

US OPEN

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Jessica Pegula

Press Conference

J. PEGULA/E. Svitolina

6-4, 4-6, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Jess, you did have a singles match today, a little while ago.

JESSICA PEGULA: Yes.

THE MODERATOR: Three sets, what in your mind was the difference in the third set?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, I felt like the first two sets were kind of up and down on both of our ends. I think, like, I played a little bit better the first set, she played a little bit better the second set. It wasn't much.

I don't really think we were playing at the greatest level, but at the same time it makes it hard to get a rhythm.

I don't know, the third set I think I found my range on my returns a little bit, was really able to pressure her on her serve, then continue to serve pretty well. Yeah, just find some momentum there early in the third to really get the crowd behind me and to pull out the set.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. It seems like Elina is playing different tennis, more aggressive tennis, since she's come back. Are the challenges of playing her different now?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, I feel like she's playing probably, yeah, a little bit more aggressive, probably going after her forehand a little bit more. She's still moving very well and still I think playing her game, though, at the same time just being a little bit more aggressive at certain times.

I also feel like, I don't know, like she's kind of come back with a little bit of a reset.

I felt like the last few times I played her before she had her baby, she seemed like a little run down, I feel like. So, I don't know, maybe her getting pregnant was good timing



for her to go back and reset. I don't know, sometimes that's what you need. That's what players do.

I think we've seen that with Wozniacki and several other girls that had babies. It's a nice reset.

Definitely playing a little bit more aggressive, but at the same time still her game. It makes it really tough because you're not quite sure what to do as much maybe as before.

Q. You were telling the story after the match about you and Madison, same part of the draws. Do you do that superstition thing where you don't look at the draw?

JESSICA PEGULA: Clearly not. Clearly not because we were talking about it as soon as the draw came out.

I always look. I'm not superstitious at all. Seems lying she looks because she seemed to have known, so... Yeah, I guess we're not those superstitious type of people.

Q. Your talk about Stubbs about playing mixed inspired me to think about the people who are triple threats. Could you elaborate, tell me if there are any interesting stories or challenges you've run into over the years when you have decided to play all three, scheduling conflicts or...

JESSICA PEGULA: Definitely scheduling is always one of them. Like US Open, we had so many rain delays that I virtually was kind of forced to pull out because there was just no way we were going to sit there. I was going to be, like, first on or something like at noon the next day, and it was already like 7, 7:30 and we were still waiting to play mixed after my, I don't know, singles or doubles. That's when you kind of are forced to have that happen.

But that was just because of the rain with all the delays we kept getting there. So scheduling I would say is probably the main thing.

Also physically, I mean, how you're feeling and stuff is also part of it. I feel like mixed to me is just a fun way to go out there and be able to compete. I think as long as you're feeling okay physically, and the schedule isn't horrible at the time, I don't know, I enjoy it. I think it's fun. I'd much rather do that than anything else. That's just how I feel. I



know not everyone feels the same way.

For me it's fun to go out there, especially playing with an American at the US Open.

Q. I was talking to Daria Kasatkina the other day. She said at this point so many players are exhausted after such a long year. You've won many matches this year. How do you manage the mental, physical tiredness and how you're feeling in general?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, I think after US Open it's hard, like, 'cause it's the last slam. Everything leads up to every slam, so you don't want to shut down, but I think you're kind of, like, relieved a little bit that the year is kind of coming to an end and you get some rest and you get a break.

But there's still a lot of tournaments. There's still year-end Finals. I think that's something we're all pushing for if you're in the race, or now that we have Beijing back, I won Guadalajara, that was a huge win for me after the US Open. There's still time to make jumps and improve on things at the end of the year. I think some girls play well at the end of the year because they know everyone might be tired or might be starting to check out or injured, whatever it is.

At the same time, yeah, staying tough throughout those last few months can really help you going into the next year. I felt like that's something I did well last year, winning Guadalajara, being able to play the Finals. Those were all firsts for me, so it was an important time but also really helped my confidence.

Yeah, it goes both ways. I think it's just physically how you are, mentally how you are. Just kind of depends on how your year goes. I think everyone feels differently.

Q. You mentioned on court the other day about mixed doubles, you were joking about you're not good at it. We see you're one of the best doubles players. What are the differences between mixed and women's doubles?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, after Austin and I lost first round again at the French was the last time I played. I was just like, Maybe we just don't play well together. He was like No. 1 or something. We were the 1 seed. I was like, Maybe we're just not a good fit. I don't know.

Well, I mean, it's totally different when you're playing against a guy. Well, I did have a good mixed record at United Cup. I don't know. Maybe it's him. Just kidding (laughter). It's definitely not.

No, it's just different. I think for him, too, we were talking about this, where he feels like in mixed he has to do a lot because he wants to help me out. But a lot of the girls are really, really solid.

