you're a top-10 best player in the world. That's pretty, pretty awesome.

Q. To follow up as to what you said, what you've been through, I mean, does it, the fact of all the injuries and everything else.

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah. I mean, if you would have told me that while I was rehabbing my hip five years ago and thinking about what I'm going to do and how hard it's going to be to come back.

I mean, I remember when I was just trying to break into the top 100 and it was kind of like this little mental block for me that I was always so close and never broke top 100.

And it's just amazing when you, you realize that you can go so much further than you think you can. And then once you break through that, you're like, Why was I so stressed about that? Like, it really wasn't that hard. Like, it's really not that, I mean, it is hard, but it's not as hard as sometimes I think the unknown, it can make it seem like it's so difficult, and I think I've learned that as I've got to the top 20 and top 15 and now top 10 is that it's definitely achievable. I think you just have to believe in yourself and it's really, really such a big, big part of it.

Q. On a slightly different note, Amelie Mauresmo gave a press conference this morning and one of the questions she was asked was about the night sessions and why there have been nine men's matches versus only one women's match even though that slot's been kind of marketed as the match of the day. And her justification for that was that, at the moment, men's tennis is more appealing than women's tennis. Just wondering how you react to that. Is that disappointing to hear from the tournament director?

JESSICA PEGULA: You know, I don't know. Yeah, I guess it's always just -- I guess it's disappointing. It's not something you want to hear. I think at the same time we need to have chances to have really good matches to show that it is a good product as well. So, yeah, that's tough.

But, again, I don't know. It's a tricky situation for her

because obviously she's trying to do what's best for the tournament as well. But I think, yeah, of course it's always a little disappointing to hear that's her reasoning, being a female, ex-female, you know, slam champion. But hopefully we can change that.

I think they did, I did speak to her, I think, before the tournament, and I think they did try to improve some of the TV slots for the women, as far as I was, I don't know exactly what ended up happening, but I know that there were supposed to be more equal TV spots for the men and women this year. I hope that was executed. I don't know because I've just been playing.

So at least that at least is on the right note, but hopefully the next step we can get is changing that.

Q. Building on that topic or, lots of issues involved there. What does it mean to you at this slam or any slam to play a match on Chatrier or the equivalent, to have that moment, that stage? And then if you could also address what you feel is in the pipeline or in the offing in women's tennis that maybe is not as accessible as the name Federer, you know, Nadal, but I imagine you see that there are reasons that the women's game is compelling and appealing.

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, I mean, well, going back to playing on Chatrier, Chatrier was amazing. It's the first time I even got to, I think, practice on it was the warmup. So that's always something really cool. And sometimes I think I forget when I'm in a match, I lose myself and I don't realize it.

But when you go out there, and you're watching somewhere else you're like, Oh, this is so cool to play on this court. But I don't know, for some reason, me, when I'm in there, I feel like I don't, not don't appreciate it, but I'm so into the match that sometimes you forget.

And so it's nice to look back, even pictures or a video of the match and, or family watching you on TV, and you have to look back and really appreciate that it's a pretty special moment. So, yeah, that was, that was really, that was really cool.

And as far as women's tennis, I kind of forget your question.

Q. Well, it wasn't worded very well. But just if the concern of Mauresmo is that it's just not as, you know, attractive, compelling, at this moment, do you see players or matchups or reasons that the women's game is or soon will be, in your view?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah. Well, I mean, I think it's, I think the depth is amazing. I think it's nice not having someone who wins all the time. But I will say, I'm sure it is probably good as well for someone like an Ash and

someone like an Iga, who are doing so well that it does kind of make a connection of people like, okay, that girl that's winning all its time, if you're not really a big tennis fan. So I think that also is important.

But, I mean, I don't know. To me, I feel like so many people love watching women's tennis because, you know, we don't have huge serves. We're not aching. There's not a lot of super, super quick points. There's more rallies. There's more drama.

So, I mean, I think the WTA's trying to do a better job of putting out a better product there and trying to get fans more connected with the players individually because I think there's so many fun personalities, and you've seen that with even Iga or with Ons who is a great personality and has such a great following.

But sometimes, because it's such a global sport and it's so big and there's so many other sports that sometimes in other countries, even in the U.S., like, they don't really know, I mean, unless you're Venus and Serena, like, they don't really know anyone else.

So hopefully the WTA can continue building that and showing that there's so many great players and so many personalities and so many girls that can pop in and win a tournament at any given time, which I think is more exciting than having the same people win all the time.

Not that I'm not a fan of the Big-3, and what they have done is amazing, but, yeah, I mean, I think it's exciting. I'm hoping we can just connect more with the fans on that aspect.

Q. Just in general how have you found juggling going deep in singles and doubles here and how impressed have you been by Coco alongside her?

JESSICA PEGULA: I'm exhausted. Yeah, she's like, I'm exhausted, she's 18, she's just like bouncing around. She like doesn't care. She's just, Oh. But I'm like taping my leg like onto my body like trying to keep it together.

No, but I, yeah, it's definitely different going deep in both because I've never really done that before, it's usually one or the other. Obviously tiring, but I still think it's, some people may look and maybe they want to focus more on singles and not be tired and stuff like that, but for me one of my goals was to play with someone and do well this year in doubles.

