

National Bank Open

Saturday, August 10, 2024

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Jessica Pegula

Press Conference



J. PEGULA/P. Stearns

6-4, 7-5

THE MODERATOR: A little tricky in the second set, so how did it feel in the end to pull it out in two?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, definitely, again, super really tough conditions, a lot of wind, a lot of gusting, kind of swirling wind today. I just, yeah, reminded myself of what I needed to focus on. Even though it was 5-2, I knew there was always still a chance I could come back, especially having break points earlier on in the set as well, and that seemed to work for me.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please?

Q. You were very complimentary of Peyton the other day on her potential. In the past year I think you guys last played at the Citi Open last year, what kind of improvements has she made in her game since then?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, I feel like she's just a lot maybe more match tough. I felt like she kind of knows maybe how she wants to play a little bit more, where I felt like maybe last year I played her it was a little more sporadic, and I wasn't really quite sure of like her intention of how she wanted to play.

Today I felt like I could feel what she was trying to do to me. I felt like that was definitely a big difference I noticed from a year ago.

Q. Taylor was in here earlier tonight and talked about the Americans, five of you ladies being in the quarterfinals, and it used to be Venus and Serena, and everyone else was trying to break that ceiling. What can you say about American tennis on the ladies' side right now about where you guys are at?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, it's been awesome. I feel like we've been strong, really for the last few years the depth has been really good, it's amazing we have five girls in the top 15, which is a crazy stat. I mean, hopefully one of us

can kind of step up maybe and win some more bigger tournaments as well.

I think it's really cool to see. I mean, me, I'm not that young, but also the younger crop, maybe with like Emma and Coco and those types of girls that are obviously going to have a long kind of stretch of career ahead of them, especially showing obviously already, Coco's already a Grand Slam champion at such a young age. It's really cool, and hopefully that will just keep inspiring more Americans and more girls to want to play this sport. I think it's growing a lot as well, and that's exciting. It's tough being in the U.S. and playing tennis because there's so many bigger sports, so it's nice that we have a good crop of girls all doing really well at the top, and hopefully we can kind of keep growing that sport in the U.S. too.

Q. Curious, if you were to compare your level in Montreal last year where you were really consistent, and even a couple years ago in Toronto as well, to the level you're playing at now and especially tonight, how would you compare the two, and what are some of the adjustments you think you still have to make to maybe reacclimate yourself to the hard courts or just to being match tough again as well?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, I would say I was probably playing better last year, but to be fair, it seems weird this week, I don't feel like anyone's playing like great tennis, it's been kind of ugly matches. I don't really know why. I think one is we're back to the regular duty, the lighter balls, which maybe are flying a little bit more on us, and then obviously the last couple days the conditions have just been really, really tough. It's hard to kind of base, give like a true feeling of how I'm playing.

I feel like my first round against Pliskova I played at a high level, I feel like in doubles I played at a pretty high level, but the last two single matches with the conditions have been tricky to kind of gauge.

Last year in Montreal I played some really good tennis, yeah, it was a great week, so it's hard to compare. Every day's kind of a new day with tennis, so you never know how you're going to go out there and play, and you always have the next day to improve and play better. I'm just trying to work my way back up there, especially with not a



lot of hard-court wins under my belt yet.

Q. In the second set when things are not going your way there was one moment where you went back to the bench, and then, I don't know, something happened, and then you went back to dominating the entire match. I'm curious to know that when, in moments like this, do you have something that you tell yourself to come back, or in pressure moments what do you do and how did you do that?

JESSICA PEGULA: Well, sometimes I think it's good to kind of let out emotion. At least for me, I'm not super emotional, so when I do let it out I think it does kind of help me clear my head and reset a little bit, so sometimes you need to do that.

I think it just has to be one of those things where you let it out and you reset and you get back right into the present moment of winning the next points.

I think for me, I knew I was close to breaking her every single game, so I knew I was going to have chances, and I just wanted to really, I just reminded myself on the things I needed to focus on, which was moving my feet and staying aggressive, no matter how the wind was moving or swirling, and just focusing on that.

Then on my service games it was just to hold, really. I just wanted to keep holding and give myself chances, and luckily it worked out like that.

It's not always the same every day, you're always telling yourself different stuff, but to me it's just to stay calm and to focus on what you need to focus on, and then if there's any pent-up energy maybe just to kind of let it out, whether it's to your self or to your coach or whoever it is, real quick and then just kind of reset and get in the right mind frame.

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