

BNP Paribas Open

Sunday, March 12, 2023

Coco Gauff

Press Conference



C. GAUFF/L. Noskova

6-4, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Great match. Fairly routine, I would say. Linda is an up-and-comer, we were all curious to watch her and watch her face you. What is your take on what she brings the court?

COCO GAUFF: I think she played the match the right way. Today I just played a little bit better in certain moments. I watched her play a lot of her matches this year in Adelaide and Australia. Yeah, she's a great player.

I think hopefully we will have many more battles in the future. I think she's going to keep rising up the rankings and keep doing better and better each tournament.

Q. Is it weird having someone who is younger than you now being talked about?

COCO GAUFF: Yes and no. I mean, I felt a little pressure coming in in today's match, to be honest with you, because of the age thing, which I've never thought about that in the past. I've even played -- I played Robin last year too and it was the same situation. I think because my age has been such a topic in conversation for so long, playing someone younger than me, you do feel like a little pressure.

But now that I'm getting older, like, I've got to get used to it (smiling).

Q. A birthday is a pretty special occasion for really anyone. Sort of a time to reflect also. Here you are, on the world stage, high in the rankings, endorsements, friends, popular. Could you just talk about your life. Are you living the dream? Most teenagers have some pretty hefty issues. Just reflect on your life on the eve of your birthday.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I'm for sure living my dream. I guess the on-court part is glamorous in a way, yes. Off-court, I always tell people my life is boring. That's part

of the reason why I've never done any, I guess, filming or any of that, like behind-the-scenes stuff. I literally just don't leave my room sometimes.

Yeah, and the tennis part, I guess online and that persona, yeah, I'm living the dream, but I guess that's my dream. Like, I don't want to be outside -- I guess there's a phrase, I don't know if you guys heard -- but be outside all the time.

I enjoy this kind of balance of being extroverted in certain situations and introverted in certain situations.

There is, you know, no other life that I would want other than mine right now.

Q. Jess Pegula was just in here and was asked about you. She reeled off this list of like 20 great things about you.

COCO GAUFF: Oh, she's so nice. I can list 30 things. I'm just kidding.

Q. Could you?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I could.

Q. But I really wanted to ask you, like, how has she inspired you? How do you think she's helped you learn and grow as a person and as a player maybe?

COCO GAUFF: As a person, I mean, Jess is probably one of the best out there, I think, especially where she comes from. Not that you should, but she could just tell everyone, like, F off (smiling).

But, no, she's like one of the nicest people ever. Someone, she's older than me. You know, she deals with all my antics when I try and say certain things. In a way, like, she does, in a way, she's like my on-tour older sister in a way. Playing with her on the court, she's always positive and, you know, telling me, You know, you're good, go for your shots, keep doing that. Off the court, yeah, I really look to her as a friend and someone that I enjoy spending time with.

She doesn't know there's just a lot of times I'll just wait around to see what she's doing just so I can talk to her longer, because I really enjoy being around her. I'm, like, grateful that I can be our doubles partner, and we have created that relationship.

Yeah, and I'm glad that she said some great things about me, because I definitely feel the same way about her.

Q. In the context of her parents, she was saying that she's good at compartmentalizing and having her work and family private life separate.

COCO GAUFF: I can really see that, yeah.

Q. You travel for tennis with family.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah.

Q. Do you think that sometimes makes it harder for you to separate work from life?

COCO GAUFF: Yes and no. I feel like my family, I mean, as I've grown up, like my family has done a good job of, I guess, like doing that with me in a way. I don't want to always separate my life from work, I guess, because I don't view tennis as work, in a way.

So whenever I tell people I'm going to work, it's as if I have to do a shoot or sponsor commitment. It's never with tennis. I will just say, I'm going to practice, I'm going to a tournament, because I don't really view this side of my life as work, because, I don't know, I just love what I do. It's not like, Oh, I've got to wake up and do this. There's days it's hard, yeah.

With Jess, she does an amazing job of doing that. I think also, I mean, she's a little bit older, so it's probably a little bit easier, I think.

Having my family on tour has helped me transition a little bit easier, I would say. I think that's why I haven't had any crazy moments because I've always had people around me to help me stay grounded.

Yes, it's hard sometimes, but I think we've learned over the years they know when to give me my space and they know when to step in when they need to. For example, my mom is coming in tonight. I think she knew that I wanted her to be here on my birthday, but I wouldn't say that, because all my friends are out in college and doing everything.

Yeah, it's finding the balance between that. I definitely wouldn't want them to be helicopter parents, no.

Q. Siblings often, I don't know, have their rivalries. You said something interesting in your last press conference when you said you learn a lot from your younger brothers when you talk with them. Can you share some of the things you have learned from those conversations?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah. I think honestly you learn almost more from kids that you do from adults at times, because they are so, I guess, unbiased and carefree in the world. Especially my brother Codey, he's 15. He has this really confident but low-key persona about him. That's something that I really try to emulate on the court.

If you look at my past matches from 15 and now, I would say I definitely was more animated then. Now I feel like I almost got a little bit of his persona where, you know, I'm sometimes pumped up, but not to say anything bad about my brother, but he knows he's good at what he does. I feel like that's something that I needed to, I guess, learn a little bit from.

My youngest brother, Cameron, I think just the way he approaches everything, he's so positive and he's so happy. Anyone who knows my youngest brother, Cameron, they call him the happy kid in the light, because he really wakes up every day with a positive attitude. It's very rare you see him -- the only time he's in a bad mood is if he's hungry. Other than that, he's always looking at the positives of things. Even certain things, just comments, he will say something, and then he'll just counteract it with a positive comment. I'm like, Why can't I think like this kid all the time?

That's what I have learned from each of them. I can go on a really long list but we'll sit here all night.

Q. Your next match is against Rebecca Peterson. You played once four years ago?

COCO GAUFF: Yes, I remember at a 100K in Midland?

Q. An ITF, yeah.

COCO GAUFF: I think it was in Midland, Michigan. I'm like almost confident.

Q. How does that factor into your mind at all as you're preparing?

COCO GAUFF: No, it doesn't (smiling). No, honestly, no, I just know, like, I remember when I play people. Yeah, that was the last time I played her, I remember. I feel like those early tournaments I remember very well. I lost to her, I do remember that. I remember when I played her, like she

whooped me. That was the first time I played, I guess. She was playing ITFs but she was also on tour, and she gave me a real old-school whooping. Hopefully it's a little bit different this time around.

I have definitely grown a lot and learned a lot from then. But, yeah, she's obviously a great player. She's been on the tour so long, and she has a lot of experience. But I don't think I'll watch that match over, because four years ago is a long time, so I think I'll probably have to watch more of her recent matches.

Q. Midland, 6-2, 6-1.

COCO GAUFF: Yep, see, I told you I got whooped. Hopefully it's not the same scoreline.

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