And, you know, a slam for Coco and I is big, especially with the scoring, because it's full scoring and I felt like that's where we could really do well.

And so I'm happy that I've gone deep in both. I think it's shown, again, mentally, it takes a lot to do that. And I enjoy playing tennis, I enjoy going out there and wanting

to win. So, for me, I know it's a lot, but it's also what I wanted to do so I'm never going to kind of shy away from the fact that I put myself in the situation, so I'm not going to complain that I'm winning.

Q. Just wondering if you could compare what it's like to play Iga on hard court versus on clay as you've done both this season now. I think she thinks of clay as her best surface. I know you tweeted something like, God help us all when it's the clay court season. So just what do you think suits her game on these two surfaces?

JESSICA PEGULA: Well, to be honest, she kind of plays like a guy. And, I mean that as, Ash was a similar way, where they don't play like a typical girl where it hit kind of flat and the ball kind of goes through the court.

She plays a little more unorthodox in the fact that she has like a really heavy forehand, but at the same time she also likes to step in and take it really early and I think clay gives her more time and I think it makes her forehand even harder to deal with.

I think on hard court maybe you can get away with rushing her and winning a few quick points on your serve or your return. Whereas on clay you can tell like naturally that's just, I think it's just how, it fits her game perfect. And that's what make it's so difficult, she hits kind of like that heavy ball and then she moves very well.

So it's just difficult really to find a lot of holes in her game and even if you do it's the fact that you're going to have to do it every single time is also really tough. But I also think she plays different and again it was like, when I played Ash, it's like you're not used to seeing maybe that type of ball with the slice all the time or someone that served that well.

And then with Iga it's like the heavy forehand, you're not used to it. So it's hard when you play girls that are so different and then you have to go out there and play someone that you're not used to their ball, I think that's what makes it so difficult. But I do think that her game is suited for clay, definitely.

Q. How much does the, "Heaven help us all" approach, how much is that a factor for her in some ways to help her, because it's sort of that little bit of an aura with her now, with the winning streak and going up against it, it's a little bit of a psychological hurdle maybe?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, definitely. Because even today I felt like I was, you know, I'd come back and I would kind of be in the game and it's like, Okay, I got a second serve. And I can feel it, I'm like, Okay, I have one shot.

And, you know, at the same time you don't want to just hit the ball back on court, because you know she can also step in. But then you're also thinking, Well I need to step up and go for my shots. But then you miss it and you're kind of like, Shoot.

And I think that's what's so difficult, same thing when I played Ash, is like you get those few chances and you kind of feel it weighing on you that if you don't take advantage of it you're like, Shoot, my chance was gone and now I have to work so hard to either hold serve or get back in this game or whatever it was.

And I think mentally that's also like what they do so well is and what I've been trying to do better at is, yeah, the pressure that they constantly keep on you. Because it's not a lot of free points, and, yeah, when you got those chances it's so far and few between.

And that's what, I mean, it's part of the game, it's part of, not a strategy, I would say, but that's kind of what you want to impose on someone is you make someone feel terrible all the time, you know? And even if you get that one shot, it's like, Okay, now I'm back on serve and now it's taken me 20 minutes to hold anyways. Then it's like right back.

So it's just constant pressure and, yeah, definitely that can weigh on you mentally.

Q. Could you reflect on the dynamic of All-American semifinal in the doubles?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, how exciting. At the French Open. Four Americans. Wow.

Well, super happy for Taylor Townsend. She had a baby, just came back like, literally like a few tournaments ago. Just awesome for her. She's a sweet girl. She came to my wedding. I have nothing but good things to say.

And then obviously I played Maddie, with Maddie a few times this year actually in doubles as well.

So, you know, Taylor's an amazing doubles player, Maddie has a big game. She's going to go first shot, serve well, return well, so that will be interesting.

But, yeah, I think it's just great. I think it's guaranteed American team in the final, which is awesome. And hopefully it's going to be a good semi, it will be fun.

We all know each other, we all kind of, well Coco is a little younger, but grew up playing with each other, so, yeah, it will be really fun, I'm excited.

Q. Earlier you mentioned Coco's age and you've got the best kind of view on court with her. Do you

reckon she's ready in singles to go for the final?

JESSICA PEGULA: I told her, I said, Freaking semis in singles and doubles, like we need the final of both, like, and then go for the sweep. Like that would be awesome.

But, no, she's, yeah, I mean, I think so. She loves clay, not surprised that she's in the semis. I'm sure she really wants to, you know, at least get to the final and win this next match.

And I know it's going to be tough, but I don't see why she can't. I think it's, not that Trevisan is bad, but I think it's a great opportunity as in she's not playing like a seed that she's lost to before or anything. Like she definitely did a really great job of, working through her draw pretty elegantly. Like not having too many crazy matches and getting the job done. And I think that's going to give her confidence going into the semis and hopefully she can do it, that would be amazing.

How old is she? 18, 19? Oh. It's just ridiculous. I'm like, I don't, I don't understand. I feel like she's been 18 for like five years. I'm like, Coco, you're like a veteran, but I'm like you're 18. Like, what?

She has so much time, so I hope she doesn't get too stressed out about that either, because I'm sure she will have many more chances. But, yes, we're definitely hoping she gets to that final and then hopefully in doubles too.

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