

# Miami Open presented by Itaú

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Miami, Florida, USA

## Jessica Pegula

Press Conference



J. PEGULA/S. Sebov

6-3, 6-1

THE MODERATOR: We have Jessica Pegula here for press. I'll ask the first question. Jessica, congratulations on your win today. Can you just give us your overall thoughts on the match and how the conditions were on court today?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, I thought it was an interesting match. Obviously someone I haven't played before. Someone that we haven't seen a ton, like, at this level. So that's always kind of a little nerve-wracking because you're not really sure what to expect, how they're going to play.

First set I thought she played pretty well and then I think I adjusted my game plan a little bit and started to play more free going into the second set, but I thought it was a good match.

**Q. Talk about the first set because she was right there giving you some trouble. What was hurting you about her?**

JESSICA PEGULA: Well, I mean, she hits kind of similar to me. Very low, very flat ball. And the court is playing a little faster, so it's getting through the court.

I at first was trying to go after her forehand I think a little bit and then I kind of switched and started hitting to her backhand, and that seemed to work. Very simple strategy.

But, yeah, I also thought I served pretty well, served pretty smart. I think once I got my serve going, I was getting a lot of free points on my serve.

Her serve, you know, I felt like I could break her every time. She wasn't really hitting it that hard. She was more, like, kicking it in and trying to hit her spots.

So I think once I got a better read and started moving forward, that also helped.

**Q. Quick follow-up. I think you have Danielle next.**

**You have known her for many years. Tough. She's an Australian Open finalist.**

JESSICA PEGULA: Of course.

**Q. Big hitter. Talk about that matchup.**

JESSICA PEGULA: It feels weird that we're playing each other in, what, the third round. It seems very soon, very early. But there's some really good matches, I think, matchups here, so that's just how it is.

But, yeah, she's going to be tough. I think she got through a tough match today as well. She's always dangerous. Especially on a hard court, especially in the U.S., especially in these conditions.

So, yeah, I mean, we know each other's games very well. But, again, it's going to be a very tough match.

**Q. I was just thinking about how this is an AFC East venue. I'm sure you were asked this last year when you made the semis, but how often were you on the road with the Bills and taking in football games at Hard Rock Stadium growing up?**

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, so actually I've never traveled with the Bills at all. I've never done that. The only games I go to -- I think away games, maybe a few here or there -- are here because I'm so close, and I'm usually home for probably the first game. I forget. Usually pretty early in the season.

It feels weird, but it feels kind of more normal because I've been to the stadium several times and been in the exact same areas and everything. So it feels interesting.

But, yeah, I haven't actually really traveled to many games. I don't know if that answers your question.

**Q. So after the first set when Sebov was giving you some trouble, what did you tell yourself to adjust after the first set and come out hot in the second set?**

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, I think, again, like I said, I adjusted my strategy a little bit. I think I started winning a



few more free points, especially on my serve. And I think I just had a little energy boost.

I think it was 3-4, 0-30, and I got out of that game. And then I felt like I freed up a lot, and I think her level started to drop a little bit, and I was able to play a little bit better and really get on top of her quick.

**Q. Jess, we were joking about it in your pretournament press about the home field advantage that you are kind of enjoying here, and obviously you had some Bills players out there to meet with as well.**

JESSICA PEGULA: Yes.

**Q. Talk about that a little bit. Was it surreal at all to be doing your professional job and kind of have that personal side kind of weirdly in your zone?**

JESSICA PEGULA: It's so weird, but it's so cool at the same time. It was totally random, too. Like, they were filming I think for "NFL Embedded." And Dion lives in Fort Lauderdale, and I think Kaiir lives in West Palm now. So I think he just said, Oh, I'm going to go watch the tennis. And they're, like: Wait, Jesse is playing. Go watch her match, and if she wins, we'll film something after.

It was just a really cool moment. I think it was both their first tennis event, so they knew nothing. They didn't even know what doubles was. I was, like, Oh, Coco is playing, my doubles partner.

They were, like, Oh, we have to go scout her out.

I was, like, No, we play on the same team.

They're, like: Wait. On the same -- how? Like you guys -- one is at the net and --

I'm, like, Yeah and then you alternate (laughing).

Yeah, so it was funny, and I told them we need to do a little tennis camp where I run them through some drills. I think Dion, he said he wouldn't do great on the movement part. He is a big boy. He is, like -- he was shocked.

I said, Well, that match was really only an hour. That's not that long. It could go two to three, you know.

And he is, like, Three hours? You get a break, right?

I'm, like, Not really. This isn't football. I was giving him crap.

So they're, like, What are you trying to say?

I'm, like, You know what I'm trying to say.

It's fun to banter with them back and forth. Yeah, I asked them too how they felt coming out onto the field in a different scenario. And they were, like, Yeah, it's definitely weird being here. They've been there so many times, to come out and watch a tennis event I'm sure is interesting, but it's a cool way to bridge both the sports together. I like it.

