

Internazionali BNL d'Italia

Friday, 14 May 2021

Roma, Italia

Coco Gauff

Press Conference

C. GAUFF/A. Barty

4-6, 1-2 [Ret.]

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Just before Ash's retirement, could you just talk through the match as you saw it from your side, just both with the multiple interruptions and also how you felt you played in your first meeting with her?

COCO GAUFF: Honestly I thought I played good. I mean, the match was a good intensity in the first set. I got broken twice, but the last game I had a lot of chances to hold at that point.

But, yeah, I mean, it's not a way you want to win a match. At the end when she told me she was retiring, forfeiting or retiring the match, I was a bit -- obviously I felt for her, but it's just like when you have the chance to play the No. 1 player in the world, you know, you just want to -- it's not a good feeling to win this way.

I mean, I send the best well wishes, and hopefully she can get well before the French Open.

Q. Did you get a sense at all just playing her as the match went on that there was any issues going on? She said the pain that she was feeling was getting worse and worse. I'm wondering from what you saw in her tennis if you noticed anything changed over the match.

COCO GAUFF: Honestly, no. When she called the physio, I mean, I knew she had her leg taped before the match, but I think she always has that taped. I was shocked when she told me she was -- when she came up to me, I was shocked. I didn't know what to make of it, just because I didn't feel like there was anything going on.

I mean, I'm not psychic and I kind of focus on my side of the court in general, so, yeah.

Q. How does it feel to make your first WTA 1000 semifinal in a week that, you know, this match maybe



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didn't end the way you wanted it to end, but wins over Sabalenka, Sakkari, Putintseva, it's been a tough week for you.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I'm very happy, especially with my first three matches. Those wins were great.

It's cool to make the semifinals. I don't know who I play yet, so I don't know anything about the schedule tomorrow. So I'm already thinking about that.

I was supposed to play doubles today, but it got canceled. I have no clue what the situation will be like tomorrow.

Q. How are you with dealing with kind of inclement weather and all of the kind of unique skillsets? It takes a unique skillset to learn how to deal with momentum breaks, having to go on court, off court, rewarm up. Is that still pretty new to you or are you pretty used to it at this point in your career?

COCO GAUFF: I wouldn't say used to it, but I felt like today, even though the first set didn't go the way I wanted, I felt like I was bringing the energy from the start after every break. I think that's something I think I did well today.

Hopefully I can continue my next, if this happens again, I'll use this experience for the next time. But it's supposed to be sunny here in Rome the rest of the week, so I don't think I'll need that here, but you never know, French Open, if I need that.

Q. Your serve has been fantastic, particularly over the last couple of matches just generally in Rome. I know you have been working on it a lot over the last year. What do you think has kind of clicked maybe with that shot? Because not only are you finding the great pace on your first serve, but you have been able to protect that second serve incredibly well in Rome.

COCO GAUFF: A lot of reps from Madrid to -- I didn't serve the way I wanted to in my first round of Madrid, and from that to this week, we served like a lot of serves, you know, to the point where my arm was feeling a little bit sore.

But I was, like, I need to -- my dad was, like, You need to



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hit serves. That's what I think, just repetition, because it isn't a technical thing on my serve. We have talked to multiple people, and it's not about a technical thing. It's really just about my confidence on the serve. I needed to build my confidence, so we would do certain situations in practice, try to simulate the match.

Because honestly, before Madrid and every time we do serving drills, I make like 50 serves in a row, so it was really just a confidence issue. I think now I'm building my confidence. I know that in my last couple of matches I have been serving well under pressure, and when you keep having that experience I feel like it builds my confidence.

Now I feel really confident in my stroke. It's the same with my forehand as well. It's not a technical thing. It's all about confidence.

I think that's just what young players in general on tour, we just have to be confident in our strokes. When you're not familiar with the level, you never know if you're making the right decisions. I think as I continue to play on this level, I feel like I'm being more confident with my decisions on the court.

Q. What are you expecting to do for Parma? Do you have any idea? Did you speak with anyone of the Barilla company? Is Albano here with you instead of Tony Godsick? I mean, I'd like to know more or less what is the plan for next week when you will be able to go.

COCO GAUFF: I mean, the plan is I haven't really thought about Parma, to be honest. But, I mean, I'm still planning to play the tournament. I want to play. I mean, Barilla, obviously they are there. That's where the factory is.

So I don't know how -- honestly, to be honest, I really haven't thought about Parma. I have just been so focused on Rome. I really don't have any answers for you regarding how that week is going to go.

But I know for sure that I'm going to be playing the tournament regardless of how I do here. I want to -- unless some freak accident happens, which I hope not, knock on wood, but I'm for sure going to play Parma and I know Barilla is there. So for sure after the tournament I do want to take a visit to the factory that's there.

But, yeah, I really haven't thought about the next tournament yet since I'm still in this one.

Q. Between the next two opponents, playing with Swiatek or Svitolina, what do you expect from any of

those two?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I played Svitolina in Australia. Honestly that match, even though the score didn't say it, I felt like it was a high-quality match. She plays super well, so I know what I have to expect, high intensity from the first point to the last.

Regarding Swiatek, she has great results on the clay. I mean, obviously she won French Open last year, and she had a good match this week against Krejckova, and so I think either/or it's going to be a tough match. They are both fighters. They both have good results in Grand Slams and in 1000s, so I think it's just going to come down to who wants it more. I'm going to try my best.

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