

Roland Garros

Sunday, 28 May 2023

Paris, France

Jessica Pegula

Press Conference

J. PEGULA/D. Collins

6-4, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Jess, just talk us through the match. Always tough to play a compatriot. Just talk us through what you thought you did really well, and also the atmosphere out there because quite a few fans stayed for you as well.

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, it was definitely interesting having to play Danielle first round. Her not being seeded, kind of floating in the draw is never easy. I know she didn't play Madrid or Rome, but still, I feel like she's still a good clay court player. She's had good results here before.

So, yeah, I knew it was going to be tricky. We just played in Miami as well, so it felt kind of fresh.

But I was happy with the way I played. I thought I played really solid, and I served really well in the second set.

Q. There's a lot of talk before this tournament about the big three, and seemingly you're not part of it even though you are actually part of the top three. Is it a weird thing for you to hear all that, or do you think it's fair? Does it affect the way you feel about yourself?

JESSICA PEGULA: That was just so funny. "Seemingly you're not part of it." No, I'm not part of it (laughing), but hopefully one day I will be. Hopefully this year.

They've earned that right. They've been playing really solid tennis. Iga, we already know from last year. Aryna I felt like broke through in Australia as far as like winning a slam, but I think her results have always been up there. Then Elena at the end of last year as well.

I mean, to see them being so consistent, I think they've earned that right. Obviously ranking-wise I'm still 3, but I'm sure that could change. I could go up or down, whatever. It depends on results.

But, yeah, I think they've earned that title, and I think it's nice to see three girls dominating. Hopefully I can be part of that conversation, but I think either way it's still



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great for women's tennis. Especially because everyone always talks about the inconsistency and all this stuff.

I just tend to think it's because we have a lot of really great depth. It's nice to see them, yeah, playing really, really good tennis, and I feel like it's good for the sport as well.

Q. It also means from an outside point of view you're a little bit under the radar compared to them. Do you like that? Is it good for you?

JESSICA PEGULA: I don't really care either way. I think I'm good with being under the radar; I'm good with not being under the radar. I mean, whatever. It doesn't really matter.

But, yeah, if that's what it is this tournament, then that's fine. If that's how it's going to be, I don't have a problem with that.

I think it's good either way. If one tournament I go in and I'm not, that means I'm playing well. So I think either way I'm fine with it.

Q. Jess, just in terms of a kind of status check, I guess, going into this event and now starting off with a win. Just how full is the gas tank just mentally, you know, physically, tennis-wise? Because it already feels like it's been a long season even though we're just at the second slam, but a lot of tennis obviously that you've played, not just this season, but obviously over the course of the last two or three.

JESSICA PEGULA: No, it's definitely been tough. I think Rome was tough. Yeah, I had a little bit of a nagging injury in Madrid and Rome. Then the two-week tournament. Then I got food poisoning last week. There's been a lot of obstacles, I feel like, the last couple of weeks specifically that have been really tough physically and then taking their toll mentally because of that.

So it hasn't been easy, and I saw I have a really tough draw as well, now playing Giorgi, who did well here last year? Yeah. I don't know. She does well here.

It's not easy, especially playing Danielle today I was just happy I was able to really, like, hunker down and focus. Because I don't think I came in this week feeling my best or feeling the most prepared, but sometimes that



happens.

I'm glad I got through today. Like you said, it's been a long few years of a lot of matches. I still feel good, but the last couple of weeks have been definitely interesting. The first time, too, playing Madrid and Rome two weeks and being American, we don't really love being in Europe that much. So it's definitely been different I think than last year.

Yeah, I'm happy that I was able to kind of shift my perspective at least today and be able to play really great tennis. Hopefully now that I have two days off I can kind of take that into the next match.

Q. Fewer and fewer tournaments have line judges out there, and there was a day perhaps not too far away in the future where even clay they're going to get rid of it. I'm wondering what's your general feeling on that? Do you like having it all be automated? Do you like having somebody to argue with?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, I think it's tough because I do feel like it's missing that interaction with people. Usually it's not a good interaction, but at least it's something.

