

Mubadala Citi DC Open

Wednesday, August 2, 2023

Washington D.C.

Coco Gauff

Press Conference



C. GAUFF/H. Baptiste

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THE MODERATOR: Congrats on your first-round win in D.C. tonight. Can you share your thoughts on the match.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, playing Hailey, a friend. Known her for a long time. It was really cool to play her in front of her hometown, and hopefully we have many more battles in the future.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. You mentioned out there just how important it was to play against Hailey. Two young Black women. Can you expand on that, how important it was to play a match like that, how you know the future is bright, maybe face Hailey again in a situation like this?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, even though she's a couple years older than me, we were, like, the same generation of juniors. Yeah, like, growing up, there wasn't, like, a lot of us. We obviously gravitated to people that had the similar experiences as each other. So I gravitated to being friends with her.

Our dads have been friends for a while. My dad wasn't here. He's in Florida, but I know he was watching. Hailey's dad, I was really happy when she won yesterday, because we never played each other. I just wanted to see how that would go.

So, yeah, I told her, you know, at the net, like, Hopefully we can have many more opportunities like this in the future.

Q. A follow-up on that, given the age difference, wondering when you were coming up, were there ever times, did you cross paths training-wise, or did the age difference factor in there? How did that play out?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, we have practiced together a lot. We have done USTA kind of camps together. We have played each other in doubles but never in singles. We

have played the same tournaments, because I always would play up. So we were pretty much the same generation, I would say, same age group, even though she is older but I would always play up.

Yeah, we practiced together so many times. Camps together. We even shared a room together in Palm Springs for, like, three weeks or two weeks. We were roommates. Yeah, we know each other very well (smiling).

Q. Unrelated, working with Brad Gilbert, just wondering the genesis of that and how that, one match, a few days, how that's coming together?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, we started this week. Yeah, we have just started this week, and right now we, you know, have plans just for the week. I mean, obviously how things go, we may expand in future tournaments.

Working with him has been great. I really didn't know him that well other than the commentating, just a little bit seeing his past coaching performances, but those were before I was born (smiling).

Yeah, he's a very funny man. I was a little bit worried, because he is older, that I thought the generational thing, I didn't want to be with someone who's a wall. But he's definitely not a wall. He's making us laugh on court constantly. I think he just makes the game fun and makes it simple. So I'm hoping if everything goes good we probably will continue after this.

Q. Two things about the handshake. On Sunday, Chris Eubanks and Frances both told the story about their handshake at the US Open when Frances beat Chris, and Frances told him, Top 100, top 100. And Chris kind of like walked away. And they were joking a little bit about it, that he ran off on him. But I think that was kind of a meaningful moment for them. Also, wondering if you could reflect back on 2019 US Open with your moment that you had with Naomi at the net and kind of what that meant to you at that time and kind of how you feel about that now.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, that moment, you know, kind of



feels like a blur in a way. I think that the human brain has things of blocking out things that you don't want to remember (smiling).

Even though it was a very sweet moment, I mean, I was crying the whole time, so it was tough. But, you know, I think that it was a beautiful moment in sports. Especially with Naomi, everything that she was doing.

So, yeah, I really, that moment, I don't remember much. I can tell you I have watched it back maybe once or twice. And, yeah, it feels like I'm not even watching myself on the screen.

But I do see why so many people were touched in that moment. Yeah, Naomi in general, I mean, she's a very sweet person off the court, and I think that she has that instinct in general to be kind to people and help them in the moments like that.

So I think that was a bit of a glimpse of her personality. I think you have seen in other moments with other players of that happening, I think, that she just has that instinct. So I'm hoping to see her back on tour soon.

Q. What would you say you're looking for in a coach at this moment?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, in this moment, I mean, I'm looking for someone that has a plan long term and short term. Obviously in season there is a lot you can do but you don't want to make many major changes.

Yeah, I was looking for someone that had a plan post-US Open and sort of leading up to US Open. And working with Pere, obviously Wimbledon didn't go our way, but I started with him that week, to be honest, so, you know, that loss, I don't really put that -- I mean, any loss you should have put solely on the coach, but you know what I mean, I didn't put that on him. He was just giving me stability. He didn't tell me much, because he didn't want to change anything before a Grand Slam.

But now that I have been working with him, had a couple of weeks to train, I do feel like he's someone that I want to continue with. Obviously a little bit of results matter, so hopefully the results will go well. But I do feel that we have a solid team right now. I feel stable. I feel like I have improved. I don't know, in this match, I feel like I have improved a lot since Wimbledon.

So it's only been a couple weeks, so I'm hoping that with more and more hours on the court and more and more, you know, training, mentally, physically, and technique-wise, that I can make a big jump and

improvement.

Q. But just this week has been with Brad?

COCO GAUFF: Yes.

Q. You're talking about another coach?

COCO GAUFF: Well, Pere is still on my team. Brad is more of a consultant, I guess, if that makes sense.

You know, I don't think, we weren't looking for another person to travel week by week. Pere being a young coach, he's 35 years old, I think that we wanted someone with a little bit of experience in Grand Slam matches. And obviously Brad has won on both Grand Slams, coaches on both sides of the tour, so he's more, quote, unquote, a consultant. So I'm trying him this week.

So I hope we continue. I'm liking how I'm feeling right now. But, you know, you don't know how things go. He's still doing his stuff off-court, as well.

Yeah, I don't want to confuse the two. Pere is my coach and he will be throughout the US Open. Brad is like a consultant this week. He's been on court with me. But them two are working together. So if that makes sense, kind of like how Darren is to Jannik.

Q. Then also your dad, I imagine...

COCO GAUFF: My dad isn't -- he's just my dad. He sometimes sends scouting reports, just a little bit, but yeah, he's not doing anything with the tennis. He may shout something, because that's just parents.

But, yeah, he's not helping me with the tennis pretty much at all at this point. I think two people is enough. He's just dad. He's not here this week. But he will be. All he will be doing is taking care of my string and my grips and being dad. But my mom is here this week. She's not a coach, but, yeah, just dad.

He's not going to be -- you know how parents are, so maybe some advice here and there but nothing, like, as a coach anymore, no. So people are clear about that. A lot of people think my dad has been coaching me for the last three years, but honestly, ever since I started with Liam, which was a couple years ago, and then I went with Diego, my dad hasn't really been a coach. He's just been my dad. He does sit in the box front and center, so people really think that, but no, that's not true.

I know it's complicated, guys. I'm trying to get through it too (smiling).

Q. How do you separate the different voices? Even if there are two voices, do they ever say opposite things?

COCO GAUFF: No. I think that really they are having a good stream of communication. Before every practice they having a little briefing, and I think that they're on the same page.

Honestly, let's be real, anybody who is watching me play knows what I need to work on. So it's not like there are two different things that people can butt heads about. I think everybody knows the game plan, whether you know, they know, the fans know. So it's not like it's a secret.

They're not butting heads at all. We have the same plan. That's what was most important for me. Before I even brought Brad on the team and before I even talked to him, he and Pere spoke without me even being in the conversation to see if they would have the same ideals.

And, yeah, I think everybody knows what I need to work on, so I don't think there is any confusion about that.

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