



WTA 500

Friday, April 3, 2026

Jessica Pegula def. Diana Shnaider
3-6, 6-3, 6-2
Quarterfinal Round

An Interview With Jessica Pegula

THE MODERATOR: Jesse, you're through to the semis. How are you feeling?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah. Another tough match today.

Yeah, I don't know, it was tough there for a while. I felt like Diana was at a really high level in the first set, and again, like the other matches, I think I just was able to hold on to my serve, start serving much better, putting a little bit more pressure on the return.

And, yeah, I thought I played a really good second and third set.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. How is your sense of humor going through all this?

JESSICA PEGULA: It's good. It's the only thing that keeps can me alive. So I think I was a little bit more frustrated today after the first set, because I was just like, gosh, like seriously? Like I'm going to have to, like, win in three, like, officially now after losing the first set, and it's like the same thing. I got all the break points, and I didn't know if I was going to convert them and all this stuff. So it's been a little bit of a roller coaster for me. But, yeah, my sense of humor keeps me going, I guess.

Q. Can I just get you to talk about the two potential opponents?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah. Is it Iva and Anna? Yeah, I mean Iva, I haven't played her on clay, but played her in Dubai. She's been playing great tennis. Super tough competitor, very focused. Works really hard, doesn't have like a ton of holes in her game. I feel like it's an overall really solid player and I think has been playing at a really high level this whole year. And, yeah, it'll be tricky playing her on clay. It's always different than playing her on a pretty fast hard court in Dubai. So we'll see how that kind of varies.

Yeah, Anna, I've played her many times, have many, many tough matches against her. So she's someone that is really tricky, very dangerous, is able to change direction of the ball very well and also someone that stays pretty calm, and I feel like is hard to read sometimes. And we've always just had really pretty crazy matches. We already had one at the beginning of this year. So I would expect, yeah, a tough match either way. But with her I definitely seem to have hard matchups.

Q. Jessica, I wanted to talk to you a little bit about that frustration, and I saw you, you were talking to yourself and seemingly your team, and based on that -- coaching is allowed now, and I wanted to know are you mostly talking to yourself, kind of like trying to talk yourself through the match? Are you talking to your team asking for something? Like what is that dynamic?

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JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah. Sometimes I'm talking to them. Sometimes -- it's hard to hear sometimes when the crowd is, sometimes I'm kind of just saying things that they probably don't hear, but then I'm talking to myself at the same time.

Yeah, I was a little frustrated at the end of the first set. Like my coach kind of told me, like, your attitude hasn't been great, and I got kind of annoyed, and I was like, well, what do you expect it to be? Like I've been competing pretty well this week. And then I start rambling on to myself, like, are you fricking kidding me? Like, seriously? I think it's been fine. Like it was kind of not great obviously once I lost the first set.

Yeah, it's hard. I feel like, for me, someone who doesn't show a ton of emotion, there is times where I do feel like I have to let it out, and he claims he kind of did it on purpose. I don't really know if that's true, but he was like, I did kind of want you to just like almost get mad at me a little bit just to, like, stop overthinking all the other things that were happening in the match.

So I don't know. Sometimes that happens, but then I am talking to myself a lot, kind of trying to talk myself through things, trying to let out a little bit of frustration. And for me it's always fine as long as I just don't let it linger on and creep into the points.

Sometimes you have to do it just to like snap yourself kind of out of a funk or a mood or whatever it is that you're in. But for me, it's just like let it out and then like, okay, you still have to compete and think your way through this match.

Q. With the adjustments the players have to make from hard court to clay, is it starting to feel a bit like clay court boot camp and maybe with a reset you might not -- you'll hit the ground running a little bit better perhaps once you switch to red?

JESSICA PEGULA: I think so. Like I said before, I do think that this week is something that I can really build off of. There's a lot of things that I feel like I can get better at that I'm not doing that well right now, that I feel have a lot to do with the surface change, just my footing, my footwork, like decision making, just, you know, a lot of different things.

And I feel like it does kind of act as a baseline for like, okay, what can we build off this week? No matter what happens, whether I won or lost today or yesterday or tomorrow, it's going to be the same.

