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Coco Gauff

Press Conference

C. GAUFF/Y. Putintseva

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THE MODERATOR: Coco, congratulations today. Just 59 minutes. Did you need to be somewhere?

COCO GAUFF: Oh, I needed to be here I guess (smiling).

No, I mean, I usually have long matches with her. I was fully prepared for that. But I told myself to play on my terms, not her terms.

She's obviously a tricky player, has some big wins. Made the quarters of the French a couple times. I know clay is her surface. It's also kind of mine, too, so it was a good match today.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. You were really crushing the ball today, particularly on the returns, leaning into it. A bit of a change in some ways. Can you talk a little bit about that intention today.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I was really focused on doing that. In the doubles I was trying to do that a little bit more. I feel like in singles you free up 'cause you know there's not someone there at the net, even if you hit it fast, they'll volley it back fast.

I was really trying to focus on that last week in doubles and in practice. Yeah, I think it showed today, this week. Even though I missed some, I definitely feel like the reward was better than those misses.

Q. You said the other day you're trying to come into this tournament without expectations. How do you actually do that? How easy is that?

COCO GAUFF: I feel like last week was a little bit of a low for me. I feel like when you are coming from a low, you can only go up.

I think the biggest thing for me is once I go up, to keep



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going even higher. I don't think you want to put like a ceiling on yourself. I guess if you go up, you have a ceiling, then it feels like you can't move anywhere. If you go up, don't have any ceiling or anything stopping you, you're constantly going up.

Yeah, this tour week in, week out, you're going to have some stagnation, even down weeks. For the most part I want to make sure I'm continuously moving in an upward pattern.

Q. If you can articulate, what was the frustration coming out of the Badosa match in Madrid? What were you disappointed about?

COCO GAUFF: I feel like I didn't have fun on the court. Even when I was still in the match in the first set, I feel like I was very stressed. I think it showed.

In the second set, she's obviously a great player, but with my serve and everything, I should be on the scoreboard. I think I mentally wasn't engaged in that second set. I think I let something happen in the first, maybe one or two bad points. I just kind of stayed down.

This week I'm just accepting it for what it is. If I try to win the point or lose the point making the right decision, I think I have to be satisfied with that.

Q. I'm curious to know what some of the differences for you are between touring playing in the States, then Europe? I can imagine there are differences in logistics or food, language of course. What makes it different for you?

COCO GAUFF: I definitely think in Europe I feel like I do more things touristy-wise. Maybe because, A, I've gone to those particular U.S. cities so many times. I feel like the cities are more walkable here. I don't need to get a car or stuff.

Sometimes I like to go out by myself. I don't know, I feel like I'm too lazy to Uber somewhere in the States by something by myself, whereas walking, you kind of stumble upon some things.

Also I feel comfortable at home. Just something about being in your country, you know how things work, you



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know the certain restaurants. Most of the time when we're in the States, other probably than New York, we rent a car or the tournament provides cars, you're not waiting on transportation.

I think there's pros and cons of both. But definitely I feel like on the court as definitely more of a pro playing at home because of the crowd. Here, I mean, I have good crowd support. Maybe not so much in Rome. They like cheering for me, but not very loudly. Usually in Paris I have good crowd support.

Q. You've got Marie Bouzkova next, who has just beaten Caty McNally. Will you talk to Caty about that? Do you ever share notes on players you've both played?

COCO GAUFF: I don't know if I'll talk to her about it. There's been times where she has played someone I've played, and the conversation kind of comes up. It's not like we go out of our way to say it.

I feel like a lot of the girls just know how each other play. You don't really need to talk to another player just because we've seen each other so many times.

I played Bouzkova. I had to pull out of that match in Cincinnati. I was doing well until that moment. It's obviously going to be a different game on clay. I don't know how she's feeling. She played Jess last week. Even though she lost, she had a good match against her.

I am just going to be ready. I feel like it's going to be a dogfight, for sure.

Q. You talked about playing more attacking tennis. What is kind of the challenge of that in tight matches, when you're down, sticking to that style?

COCO GAUFF: I think just the instinct of it. You do so much one way. I've been pretty successful playing the way I've been playing. But the goal isn't to be top 10 forever. The goal is to be No. 1 and win Grand Slams.

To get to that next level, I feel like that's the decisions I have to make, so it's almost retraining my mind to make those decisions.

Today I tried to be, every ball, I think there were maybe two times I think where I didn't commit to the process, and I lost those points. You feel much better when you're committing to the process. I do feel like when you're committing to it, it's going to work out eventually.

Q. After such a great run in Paris last year, what's the

overall goal for this clay season?

