

Miami Open presented by Itaú

Monday, March 27, 2023

Miami, Florida, USA

Jessica Pegula

Press Conference



J. PEGULA/M. Linette

6-1, 7-5

THE MODERATOR: Jess, a great performance today. Very solid. Talk us through how pleased you are with the win today.

JESSICA PEGULA: Definitely very happy to get it done in straight sets. It's always nice when you're able to do that.

It was kind of a weird match. I had strings of games where I was playing really well, then a little bit off. For the most part was able string together good games, so that's always a good sign.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. You were saying at Indian Wells you were concerned about slow starts. Today, that was really fast. Five games up in no time at all. Has that been a conscious...

JESSICA PEGULA: I haven't really been thinking about it. It's just nice this week that I haven't been getting off to any slow starts. I mean, it's going to happen both ways.

But, yeah, it's definitely nice to not be coming from behind every single set I play here, like that was happening in Indian Wells.

It wasn't something I was really thinking about. I think it just has been happening that way, which is nice.

Q. You're playing in your home, in the United States, your home country, but it's not New York. How is Miami? How is the weather feeling so far?

JESSICA PEGULA: Good. I've lived and trained down here for quite a long time. Yeah, I'm a little more warm-blooded than I used to be. I like the heat.

Although it's been nice, I've been playing in stadium when it's shaded a bit, so it hasn't been too hot. But, yeah, definitely used to the humidity.

I like it a lot better than the dry heat. I like to be sweating and feel that heat that way. It's been nice being home and having a few days where it's a little warm. It feels normal to me. It feels comfortable.

Q. At 5-5, did you see it then, visualize, Boom, I'm in for the kill at this point?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, I think after 5-2, I don't know what I was doing. It was, like... The changeover before that I, like, switched racquets because I thought maybe the ball was flying on me a little bit. It didn't feel very good. Switched back to the old racquet and I won the next five games.

I don't know why that happened, but sometimes it does. I was mad at myself that I switched racquets in the first place because it was only one break. But we got through that little mental battle I had with myself and I was able to play very well.

Yeah, I mean, she picked up her level as well. I made a couple mistakes. I wasn't serving super high percentage first serve and she was I think used to my pace, got into a rhythm, was playing some good points, which I knew she was going to do.

I'm just glad that I was able to turn it around. Also I picked up my energy a little bit after I was down 5-2.

Q. Anastasia again, quick rematch with her. She says she's changed her game and improved a lot since last time. What are your thoughts?

JESSICA PEGULA: That's not good for me to hear. I barely won last time.

No, I watched her play obviously a little bit this week. I watched her play Coco the other day. I mean, she's playing pretty fearless and she's going for her shots and she's an aggressive baseliner. She's going to be more comfortable playing me, as she almost beat me in Indian Wells.

The courts here are much quicker. I'm not sure who that's



going to help most. I guess we'll see.

Yeah, it's going to be another tough battle. I mean, I think she's finding her confidence. Even when I played her in Indian Wells, saw her at the net, I kind of gave her a look like, One is going to go your way one day. She kind of like gave me a hug. Like, she felt a little defeated in that moment, or tough match, but in a respectful way.

At the same time obviously I'm rooting for Coco, but I think that was probably a big mental battle for her to get through. That's tennis. I mean, I beat her in a really tough match, then the next match I lose in a wild match to Petra. It changes week to week, every single day. It can flip.

I think for her, it's definitely flipped this week here in Miami. She's playing well. So it's going to be tough. Yeah, like I said, we just played each other so we'll be familiar with each other's games very quickly.

Q. Many of your fans crossed over to Canada last year to see you and Bianca in Toronto. Especially because your family is involved in sponsoring so many sporting events, is it possible after the Canadian Open there would ever be a WTA tournament in Buffalo, given the clout that you?

JESSICA PEGULA: I would love to have one there. I don't know where because Buffalo isn't really a tennis haven. But maybe one day. I think that's always been something I've thought about, even after my career, is having a tournament. I think that would be really fun. I don't think my parents are really up for it, but maybe one day I will have one or try to get something going there.

I think it would be really fun also making the connection with Toronto, Montreal, obviously Toronto being right there. I know we alternate with the men, but it's so close. I don't think people realize how close it is. It's like an hour-and-a-half drive.

Yeah, that would be cool because I had a lot of fans in Toronto that were either people from Buffalo or associated with Buffalo just because of the proximity. So maybe one day.

Q. We saw some of your preparation at the end when you finish your game, doing stretches and all that. How about before the game, what is your match preparation?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah, so I have a pretty good warmup. Again, it's always tough to time. You never know how the match before you is going to go.

At least being on stadium, now with the off-court interviews, you usually can give or take five minutes when the match ends before you go actually on court, so I think that helps. Playing on a bigger court, you know there's going to be an interview, people are going to sign autographs.

It's hard. I try to time it as best I can. I try to do as many sets of my warmup, then I switch to something more dynamic. It's nice to have the field out there, so I kick around the soccer ball. My soccer skills aren't very good. Throw the football a couple times. I think just try to warm up, loosen up, keep your energy levels up.

It's hard when you're following a match, especially one that splits, you don't really know how it's going to go. I've had a couple of those this week already.

It really doesn't bother me too much. We're all used to adapting and having to maybe change our warmup or change something depending on how the match before us goes.

Q. You mentioned the other day your familiarity with this facility. Dolphins and Bills, pretty big rivalry. What is the reception you get like? Are people ribbing you about that?

JESSICA PEGULA: Here?

Q. Yes.

JESSICA PEGULA: I feel like there's so many Buffalo Bills sports fans removed, like a lot of the northern teams that live down here now. I don't really feel any hatred from any Dolphins' fans. I'm not a Dolphins' fan, but they're pretty nice to me, I guess. Seems like it.

I really only hear the Bills fans cheering, people that are from Buffalo that come down and have the association with me and the teams.

Yeah, I don't know. I think our fans travel very well, so... I get a lot of those for my tennis I think as well.

Q. What do you think would be your biggest strength? How do you leverage it on the field?

JESSICA PEGULA: I'm sorry, what was the last part?

Q. How do you leverage your strength on the field?

JESSICA PEGULA: Like on, the court?

Q. Yeah.

JESSICA PEGULA: Just making sure we were talking about the right sport (laughter). I was like, I don't have anything to leverage on any other field.

I mean, I like the speed of these courts. I like that they're faster. I think what I'm good at basically, if that's what you're asking, I don't know, I think I change the direction of the ball very well. I hit low, I hit fast, I hit hard, I try to rush my opponents. When I'm playing with the right amount of aggressiveness, I think that's when I'm playing my best, especially on my serving and return, especially during the point where I'm taking my chances, but at the same time playing with margin and not overhitting or getting frustrated.

I think just my ball striking, my ability to, I don't know, kind of just change the direction of the ball. People always, like, laugh at me. It doesn't look like you're trying, but you hit the ball so hard, you give zero effort. I am giving my effort.

That's I think my strength, it's my timing with the ball. When my footwork is good and I'm moving forward, I think that's when I'm playing my best.

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