I mean, my coach, we have this thing where we say it's just practice anyways. And so we kind of just say everything is practice, even though it's not. But it is kind of true. I mean, today I was thinking of what I need to do better from yesterday, like what are things I need to work on on the clay.

And, of course, I'm working on winning the match. But when I'm kind of thinking about those things, it does help me play better, and I felt like some of that showed today, especially in the third set. I started moving through the ball a little bit better, taking the ball a little bit earlier, playing more inside the court. And those are all things I think I'm going to have to adapt and get better at as I transition into the clay, rest of the clay court season on to the red.

Q. Jesse, these three matches, the tough first sets, are they on you or the opponent playing really well or is it just kind of coincidence and circumstance?

JESSICA PEGULA: I would say a little bit of both. I think that some of the girls I've played have come out playing really good tennis. Maybe me not at my best. But, I mean, I've been getting like break points early in the first set, maybe not converting and it's kind of flipping the sets. But then I feel like they've played some really good points also to either save break points or to break me and stuff like that.



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So, I mean, Diana, I felt she hit a couple like running-down-the-line forehands in the first set that I was like, that's too good, like great shot.

So I do feel like the girls are definitely coming out kind of with nothing to lose, and I think sometimes that happens when you play against someone that's maybe ranked higher than you or is a top seed. You do feel like you can play really free, and I've been used to that now over the last few years, being ranked pretty high.

And I just try to do my best to keep my level, keep improving my level and seeing if they can keep their level the same. And if they can, it's too good. If not, then I try to find my ways to work myself back into the match.

Q. Well done today. So with these three-set matches, I guess, in terms of recovering and preparing for, now, tomorrow and the day before, whatever, I guess how does your recovery and routine change? What does the rest of today look like and how does that differ from when you win like double bagel in an hour per se?

JESSICA PEGULA: It definitely changes. I think I've actually felt pretty good. Obviously I'm a little just tired, but as far as my body feels, it actually feels pretty good.

It's a lot of ice bath, recovery, massage, a lot of hydrating, relaxing.

I guess I have to stand up for Bob, though, today because he was like, I'm getting so much flack because you were first on today. And I actually, like, had somewhat of an option, and I chose to be first on. So he was like, you need to back me up when you do media because people are like, how could they do that?

And it was funny, I chose to be first on today, and I woke up this morning kind of regretting it a little bit because I was like, ugh. I wish I could sleep for a couple more hours with the somewhat quick turnaround from yesterday.

But my recovery process, it stays the same, especially if I'm in kind of a routine. I would say the only thing is if there's something bother you, then obviously you play more attention to that, but it's pretty much the same.

Q. Jesse, your career, obviously, you've had many different chapters. How much are you able to kind of take in what you've built, and this stadium, everyone loves you, obviously the support. But I know you're out there competing, and how much are you then also like appreciating what you've achieved while you're trying to achieve more?

JESSICA PEGULA: Yeah. It's been really cool, especially someplace here where I've played this tournament so many times. I mean, I started, this was a big tournament for me to play qualis at, getting wild card into qualis growing up nearby and then also living here for a couple of years.

I think you really do, in that sense, kind of appreciate just the fact that I've been able to kind of grow up around these fans and become a better player, and I think to come back here every year, I'm always just very appreciative because there are probably people that have watched me play many years now, have now seen me win the tournament, have seen me come back, have seen me in these crazy matches and stuff like that.

So I do feel like the people that come here, yeah, they know me very well. They've seen me go through some hard matches, win the tournament, lose when I was younger. There's been a lot of things.

So I do feel in a sense they've followed me a bit through my career and to where I'm at. So I'm always very appreciative of that, and I think that's why they carry me through so many matches, because I do always feel like a little bit of a connection to me growing up as a kid and learning how to play down here in the Low Country on the green clay.

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That is something that, yeah, is always very special. And I have a lot of friends and family that come, too, so I think that's really nice.

And being able to come, again, like full circle and be able to play in front of them with the best players in the world -- and also this event has grown into such a big event, too -- is really cool.

End of Interview

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