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**Charleston  
Open**



**Thursday, April 2, 2026**

Jessica Pegula def. Elisabetta Cocciaretto  
1-6, 6-1, 7-6<sup>1</sup>  
Round of 16

**An Interview With  
Jessica Pegula**

**THE MODERATOR:** Jesse, what a battle out there today. Just your thoughts on the win.

**JESSICA PEGULA:** Yeah. Really tough match today. Was able to come back in the third set, but, yeah, just kind of up and down, I think, from both of us. Just didn't start off great, but was able to play good tennis at the end when I needed to.

**THE MODERATOR:** Questions.

Q. Jesse, are there some matches when you come away from them and you're not even sure how you got through it?

**JESSICA PEGULA:** Yeah. Sometimes, yeah. Many of them here, actually. But, yeah, it was a bit like that. I mean, I played a really good second set. Just the third I got off to a bad start.

It was kind of overcast, a little chilly, a little cold, and I just felt like I wasn't stepping into the court enough. I think I served really well in the second, and I was able to serve really well just from pretty much being down 1-4, and I think that really helped change the momentum of the match.

Q. She's tough. I mean now you've played her on a fast surface and a slower surface. She's a pretty good ball striker.

**JESSICA PEGULA:** Yeah, I know. I mean, she's a good player. Like, I mean, the few times that I've played her already, she's good. And I've seen she won a tournament earlier this year. She's beaten a lot of Americans. I've witnessed her beating a girl at BJK, Emma Navarro, and then beating Coco in the Middle East and then Coco having a tough three-set battle with her in Miami. Like I don't know if she loves playing Americans or what, but I've definitely seen her play at a very high level multiple times and very good ball striker, angles the ball off the court really well, and I actually think she has a really good serve as well, very sneaky, because she's not super tall. But she places it pretty well.

Q. I watched you practiced this morning and Elisabetta was on court with you, and you practiced at the same time. I think this is something a lot of non tennis fans and new tennis fans don't quite understand. Every time you see them, going, what do you mean? They're playing a match. Or even that situation, or even just hitting together sometimes. Like what is that -- are you just used to it? Is that just something that you grow up with so you're used to it?

**JESSICA PEGULA:** I mean, we're definitely used to it. But I always think it is such an interesting dynamic to our sport where you're like literally next to each other and about to play in an hour. And sometimes we laugh, like you go and your locker is right next to them and then you're changing right next, getting ready for your matches and warming up together.

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It's such an interesting dynamic in tennis where you're competing against each other, but you can be right there. And that's something that no other sport really has. If you're on a team sport, I mean, you wouldn't dare like be around them really. Like even when they're warming up on the field or on the court, like, you're on your separate sides. It's very, like, a lot of boundaries. But when you're warming up and you yell, want to hit on the same court, sometimes that happens. So I think we're used to it. But it is kind of strange.

But I think because we spend so much time with each other, it doesn't seem as strange to us, but I can see from like an outside perspective of it being kind of an interesting like mental side of having to compete against someone, but then you're sharing practice time with them.

Q. I know you talked an about your personality being kind of even, and we all see that, but I'm wondering do you think you have an alter ego who likes to live on the edge?

**JESSICA PEGULA:** Yeah. I like being like -- yeah, maybe. Maybe I do. Maybe that's what it is. I don't know. I just think that -- I think when I do get in those positions, I think my personality helps me to stay pretty even-keeled. I mean, there are times where maybe at certain times I could be a little bit more to maybe like get myself -- like, I don't know, maybe the first couple games of the third, like maybe if I would have had a little bit more energy maybe to push me through those couple games, kind of send a message that like I'm coming out, a lot of energy and stuff like that. I think sometimes I can do a better job at that, but I do think that when I am down, my personality kind of gets me out of a lot of situations because I don't get overly stressed, and I don't think I show that, and sometimes players can feed off of each other's kind of energy and emotions, and if I'm not giving a lot, I think sometimes it's hard for a player to maybe gauge like how I'm feeling. Like am I that frustrated or am I trying or am I competing.

And I think it helps me also just to think very clearly when I'm in a tough situation. And I really felt like I had to tap into that today where I just felt like sometimes I wasn't like thinking out there, for whatever reason. And I just had to kind of dial in to like finding that temperament, finding that problem-solving state of mind. And I think if you get too emotional, like it's really hard to do that sometimes, at least for me.

But, yeah, who knows. Maybe I like to put myself in tough situations. I like to think I don't, but the tendencies here say something else.