But at the same time I think it's probably better if the technology is available, to move to something where it's all automatic. I think that's what TV wants. I think they like things to play quicker and faster and keep everything shorter and kind of less up to chance.

I think it does help in a way make the decision for players mentally, like, okay, this is the call, that's how it is, and you can't do anything about it.

I think for tennis to grow it probably has to go that way. I do miss the interaction a little bit with people, but I think we're all pretty used to it now. I do kind of like it more than I thought I would.

Q. When you say it can make it easier to move on, even knowing that in theory that call is right because it's automated, are you ever, like --

JESSICA PEGULA: I'm not like Ostapenko. I'm not like Jelena who she's like, it's still not right, I'm telling you.

I do, like, somewhat agree with her where I don't think it's entirely -- is it 100 percent accurate? No, I don't think it is because there are times where I'm, like, how does it know if it's this much? You know?

Again, I think it just takes the guessing out of it and it takes that kind of away. So mentally you do kind of have to move on because there's nothing you can do about it. I do think in that sense it helps. But yeah, of course, it's not, I don't think it's 100 percent accurate.

Jelena is probably like wants to do a third-party investigation. Let's test the real accuracy of this.

Q. Just following on from Courtney's question, when you're in Europe for a long time and, as you said, not everything is great behind the scenes, what do you have to do off the court to make sure that you're mentally fresh and ready for when you get on to the court?

JESSICA PEGULA: It's a balance. I think, obviously, do all your recovery and everything that you need to do to make sure you're feeling better physically. Then I also think it's good to get out and to do stuff around the cities that you are in.

We are in some really cool places. The long two-week events do give us a little bit more time to do stuff. I think it's good to get out of your room and walk around and get moving. Because I think sometimes we can be really stuck in our rooms and not want to leave, and it kind of leads into this, like, Oh, I don't want to be here, I'm in my room all day, I don't want to do anything.

So you do have to force yourself, I think, to go out and to do some fun things. Even if you lost or if you're just there practicing or whatever, I think it's good for your mental sake to get out and do things.

So I think I have to force myself to do that a little bit, but that's something that I try to get myself to do more when I'm stuck in long places for a while.

Q. On another note, on the ATP Tour recently there's been a few incidents where players weren't happy with the amount that the opponent shouted "Come on." It happened with Djokovic and Norrie the other week in Rome. I'm wondering, how do you see that? When an opponent is shouting a lot, does it annoy you when someone does it, when you hit an error or...

JESSICA PEGULA: Of course, it's one of those things that's annoying, but then also at the same time it's, like, you can't really get upset that the guy is trying to get in your face. I think that's why we play sports. That's why it's competitive.

Yeah, of course, sometimes it can be a little obnoxious, but I also think if that's what gets them going, if that's what they're trying to do to rattle you a little bit, then it's part of the game.

As long as you're not yelling during the point or anything like that, but if it's after a shot, then, I mean, it is what it is. We're out here to compete, and I think sometimes players, I don't know, maybe need to fire themselves up more on a particular day than others.

I don't know. When you are playing against Djokovic, I'm sure Cam was, like, yeah, double fault. You don't get a lot to work with, so I'm sure he was extra fired up because it was, like, every chance he got was a huge chance, when the margins are so small.

I think I'm pretty good at staying in my own little bubble when I'm playing. I don't care if people are walking or yelling or anything. It doesn't really bother me that much. I think maybe some people are more bothered by it than others.

Q. Have you ever played a match where you felt like an opponent was really trying to get into your head in that sense?

JESSICA PEGULA: I'm trying to think recently. I don't know if I can think of anything recently. Juniors, yeah, everyone is screaming at everybody (laughing). If you watch college tennis, it's like the atmosphere there as well.

Yeah, I don't think I've had anything recently that I can think of off the top of my head. But yeah, definitely in juniors for sure.

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