

Omnium Banque Nationale

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Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Jessica Pegula

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Jessica, welcome to Montreal. Two time champion. How are you feeling ahead of making it a three peat?

JESSICA PEGULA: I feel pretty good. I just got here yesterday, so first kind of real good day of practice here, but excited to be back. You know, have had a lot of great memories between here and Toronto over the last few years.

I mean, yeah, everyone is, like, Oh, three peat, three peat. That's a long ways away, but yeah, I'm hoping that I can kind of find some magic here in Canada that I've been able to kind of summon over the last few years and hopefully play some good tennis.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Just regarding that, just how do you feel coming from Washington and after also how did you reset maybe after Wimbledon, the early exit there, and preparing for the hard season?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah. I mean, Wimbledon definitely didn't go the way that I wanted. I was very disappointed in that, but at the same time, it's not a horrible thing to be home for two, two and a half weeks before the hard court season.

I have a good time to kind of clean up any injuries or anything that was bothering me and kind of focus on the new surface and getting used to it again and being home. So that was really nice.

D.C., yeah, I mean, it was a really tough match. I was up in the third against Leylah, but obviously she's clearly playing some good tennis. In the finals today, and she's really tricky. I played her a couple of times last year, and every match I honestly felt like could have gone either way.

I was trying not to be too upset about that match. I think it was a good first match to kind of really challenge myself, especially in the heat in D.C. There was a lot of elements that day.



Kind of just wanting to reset again here in Montreal and hopefully, you know, use what I've been working on the last few weeks and compete hard and see what happens.

Q. Generally this tournament is the first tournament on hard court for most players. What do you think has allowed you over the last few years to maybe get ahead of the curve and adjust maybe quicker than other players?

JESSICA PEGULA: I think I'm just more comfortable on the hard a little bit. I think the courts are always a little bit quicker in Canada as well, which I think kind of suit my game when I'm playing well a little bit more. So maybe that's why I feel like I've been able to adjust maybe a little bit faster.

I remember even last year for Toronto I came straight from Paris on the clay and was able to adjust pretty quickly. I mean, I think it's the surface I feel most comfortable on and most comfortable moving on, as well. I think those all kind of go into my favor, I feel like, when we start the swing.

Q. Two years ago here in Montreal it was a very kind of particular tournament from "Cotton Eye Joe" to the late finishing and the rain.

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah.

Q. Is there anything that stands out, or just kind of blurs all in the background?

JESSICA PEGULA: From that week?

Q. Yeah.

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, that was a hectic week. The weather was nuts. The "Cotton Eye Joe" thing was wild. I don't know. It feels like it was just yesterday, to be honest. When I'm back here, it's like all the memories kind of come back.

Yeah, I just remember the weather being kind of crazy, and there was a lot of long days, and everyone was kind of playing matches really late. It was just a lot of drama, I feel like, in one week.



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Obviously it will be a little different this time, because the tournament is a bit longer. So hopefully we kind of don't have any of that stuff happen and we get a better event and maybe better from the players not feeling like we're so rushed with the weather and having to cram the tournament in.

Yeah, I mean, it was just a special week. I just remember kind of thinking, Try not to get frustrated with all the elements and all these things that are going on and just try and go out and win matches. That's what I was kind of able to do.

Q. You were born just one day apart from Genie Bouchard. Yet, I don't think you've faced each other on the tour. I was just curious as to what is the relationship there, and how much have you crossed paths over the years?

JESSICA PEGULA: I think I'm a year older, right?

Q. I think you're both '94.

JESSICA PEGULA: I know we always text each other, because we know that we're a day apart or whatever it is. But, yeah, Genie, we share the same agent, so I've known her for such a long time. I got to hang out with her a little bit in D.C. because she was doing some work there. We did some sponsor stuff together.

She seems really content with being able to retire I think here. She just said, my body just couldn't she said it just wasn't worth it in end, with a lot of injuries. I think she's, honestly, kind of an iconic player for the tour and what she was able to bring. I've always really honestly gotten along with her, and I thought she's always worked really, really hard.

I don't know if we ever played against each other singles. Maybe

Q. Not on the WTA website. There's nothing.

JESSICA PEGULA: I think in juniors once a long time ago, but we played doubles quite a bit actually, and we always did pretty well. So I always enjoyed playing with her.

I know it's going to be kind of an emotional week for her a little bit. I hope she kind of, yeah, enjoys it and enjoys the amazing career that she's been able to have, and I know she has a lot of, she said, friends and family here. So I'm sure it will be a special week for her.

Q. She was just out there training, and there were a lot of people watching her, and there's always this

attraction around her. Can you pinpoint, what is it that makes people attracted to her and keep following her, even though she hasn't played that much over the last few years?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah. Well, I mean, I feel like she really put Canadian tennis on the map a little bit with how well she did when she was younger, doing well in juniors, and then obviously doing well making the finals at Wimbledon. I feel like tennis has gotten really big here, and I think she's one of the reasons why.

I think she kind of, I don't know, helps Tennis Canada kind of grow and get a lot more players playing. Now they have a really good crop of players on the men's and women's side. I think that's probably part of it.

And I think she's a fun personality. She's outgoing on socials and whenever she was playing. I think competed really hard and always spoke her mind and believed in what she believed and how she wanted to do things. I think people are always drawn to someone like that.

Q. You touched on it earlier, the rocky finish of two years ago and obviously the weather. This is obviously the first year in Canada we're going to have the expanded draw. Same thing for Cincinnati. Kind of like Indian Wells/Miami. Is that something, especially for WTA 1000s, that you have come to appreciate the bigger draws, the longer tournament, having days in between matches, not playing every day? Is that something that you personally like or something that you appreciate?

JESSICA PEGULA: I kind of like the smaller (laughing). I kind of like when it's quicker. I feel like you can just go and get it over with. I feel like sometimes when they're really long, it can seem really long, especially leading up to a slam, but I'm interested.

I think this format is a little bit different. It's not quite two weeks for each tournament, right? It's 21 days. Pushed together within 21 days. I think it's a little bit of a hybrid between what we've seen with, like, Madrid and Rome or Indian Wells/Miami, and then obviously longer, though, than just having one week to finish everything.

I'm, honestly, just more interested to see how it kind of turns out and how it feels for the players and for the fans, as well, because I think it's kind of like meeting in the middle a little bit.

I'm not a fan of, yeah, when they're, like, two weeks long. It can get really tough. I feel like slams are two weeks, and so now turning everything almost into a slam is really



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mentally draining. I'm hoping that these two events feel like a good kind of middle ground, I guess I could say.

I'm not sure. It's the first time we've done it, and I think we're all going to have to get used to it, but I guess we'll see how it goes.

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