Q. Jesse, you've only played two singles matches obviously, but you've been on court more than six-and-a-half hours this week. Does that play into your preparation?

**JESSICA PEGULA:** It's probably not ideal, but there's not really much I can do about it. I actually today felt pretty good considering it was such a long match. I played the first match on clay, I was shocked that my body was actually feeling okay.

Obviously we'll see like tomorrow and how I feel, if I get through that match. I'm not sure, just time on court obviously is more. So that's, I'm sure, going to affect me in the long run, but I think, kind of like I said yesterday, I don't mind getting all these tough matches in now. I think you kind of need that on clay at some point.

So in a way I'm a little kind of glad it's happening now and maybe not in like a month where all of a sudden I'm having these tough matches and I don't really have my legs under me and I don't have my lungs in me and all these things. So being able to get all of this, with the mental, physical side, playing matches, getting used to the clay now, I think, is best case scenario.

Q. The crowd really urged you on at key moments. Has that helped and have you been on the other side of that and what's the effect of that?

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**JESSICA PEGULA:** Yeah. I mean, I tend to kind of be in my own world, but I also think when I hear the crowd, I don't ever want to show them like I'm super frustrated or that I'm being a bad example for anyone that's really rooting for me, and I want to give them a reason to cheer for me. So I feel like in that way I feel like my attitude is usually better. I think I compete a little bit better because I don't ever want to like let them down in that sense. And even if I lose, it's fine, but like as long as I'm showing up and competing and stuff like that. So I think in that way they always really help me.

As far as being against me, I don't know. I don't, like, pay attention enough for that to really affect me. I've played against some pretty tough French crowds before, at Olympics, at the French last year. And I honestly just think it's fun. Whenever the crowd is interactive, I think it's best case even if it's not for you.

Q. Jesse, I wanted to ask you about a type of it tennis that comes a bit more naturally to me, which is Mario Tennis. I saw you filmed that ad as a Nintendo partner. I'm curious how that all came together, if that's a game you grew up playing.

**JESSICA PEGULA:** Yeah, I played Mario Tennis all the time. I've played a lot actually of just like Super Mario Brothers, and I played on Nintendo DS, which was, yeah, great console, by the way, probably my favorite console that ever existed. But obviously they make much different, easier versions now, instead of carrying around a cube, giant box with you.

But, yes. It was really cool. It just happened, I don't know, like a few months ago they asked me to be a part of it, and I'm a little bit of a gamer, so I think I was excited to like be involved in something that I grew up playing with.

I saw Taylor Fritz did the same kind of thing, and he already messaged me and said he would destroy me, and I was like, all right, like calm down.

But I'm definitely much better with the controller than I am in the swing mode, which it's kind of like a Wii tennis situation. Wasn't as good with the remote, which kind of doesn't make sense. You'd think I would be better. But I was much better with the controller.

But, yeah, I mean, it's great. The thing is so small, and you can travel with it. I know some players actually travel with it, because you just hook it up really easy and play lots of fun games. So it's cool. I'm always like -- I think I'm usually Peach, for whatever reason.

Q. (Inaudible).

**JESSICA PEGULA:** Oh, sorry. Princess. No. I think I was Peach. I'm usually Peach. We played a bunch of different games, but I was probably Daisy for that one.

Q. We'll follow up on that. Is Peach Louise like your favorite character?

**JESSICA PEGULA:** I don't know why. I just always tend to be like the girl. Also in like Mario Cart, too. I don't know.

Q. Talking about next round, you'll play Diana Shnaider. Just your thoughts on playing her in the quarters here.

**JESSICA PEGULA:** Yeah. I haven't played her in a little bit. We played a few times, I think, one year, not often, but a few times. And haven't played her on clay, so, yeah, we'll see. I think a lefty is always tricky, especially her. I feel like she's crafty, but can also play pretty aggressive.

And I think when she gets matches under her, too, she gets confident. That's how she played a really convincing score today. So I'm going to have to do my best to kind of adjust. I feel like I've played a different arrangement of different players. And it's always tough, too, when you don't have a day in between to kind of adjust to all those different players that you're playing. So I



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played someone who's Putintseva, who's a total clay courter, hitting high balls, and today was like the exact opposite, and then, now, a lefty tomorrow that's going to be pretty crafty.

So I'm just going to look at how I've played her the last few times, what things worked. And I think I'm doing some things better now. But who knows with my matches this week. I don't know how it's going to go, to be honest. So I'm just going to do my best to try and find my game, hopefully sooner than I have been maybe this week.

End of Interview

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