

National Bank Open

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Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Jessica Pegula

Press Conference



J. PEGULA/Y. Putintseva

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THE MODERATOR: Jessica, well done. Winner in both singles and doubles. Can you talk about how you're feeling after that.

JESSICA PEGULA: I feel really good, actually. Always nice to win both matches. So same tomorrow. Double up tomorrow and hopefully I'll be ready to go.

THE MODERATOR: Questions?

Q. You are, in the singles tournament, you are the top seed that's left. Is that exciting or an advantage knowing that there's maybe a clear path toward the final and maybe a title win?

JESSICA PEGULA: I don't really think so. Because I feel like these days anybody can do well. I mean, even this match here. I think Bencic has won this tournament before. She plays really, really well on these faster, quicker courts this time around. And of course I play Halep who is a great champion.

So no, never easy. It's, I guess, nice to see I'm the highest seed. But I don't really think it means anything at this point.

Q. You've actually never faced Simona Halep before in singles. What are some of the challenges she poses and what kind of match are you expecting?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, I remember I almost played her last year in Cincinnati and she actually pulled out. And I was kind of bummed, because I really did want to play her.

Haven't played her. Practiced with her maybe once like a long time ago. So there's definitely some unfamiliarity there.

It will be interesting. I'm sure we'll kind of be feeling each other out. But I'm sure she's seen me play a lot the last

couple years. I've seen her play a lot.

So we'll definitely have our strategies and try to execute them the best. But, yeah, I'm excited to play her for the first time.

Q. You didn't start the year playing with Coco until I think February was your first tournament in Qatar. And your second tournament you guys were able to make the finals at the French Open. How did this partnership kind of come together?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, so I was playing with Asia Muhammad, who also played here in singles. She's great. And we were playing doubles, but we weren't doing that great.

And I was, it was hard with the schedule. Because she's still playing singles, but she's ranked a little bit lower. And we weren't really at the same tournaments. So we were having trouble kind of getting momentum of playing a lot of the same events.

And so we said, Okay, Australia. I was like, you know, Maybe Australia will be our last tournament. And I was actually going to start playing with Timea Babos, who you guys probably remember. She's won a lot of Grand Slams.

And so, of course, Asia and I ended up winning a tournament before Australia. And we're like, Well, of course we're going to win a tournament before we kind of stop playing.

And then we were in, yeah, Dubai, actually. And I played with Coco before, actually. I think last year in Montreal, maybe one other place. And we never did well but we were really like, We should do well. Like, we should compliment each other, right?

And so she was playing with Caty. And then I think Caty couldn't come. And Timea actually got hurt and had to pull out literally like the day before Dubai started.

So we signed in there. Coco and I just signed in by chance.

And then did the exact same thing in Doha. And then



ended up winning Doha.

And then we were like, Oh, well, for the Race we might as well continue playing.

And I guess it worked out. Because we both have been doing really well in singles and we're pretty much playing the same schedule. And so we've been doing well ever since then.

So that's definitely a goal I think to make year-end doubles and hopefully singles, both of us.

Q. What makes her such a good doubles player?

JESSICA PEGULA: She's just so, I mean, she likes playing with me because I hit the ball so hard and it's easy for her to move.

I think what makes her, I mean, she can serve well. And she is just so athletic. Like I don't really have to do as much (laughing). She's, whenever I see the ball over there short I'm like, Oh, she's going to get it. So I know I have to get ready.

But she's just so athletic around the net, in the back of the court. Has a lot of good intangibles with her volleys, lobs, and a lot of her good gets.

So I feel like just her overall all-around athletic ability makes her just really good in doubles. She has a great overhead.

And I think I kind of more, maybe set her up easier at the net. So it makes my job easy and she says it makes her job easy. So I guess it works.

Q. I guess this is two parts. I'm curious, so far this year you've had a lot of success in singles and your ranking has risen a lot. Why do you continue to play doubles? Is it because it's just a lot of fun? Or is it because you feel like it helps your singles game? Or maybe both? And then, I know it's a long way away, but looking into 2023, do you think you'll continue to do that alongside your singles career?

JESSICA PEGULA: I guess it depends on how I'm feeling health-wise. But I always just love playing doubles because I love to play tennis. I like to compete. I think it helps the weeks. Especially if you lose or you lose early you still have a doubles match where I feel you can bounce back and get right back into that competitive mode.

A lot of pressure points. A lot of intangibles you can work on if you're working on something. Serve, return, volleys,

whatever it is. And so for me I think it helps a lot.

I really don't think it takes that much energy. I think maybe sometimes it's just waiting around to play if you're doubled up.

But, honestly, I think it's just because I like to play. It's fun. I like to win. (Laughing). It's another chance to win, right?

So even last week I won DC doubles and I felt like that gave me confidence coming in here for singles. Because I felt like we saved some match points, we were in pressure situations and we were able to win. I think that helped singles and doubles this week.

So I just, I enjoy it. I think it helps. I would like to still play doubles next year as well. So we'll see.