COCO GAUFF: I mean, just continue to get better. I mean, the result goal would be to win Roland Garros. I mean, that's I feel like everybody who enters the tournament's goal.

I do think just going back to committing to the process, I feel like this year we can really change the way I play. I feel like it's a crucial year for me. So I think I want to relearn and retrain myself to be aggressive.

I definitely think I started that in juniors. I do think when I transitioned to the pro, especially on the younger side, I mean, I wouldn't say I was weak for a 15-year-old, I was pretty strong in general, but certain things, transferring from the juniors to pros, the balls come a lot faster.

I just resorted to being behind the baseline and running everywhere and being aggressive when I can, whereas juniors I was pretty much running people off the court. I think that was the transition.

Now looking back at it, I don't know if I wish I could have committed to be more aggressive. I was doing well. But definitely now I feel like that's important.

Q. A comment about the men's side. There's a chance that Rafa might not be in Paris. What would it mean for the tournament if he's not there? What would it mean if he shows up with little to no match experience?

COCO GAUFF: I mean, if he goes, I'm going to take him in Paris any day. I don't think he needs match experience. I'm sure he probably would have preferred to play some matches before. I think that him and Roland Garros is something special.

There's been times, I remember last year, he was having that problem, completely lost that match, didn't look like he was going to be ready at all. I made the mistake of doubting him. Next thing you know, he pretty much stormed his way to the final and won straight sets.

He's just a GOAT in that way, a GOAT on clay, someone you can't underestimate.

I think for the tournament, if he doesn't play, obviously it would suck to have a player like him not play. But also I feel like the tour has a lot of -- I think it will open it up for the guys, the men's side.

Then again, we haven't seen him play in so long. So maybe the draw is open. I don't know. But I definitely think he's going to be a threat regardless if he plays or not.



Q. Retraining your approach, is that more mental than technical or both?

COCO GAUFF: I think it's both. I think being aggressive, you have to have a shorter swing 'cause you are taking the balls faster. It's something I'm working on.

I also think it's more mental because I feel like most times I adjust pretty quickly and learn pretty fast, at least based on what people tell me. I do think I can see the game decently well. I think it's more about executing it.

I definitely think it's more of a mental thing. Yes, there's technical things that need to be fixed, but the first step is committing to that process.

Q. With your CEO hat on, when you're interviewing coaches, looking for a new coach, what are you looking for in order to help you at this point?

COCO GAUFF: I don't really know. Like, I know what I'm looking for, but in a way I feel like I definitely put I guess the relationship, like the personal relationship, over the coaching part. I'm feel like I'm the type of person, I love my team right now. Even with Diego, I loved having him around. I obviously didn't want to stop with him.

I think that's the first part. I want to make sure it's someone I get along with, my team gets along with. That can be fun. Some coaches are a brick wall and are worse for some players. I can't have that. I'm very serious, too, on the court. It's not like I'm goofing around all the time. It's more so the off-court way of life. I want to make sure I get along with him.

Obviously the tennis, they have to have a plan. It's something I'm still learning about what I need. I'm obviously getting a lot of advice from people on what I should look for. For the off-court part, for sure someone that can get along with me. I get along with most people. I don't want to have someone super stoic because I have to have it fun for me and the way I work.

My family is pretty involved. Even with Diego, I had a relationship with his family. His daughter is my age. They had a relationship with my family. I really enjoyed that dynamic. Not saying we have to be best friends, but we have to like each other (smiling).

Q. On these long stints away from the States, what aspects of American culture do you still feel completely tapped into, whether because you TikTok or Netflix, music, and what stuff is happening back home that when you get back from these long stints

you're like, I have no idea what you guys are talking about?

COCO GAUFF: I feel like I am pretty involved in most things. I just see it a lot later because of TikTok. I'm not on Twitter. Anything that's going on Twitter, usually if I were to tweet something, sometimes it's my agent, I'm not going to lie. If it is me, I literally have to log in and log back out. I don't really go on Twitter.

Yeah, TikTok I'm pretty much on. That's where I get most of my news, which is probably bad. Here it's not like you can turn on the TV and they're going to speak your language.

Here, I mean, I really like Europe. I would say I'm different from most Americans. I enjoy. I stayed last year. My plan is to stay this year if I can fly my family up for a week like I did last time. I really enjoy here. It's a good stint from home.

I live in Delray Beach where there's not much going on other than Atlantic Avenue, which most of that is 21 and up. I don't really do anything. I feel like Europe is more accessible, I guess. I feel like I can do more things. I live too far from Miami to go and do something there.

I like the pros and cons of both. But I look forward to coming to Europe every year. I think compared to most Americans I probably enjoy it more.

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