

# Internazionali BNL d'Italia

Friday, 9 May 2025

Roma, Italia

## Coco Gauff

Mixed Zone

C. GAUFF/V. Mboko

3-6, 6-2, 6-1

### Q. What was it like when you were down a set?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, obviously the last two sets were a lot better. It was tough finding, like, my rhythm. I find the conditions are so much slower than Madrid. I felt it was impossible to hit a winner.

Victoria played great tennis. She forced me to play like that. So full credit to her.

I was pretty composed because I felt like I was playing the right way in the first, just not necessarily connecting on some shots. I just felt like if I just started to land more balls in, it would go my way.

### Q. How much have you seen about her before? What impressed you?

COCO GAUFF: First I saw her Miami Open. I didn't know much about her before, but I've been following her since Miami. I think she's a great player. I knew it was going to be a tough match.

Yeah, like the ranking difference looks different, but she's playing top-level tennis. I approached the match that way. It's not a case of underestimation. I knew she was going to come out there and play great. Maybe I psyched myself out a little bit in the first set.

### Q. Given the weapons she has, did she remind you like anybody? An 18-year-old version of yourself?

COCO GAUFF: Honestly, not even on (indiscernible). For sure in the movement. I felt like playing myself because I feel like I move pretty well, she moves very well. On that, yeah.

But she obviously has a great game, so I don't want to say her game is like mine. For sure on the movement, I would say she's up there with me on that.



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As far as the other parts of her game, she's obviously a big hitter, can play well, moves pretty well, has a nice backhand, same on the forehand.

Yeah, I don't want to say she plays like me 'cause she obviously doesn't. We're like closer in age. I would say on the movement side athletically she's one of the best athletes on tour.

### Q. You're extremely young yourself. Do you feel a bit like a vet welcoming the new generation?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I don't feel like a vet 'cause I feel like she might be more mature than me. Who knows. At the end of the match, she probably lost with more grace than I ever did at her age.

I definitely feel like I have the advantage with experience on tour in the big moments. I knew maybe I had that going for me.

Yeah, I think she's pretty composed herself. I wouldn't say that I feel like a vet. I didn't feel like she was out there frustrated or anything. I think she was playing composed tennis.

### Q. There were moments in that second set when she was starting to get a little hot. Is that something you could notice from 80 feet away?

COCO GAUFF: I saw maybe like twice. It wasn't anything out of the ordinary. She maybe missed an easy shot, had a reaction after that. Maybe there were some other reactions that I missed.

But I try not to pay attention to that in general when you're playing some people 'cause some people can play, maybe act like they're tanking or whatever, and they play great tennis. I'm not saying that's the case with her. I say in general I try not to focus on that.

I saw her frustrated. I didn't think it was anything out of the normal. I was getting frustrated, too.

### Q. What do you think about the new Pope?

COCO GAUFF: I didn't know much about how the whole thing happens. I was looking up some stuff since I'm here



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I remember on the car ride over, my physio is Catholic. I said, Has there ever been an American Pope?

She was like, No, there probably won't ever be one.

We were watching on TV. They said from U.S. I kind of like screamed. I felt like I was in the Olympics or something, like, Yay.

He seems like a pretty cool guy. I was looking at his brother's interviews and stuff. I was like, Wow, this is pretty cool.

I'm not Catholic or anything, but I wanted to try to go when we found out it was like the white smoke in the car. We saw immediately, as soon as the CNN notification came on the phone, I was a little bit closer doing the same. I realized with the match the next day, it's probably not smart sprinting to go see.

It's pretty cool. I'm glad to be in the same city as the historic event and hopefully he does a great job.

**Q. Did you see he's a tennis guy?**

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I saw that on TikTok that someone says he plays tennis. I'm not going to say that I'm up there, but he probably knows who I am, if he likes tennis. Hopefully he watches some women's tennis. If he does, he definitely knows who I am.

That's pretty cool. Yeah, if not, that's cool, too. But it's cool that he likes tennis. I don't know, maybe Popes go to sporting events. I heard he's a White Sox fan. Maybe he'll come to a match in the future.

**Q. Villanova guy, too.**

COCO GAUFF: Cool.

**Q. You mentioned changes in conditions. What is the biggest difference coming from Madrid?**

COCO GAUFF: For me, I didn't really have time to practice at night just 'cause it was a quick turnaround, they were debating playing me first or last. I didn't want to come practice at night, play 11 a.m. the next day.

I would say it's a lot slower. Obviously I lost earlier in Madrid, so I had time to adapt. I think next night session I might go a little bit lower in tension. It was a little bit slow, so I did struggle with that.