Q. I just want to know what do you like in the way you play this week?

JESSICA PEGULA: What do I like in the way that I play? Well I thought, I don't know, I didn't have a ton of matches coming in here. Obviously DC, like I said, the doubles, winning the title there helped.

But I think, I don't know, I think I just competed really well this week. I mean, today I played pretty solid. I played smart.

Yesterday against Giorgi I just competed. I mean, there was nothing else. Especially with someone like her where she can just hit you off the court at any second. Sometimes that's really all it is is trying to be in there every single point. Saved a match point too. So it was definitely all mental yesterday.

But today I think I just played smart. I think I'm just doing a good job this week of figuring out each match as it comes along. Sometimes you don't know what you're going to have to do, but you have to figure it out while you're out there. And I think I've been doing that well.

Q. Serena's playing Raducanu in Cincinnati. As a player, as players, how interested in that are you and how would you analyze that matchup?

JESSICA PEGULA: Oh, well, that's a nice popcorn match, I guess, for everyone. Yeah, I mean, I don't know. I mean Serena hasn't been playing that much.

Emma at least got a little momentum in DC. Lost a tough match to Giorgi here. But, I mean, again, Giorgi can just be on as well.

So I don't know. It will be interesting. I'm sure it's kind of cool for her. At least she gets to play Serena. Serena isn't going to play after the US Open. So that will be exciting.

And it will be, I guess, I don't know, Serena's kind of on her way out. And Emma's already won a slam, but still on her way in. And it will just be kind of cool to see the two of them out there.

Q. You've been having a pretty good season and you had a few big weeks here and there. Like the final of Madrid. Is it a big goal to try to get the first title of the season? Or are you kind of concentrating more on just being consistent week-to-week?

JESSICA PEGULA: No. Of course I always want to win the tournament.

Consistency is nice. Putting myself in position to get that title of course I always want to do. And sometimes that takes a couple matches.

But of course I always want to win the tournament. I always want to go in winning the tournament.

But it's hard. It's so many matches. So many things can happen and change. So it's really day by day.

But yeah, of course I'm happy to, again, happy to be able to put myself in a semifinal position where I have a chance to get the trophy. And that's obviously the main goal.

But I still have to win tomorrow. So I'm happy with my consistency though. I think that's one of my strengths obviously the last couple years is being very consistent. And I think as long as I'm consistent I'm going to keep putting myself in good situations to win.

Q. Do you sort of feel like that consistent level you have, is it enough to win sort of a title like this this week? Or do you have to do something special during the week?

JESSICA PEGULA: You know, you don't really, you know, you hope that that one match you play really, really well is the final. Or if you get to the final.

And you hope you just have that kind of lights-out match where maybe everything was going well. Sometimes maybe that's not what happens.

But I think, no, I think I can be consistent and still win a title. But of course it would be nice if something special did happen and it helped me win the title. Of course that would be nice. But, you know, just depends.

Q. I think you played Serena in the last final that she played in Auckland. So I want to ask you what you remember from that match. And what you make of the legacy she left on this sport. Because everyone is really in awe of everything that she's accomplished. So what do you remember from the match? And, again, what do you think she has really left on the sport?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, that final was actually really cool because not a lot of people can say they have played her in a final.

I know she was also trying to play tournaments, get matches. It was her first title as a mom. So I know it was really special. I know her daughter was there with her and it was pretty cool to see them that week.

But yeah, I mean, I think the biggest thing for me was... I haven't even like practiced, I practiced with her once after that. But that was the first time I really even hit with her or practiced or whatever.

And I guess just feeling her presence. Like just the power that she has. You can definitely feel it on the other side of the court. And that was something that was different than other players.

But yeah, I mean, it was a cool experience. And yeah, I think everyone's in awe of what she's done.

And it's kind of sad, I guess, to see it sort of come to an end. But there's not much else I can say. I think everything she's done kind of speaks for itself.

Q. So you've won three doubles titles this year with three different partners. What about your doubles game makes you so versatile to be able to find success with a bunch of different partners on the court?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, it was weird. When I won with Erin last week I was thinking that. I was like, Wow, I've won three titles with three different people. I guess that's a good thing. Or I just pick good partners, I don't know.

But, no, I don't know. I return well. I think that helps. I do have good hands. I think I'm quick at the net. And I have good volleys. But I'm always working on trying to be more aggressive.

Because sometimes I can, I kind of like the more defensive volleys where I just like to react instead of kind of closing the net. So that's something I'm always trying to work on.

But I think my hands are good. And I return pretty well.
And I usually serve pretty well in doubles too.

And I think I see the court. And as I play more and more,
yeah, you see the openings. You see what to do.

And I like it too because I get to strategize of who to serve
to and the different set plays. And there's a little more
strategy, I feel like, where you can kind of control more with
playing I-formation or Australian or whatever you're doing
than in singles. And I think I'm good at picking up on stuff
like that. So, yeah, I don't know, I think that helps.

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