

Internazionali BNL d'Italia

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Roma, Italia

Coco Gauff

Press Conference

C. GAUFF/J. Cristian

6-1, 0-6, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Coco, your thoughts on the match.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, it was obviously a tough match. I mean, she came out playing well in the second set. I think I just kind of got startled by that. I'm happy with the way I was able to fight through.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. How were you able to reset in the third set and how clearly were you thinking after?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I think you lose a set 6-0, I mean, the first three games I will say she played well. One or two points, it could have been 2-1. The last three games definitely was on my racquet where I was just making errors.

I kind of just, like, brushed it off because I was like, Really, she beat you in three to four games that set, and you gave away three.

I think for me, when I lose a set like that, you feel better about it than when you lose a set and you feel like you're playing good and they're just blowing you off the court.

I don't like getting bageled, but it's okay (smiling).

Q. In the latter half of that second set when you were missing a little bit more than you would have liked, was that because you weren't sure whether you wanted to go big or play through the rally? What was causing that?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I think it was definitely deciding whether to go big or not. I was going really aggressive in the first set, and I think she kind of started to swing freely. The balls landed in.

Yeah, I think I just tried to go too much, whereas I usually I tell myself I'm not aggressive enough. I think that was a



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time I could have maybe just feel it out, like when I lost three or four games pretty fast. That could have been a time, at least for one game, to feel her out, try to change the rhythm of the match.

Q. Do you have a preference in terms of the conditions? At this time of the night it's very different.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, it's very different between night and day. I think I can do well on both. It kind of depends on the opponent. Yeah, the ball definitely jumps more in the daytime, which is probably an advantage for me.

At night, she's the type of player that likes to play the ball on her racquet. Honestly in the day I feel like it could have gone the same way, because her ball definitely would jump more, too. She's a hitter.

Yeah, I don't have any preference. It just kind of depends on who you're playing, too.

Q. Where do you think you get your scrappiness?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I don't know. Just the will to win. I think I just do well at buckling down in those tough moments.

I definitely want to do better at closing matches and doing that. Like I said, the second set I think just got away from me. But I am happy with how I was able to buckle down. I felt, like, very confident going into the third set, which I could have let the 6-0 get to me.

Q. Talking to players about forehands on the WTA, how there's a lot more topspin. You hit with a lot of spin. What was the origin of that for you?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I mean, I don't know when it started as a kid and stuff. My forehand's always been way more spinier than my backhand.

I think it was when I was younger just modeling it after a guy. I don't know. I just feel like the flat game, it's great, and it did well, but we're all transitioning. I think tennis is transitioning into being more physical. Everybody's taking care of their bodies. People are really in peak condition. I feel like the spin just helps. The heaviness helps the ball jump off the court than hitting a flat ball.



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In the women's game, it's still effective so I don't want to hate on people with flat forehands. Definitely if you look at especially like the top five, I think pretty much all the girls, maybe Elena's is a little bit flatter, but Iga and Aryna definitely hit spinier on the forehand, too.

I think it's just modeling after guys. That's what they do and they're better in that aspect. I think just trying to model their game.

Q. Looking ahead, playing Paula. Tough matchup in the past for you. Paula said you were reaching out to her while she was injured. She really appreciated that energy. What is your relationship with Paula to trigger that? What do you make of the matchup here?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I mean, Paula and I, we aren't close friends, but we are friendly with each other. I think she's a nice girl. She's always been nice. Her team has always been nice practice.

I think she's a player that loves to play tennis. Unfortunate with all the injuries she'd had trying to come back. Something else happening...

I felt compelled to just send her a message. I do that with most players on tour that I know. I'll send a message if I have their number or if we follow each other on Instagram.

Definitely I think we're pretty friendly on tour. We aren't close friends. We're definitely in different stages. I feel like that's a lot of me on tour. I think she's 25 maybe, so five years' age gap. We're never going to be close friends, but I'm definitely friendly with her on tour. I always root for her.

It's going to be tough playing her. It is a tough matchup for me. I think she's getting back to her top form. She was No. 2 in the world, playing well. She's always dangerous regardless of how the past weeks have gone.

Q. It seems like escape rooms have become a thing with you and your friends. How did that come about?

COCO GAUFF: Chris and I did one with a lot of my family, like my aunt, my brothers, my uncle. We did one, like 10 of us. It started I think with that, with Chris. That's what I think.

Then Ben got on tour and Chris was friends with Ben. I became friends with Ben through that basically. I think we started with all four of us with Chris and girlfriend Anna in Australia.

Yeah, it's been a fun thing ever since. I try to do it almost

every tournament that we're playing together, if we can, if I know there's a nice room.

I'm usually the one that's coordinating everybody's thing. I have to schedule two or three weeks in advance. Ben won't respond to messages a lot, which is kind of annoying. He's usually always down for it. I've learned to already book it and tell him later because he won't respond.

Then Chris and Anna, they're always down to do anything. I'm really happy that Chris got a girlfriend 'cause I got tired being around with guys. Being with Anna is a nice balance with the two. I don't think I would do it with just the three of us. That would be rough. Too much testosterone.

Q. (No microphone.)

COCO GAUFF: The first one that was very equal. The guy said the clue I solved I skipped a couple steps that saved us time. I totally got it by luck, but it made me feel really smart.

Ben and Chris and Anna were like, I don't think that has anything to do with it. I was adamant about it. The guy after was like, You skipped three or four steps doing that, so you were smart.

The last one we did before that, Ben did really bad. In Australia, Ben did really good. Chris is really solid. Ben is hit or miss. I'm always solid. Anna, she figures out the clues that none of us would get. She's a smart one, for sure.

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