**Q. (Off microphone).**

JESSICA PEGULA: Kaiir Elan and Dion Dawkins. I think one is a corner, and Dion is a lineman or, I don't know, something.

**Q. Francis Tiafoe has started a bit of a discussion going. Roll your eyes.**

JESSICA PEGULA: About me?

**Q. He feels that to attract more younger people into watching tennis that there should be movement during points.**

JESSICA PEGULA: Oh, I read this quote, yeah.

**Q. And talking and what not. What are your thoughts on something like that?**

JESSICA PEGULA: I mean, I like it. I'm also, like, one of those people. I don't really get bothered if people are standing or yelling or talking -- not yelling maybe, but if there's commotion or...

I remember even at the US Open last year a lot of people complained how loud it was. I guess if I noticed it, I'm, like, yeah, it's loud, but I don't know. That stuff doesn't really bother me that much.

So I can see how, yeah, that's a cool way to look at it.

I mean, even talking with the two football guys today, they had no idea the etiquette. And they were, like, walking out, like, Whoa, let's go. Then they said, All these people were looking at me. He said, I didn't know the tennis etiquette. I didn't know what to do.

I think, yeah, to bring some personality to the sport I think we have to start looking at some different things to touch a younger generation. And guys like Foe who have so much personality and so much energy, they love it, and they have such an amazing fan base, and they have so many fans outside of tennis I feel like because of his energy. So

I think something that could compliment that would really help the sport.

**Q. What about the aspect of when you are in the middle of a point or you're about to serve or anything like that, somebody shouts out or makes a comment, but also for a player hearing ball making contact with the strings of an opponent's racket and the dimensions of something like that when you have got people moving around and talking and jumping up and stuff?**

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah. I mean, I think there would have to be some sort of parameters. I don't think it could ever be replicated exactly, but I think the idea of thinking outside the box is positive.

I mean, yeah, I know what you mean. You can't have people shouting in the middle of a point necessarily, but maybe if the movement was less restrictive, like, I don't think it's that big of a deal. But then, yeah, of course, you open yourself up to things that could happen where it does maybe cause hindrances throughout the play, and it really affects the players.

But, I don't know. He loves the NBA, and he goes to NBA games. And it's like constant chatter between the players and the people sitting on the court. There's a lot of movement, music.

I mean, I think we have to implement some of those things. Obviously we have to fit it to our sport, but I think the idea is there. Maybe just fine-tuning it.

**Q. I'm going to ask you about another thing that an American dude said. Reilly Opelka on doubles, just kind of diminishing the importance of it. I just wanted your perspective as one of the top players who chooses to participate in both singles and doubles at the highest level. What does doubles mean to you and your experience on tour and then maybe what it means to tennis in your view as a whole?**

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah. I think Reilly may be a little bored. He has been hurt a little bit for a while.

I like Reilly, but he always likes to make these comments and get people talking, which I like that about him as well. You know, he is not afraid to say what he wants.

He is entitled to that opinion, but I personally love playing doubles. But, I mean, I could see his point, but at the same time I do think that tennis recreationally most players play doubles. So I think there is some sort of fan base there.

I don't really think we've tapped into that maybe the best because, I mean, everyone in South Florida, you look at all these leagues, all these women's, ladies doubles leagues. It's their whole life. It's so popular. So I think there is something there. Maybe we just haven't reached it.

But, obviously, playing with Coco, you know, the last year or so, like, we get great crowds. So for me it's fun because our atmosphere is always pretty good. We do well. We have a lot of people that support us. But, also, it is because our singles rankings are also very high. It's a Catch-22, I guess, in a way.

I, again, love playing doubles. I love to stay in competition mode. I like to do that on an off day like tomorrow instead of just practice for an hour, like, mindlessly. You know, think about the next match.

I like staying in that mindset, so for me that's what really helps me, and that's why I love playing it, and I think I get to work on a lot of things. That's why I prefer it.

And I know obviously a lot of doubles players are super passionate and are very good athletes and do well and make a pretty good living playing. So, I mean, I don't agree with his rash comments personally. I like playing doubles, but that's his opinion. He can say that, I guess.

**Q. Jess, speaking of Coco, did you watch her acting debut, "All American: Homecoming" on Monday night?**

JESSICA PEGULA: I did not.

**Q. You didn't see it?**

JESSICA PEGULA: I know she's always watching it on her iPad whenever I'm traveling with her. I did not watch it, no.

I don't really watch that show, but maybe I'll watch a clip. I saw she posted some pictures and stuff. She looked great. I haven't asked her about it yet, but I'll ask her tomorrow.

**Q. Do you see an Emmy or Oscar in her...**

JESSICA PEGULA: I'll ask her if she's starting her acting career.

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