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Coco Gauff

Press Conference

An interview with:

COCO GAUFF

THE MODERATOR: Coco, obviously good memories from last year. What are your thoughts going into this year's event?

COCO GAUFF: Last year was a good tournament for me. It was tough losing the final, but it was a cool experience. I'm looking forward to being back here and hopefully putting up another good tournament.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Obviously last time we saw you, you weren't feeling very good. Curious, how did you feel looking back on it? How did you recover? When did you feel you were practicing at full strength?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I mean, when I started my first practice, I felt 100%. I took three days off after my last match. Yeah, I feel fine, like nothing happened. It was definitely a weird maybe 48 to 72 hours.

I mean, I got through some tough ones. I had chances in the last match. Given I wasn't feeling 100%, definitely some positives to take, for sure.

Q. Of the surfaces - hard, clay, grass - what's the easiest or hardest one to kind of build momentum quickly?

COCO GAUFF: Uhm...

Well, I guess for me the hardest has always been grass. Yeah, I just think no one can really build momentum on grass. If you do well slowly kind of well, you're playing the week before, you win that tournament, but then you're playing the first round of your Grand Slam, which is two days later, which is tough. I think grass is the hardest.

And the easiest? I think both clay and hard for me felt similar. Maybe clay just because it's a shorter amount of tournaments. Usually if you're playing well, you're usually



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playing well the whole swing, whereas hard is a little bit broken up at times.

Definitely grass is the hardest for me.

Q. Aryna was in earlier and said she thought it might take a player boycott of the slams to kind of move forward in this discussion that's ongoing. Where do you stand on that?

COCO GAUFF: Uhm, yeah, honestly I kind of agree with that, just taking what the WNBA kind of accomplished. They also have a union, so I think that helps.

I definitely think, from my not experience, because I don't have a lot of life experiences, but from the things I've seen with other sports, usually to make massive progress and things like this, it takes a union. Yeah, we have to become unionized in some way.

Yeah, I mean, I think you can put pressure on media, media pressure and things like that. For all of us showing up, everyone's going to act as normal. I definitely agree with her on that standpoint.

I think a few other players agree, too.

Q. Has that ever been discussed?

COCO GAUFF: I've never been a part of any real discussion regarding that, like where it comes to something as big as a boycott. Maybe there have been other discussions between other players, but I've never talked really to anyone about on it on tour, yeah.

Q. Could you really see yourself boycotting a Grand Slam one day? Do you think there is the coherence and collaboration between the players for everybody to move as one?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, if everyone were to move as one and collaborate, yeah, I can 100% see that. It's not about me. It's about the future of our sport and also, like, the current players who aren't getting I guess as much benefits maybe as even some of the top players are getting when it comes to like sponsorship and things like that. We're making money off court.



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When you look at the 50 to 100, 50 to 200, how much money each slam makes, it's kind of unfortunate where the 200 best tennis players are living paycheck to paycheck, whereas other sports it's not even a discussion. And we are profiting, so...

Yeah, I definitely think, like I said, if we all collectively agree, then yes. I mean, I wouldn't want to just be the only one because people talk about it. I'm just like, Yeah. Then I'm like the only one not playing (smiling). That is where there needs to be a real discussion.

I think that is something us as players have to talk amongst another and do it, and talk within each other and decide what's best. But we definitely can move more as a collective.

I feel like we're doing well, though. The progress we made since last year to now, just having the top 10 all agree on something, is I think the first that's happened in our sport in a long time. I do think there's progress, but we can do more, for sure.

Q. How did you come to realize that this was an important topic for you?

COCO GAUFF: I mean, honestly, when I was younger, I remember the full first conversations, people were talking about it, was actually one of my first US Opens. I didn't know anything much then, so I wasn't really involved or anything.

I think when you just look at the facts of the situation, the numbers, then you talk to other players, you talk amongst each other, then you realize I think this is something that I think is important.

Also when you look at other sports who have done the same, how much of a massive improvement has been made for their players. Not just the players only, but the overall structure of the league or tour is I think something that can be improved.

I think it's important, like I said, not just for me. I think this conversation can sometimes get twisted as wanting more and more and more. Us as top players understand that maybe our voices are amplified a little bit more because of the reach that we have. That doesn't mean we're only doing this for us.

I definitely think there's a consensus around that this needs to be addressed for all players of all levels, especially the lower-ranked players, too.

I definitely think that's something that I care about. I want

to leave the sport better than I found it. If I can say I played my part when I retire, that's something I can be proud of.

Q. How did you get into crocheting?

COCO GAUFF: I started two years. I haven't done it in a while honestly. I started, like, two or three years ago. There's this brand called the Woobles. I was just bored and I ordered one and did it.

I've only made stuffed animals. I tried to make a blanket and then I kind of like gave up because I'm a perfectionist. Maybe I will restart it.

But it's fun. It hurts my wrist sometimes, so that's why I kind of stopped. I can do it for, like, hours. I don't think that's good for my wrists.

Q. Are there instructions?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, they give you YouTube step by step. It's actually really easy. If you can't do it off of this company, you probably can't do a lot of things. Anybody can do it (laughter).

Q. Do you have a favorite court that you especially like to play in?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I don't know how to say it, but the statue court for sure, which I don't get to play on as much because my ranking. When I play doubles, we played on it a couple times and I enjoy it.

Q. Favorite thing to do in Rome, other than the tournament?

COCO GAUFF: Gelato. I got some last night. I like to try gelato flavors. I like pasta, too. After a week I get tired of it, but that one week is really great.

Q. Are you a Met Gala girl? Are you on the phone scrolling?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I watched or saw all the looks this morning because I was asleep.

I really liked Emma Chamberlain's look. Hers was cool.

Dang, I'm like blank spacing on certain people.

Serena and Venus, obviously. Naomi. I got to get the tennis girls. They all looked great.

Who was my favorite? My favorite men's look, I really liked



Wisdom Kaye. He's like a fashion influencer.

Yeah, Ciara, too.

I'm missing some. I'm blanking. I think I named some solid ones so far, yeah (smiling).

Q. You mentioned about not playing so much on smaller courts anymore. How different is the kind of dimensions if you play on smaller courts? You're on the biggest show courts. Leaving aside the atmosphere, how much is it playing on the big courts, space? Does that affect players when they're playing?

COCO GAUFF: I don't think so much as the women as much maybe as the men. I was next to Medvedev in Madrid. The guy is returning like one inch from the fence, so... He might have a better answer for that. For me, I'm not usually going that far back.

I will say the center court here is surprisingly small compared to other center courts. I feel like it is not as much space, which I kind of prefer it. Just to walk to get towels, the only thing on these bigger courts it's such a far walk (smiling).

I'm sure the men, for sure it makes a difference for them if they're on a wider court.

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