I'm like, I think he kept getting passed down the line. I'm like, Maybe you're just trying to do too much. I can rally from the back. I'm used to that, right? I'm used to in women's doubles we have a lot more rallies.

I'm okay back there, whether it's the guy or the girl, we don't need to panic. Where I think in men's doubles, they're attacking and moving the net so much. I think it's about finding a little bit of that mix in between where, yeah, you want to help out but at the same time the girls can hang.

Then obviously the serving, the men serving, if you can stay in it a couple of those games, get some breaks, that usually helps win the match.

Q. At 2-2 in the third, was there anything there that allowed you to finish so well?

JESSICA PEGULA: I don't know. Who was serving?

Q. She was serving.

JESSICA PEGULA: She was serving. I broke that game?

Q. Yes.

JESSICA PEGULA: Obviously, I won 6-2 (smiling).

Yeah, I don't know. I think I started stepping in on my returns and committed to playing aggressive. I felt like if I could keep pressuring her with my returns that I could get her serve to break down or maybe I would get a double-fault or maybe I could hit a good return where she'd feel pressure on the first ball. I think that's more or less what happened a couple times in that game.

I just started, I think, finding my range on my returns, hitting some good shots, feeling like I was gaining momentum. I just wanted to keep trying to play aggressive and keep pressuring her and not let her hit out or hit free or feel like she was in control.

I'm not sure why it happened at 2-All. I think I had a lot of really good positive energy, getting a couple tough holds, some tough points holding. Just keep putting pressure on her, even though she was pressuring me to hold, that I wanted to put the pressure right back on her and be like, Okay, now it's your time to hold, but I'm going to make you

play, I'm going to hit some good returns.

Luckily I think I was able to kind of break there and just take that momentum and run away with it. But there definitely weren't a lot of easy points. Yeah, there were some tight moments where, if it would have flipped, who knows, might have been the opposite score.

Q. It must be strange to kind of warm up and hear somebody over the loud speaker yelling your accomplishments. Do you pick up on some of the things they're saying about you? Has there ever been a time when they said something incorrect? What is that moment like?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, have definitely had incorrect stuff. Like incorrect stuff that either was, like, good, as in I hadn't done that, or where I'm like -- they would say a couple things, and I would be like they missed three things they should have added. It doesn't happen so much at the slams. Might have been like a smaller tournament.

Yeah, I think it's nice. It's cool when they can rattle off some really cool accomplishments. It makes you feel proud to walk out there, excited. Gives you a lot of confidence hearing them announce that. I don't know, it makes you feel good, I think. Gives you a lot of confidence. Makes you feel like you have some swagger when you're out there. You're in this huge stadium, there's someone announcing all these accomplishments.

If it's a longer list than your opponent, then you feel good. Then sometimes I play against someone else, I don't know, like a Petra, Woz, they're like, 20 titles. I'm like, Oh. Doesn't sound as good when someone's are better than years.

Yeah, it's a cool feeling, especially here at a slam.

Q. A player like Maddie can be pretty lethal when she's playing well. How do you feel in general about the challenge of facing a player that can take the racquet out of your hands? Is that a challenge you embrace?

JESSICA PEGULA: I've definitely played or just practiced -- we haven't played that many times, I think just once last year, and I won, and it was tight. I know she plays really well here. I know she likes the U.S. hard courts. Obviously she's a finalist here. She's definitely been playing well, won Eastbourne, did well at Wimbledon. I practiced with her several times since.

Every time I practice with her, yeah, she just has the ability to just hit aces and rip forehands and backhands, play a really big power game.

It will be interesting to see how smart I can play and what I can do to combat that. It's always a challenge. I don't mind playing players like that. Obviously you have to play against girls like that, but it is hard. You know if they're having a good day, you're in for it.

At the same time I think I have a good game that can disrupt a lot of those players, so hopefully I'm able to do the things correctly that I need to do come match day.

Q. I was speaking with de Minaur. He said he is a Fantasy Football fan. Has there been any international players that you're surprised with who are NFL fans? Have they become a fan of the Bills?

JESSICA PEGULA: I'm surprised that he is. That's interesting.

I don't know if there's some people, like I couldn't tell you names, but there's definitely people that have randomly come up to me, Josh Allen is on my Fantasy, he's getting me mad points, blah, blah, blah. It's something like that. It tends to be in reference to their Fantasy team. They have a reference to the Bills, Josh Allen, Diggs, something like that. I had no idea they're an NFL football fan. Being international as well, a couple coaches have come up to me and say the same thing. I think it's cool.

I need to work on getting more players to become Bills fans. I don't think a lot of them watch American football. I need to be kind of getting in there and getting some more fans. I forget who it was the other day, You can just be a fan of the Bills. It's already done. You don't need to try to go anywhere else. You have a reason, so...

Yeah, it's cool. But definitely more of the American guys are obviously the ones that are, like, really ready, including my coach, ready for football season to start.

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