

BNP Paribas Open

Wednesday, March 13, 2024

Coco Gauff

Press Conference



C. GAUFF/E. Mertens

6-0, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Coco, happy birthday.

COCO GAUFF: Thank you.

Q. Your first win as a 20-year-old. How does it feel?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, feels good. Finally got a win on my birthday, which is great. Yeah, I have nothing to say about the match. It was pretty straightforward and hopefully I can continue the good tennis.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Happy birthday.

COCO GAUFF: Thank you.

Q. The boys have this superstition that when they win a set 6-0, there are like flashes through their head, oh, no, now I know I'm going to lose the next one. Is that a thing with you as well, or how do you feel when you come off a 6-0 set?

COCO GAUFF: Honestly, I think I'm trying to get as many 6-0 sets as possible because we have Iga who has the bakery. I can have a mini one.

I did think about it, because I remember Taylor Fritz said in an interview...

Q. They all say it.

COCO GAUFF: I've only heard Taylor's about the 6-0 set. He was, I'll lose a game to make it 6-1. I did think about that. I don't believe in that superstition. Obviously it happens, I feel like, more frequently than you think.

But, yeah, I don't believe in it (smiling).

Q. A random question. I'm sure many people have reached out to you on your birthday, but a while ago

you spoke beautifully about your grandmother. Did she reach out to you? Did she give you any particular message or not?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, she called me this morning and sang "Happy Birthday." It's like a family thing, they all get on a voice call and sing "Happy Birthday" to the person. She did that.

I'm pretty sure she probably texted me too. Like you said, I have so many messages I need to respond to. So I'm, like, I'm sure she texted me. It's a lot of scrolling, I guess, because she's probably one of the first people to do so.

Q. Coco, your teens went pretty well. What plans have you got for your 20s? What goals have you got, whether life goals or tennis goals?

COCO GAUFF: I guess tennis goals, definitely to win some more slams, and I want to medal at this Olympics or 2028. That would be cool.

Then life goals, honestly, I haven't thought that far. Yeah, I mean, I'm not trying to do anything, I'm not trying to get married or anything (smiling). Definitely no kids.

Yeah, just tennis right now and we'll see where life takes me off the court.

Q. You said you don't believe in the 6-0 superstition. Are you superstitious about anything?

COCO GAUFF: Not really, to be honest, no.

Yeah, I think only today I didn't want to make a big deal about my birthday before the match. I just wanted to focus on the match. Then after that, no. I don't have any superstitions.

Q. Your birthday does fall in the middle of a very busy point for you. Does the bulk of the celebrating happen after the tournament? What do you have planned for tonight or the next couple of days?

COCO GAUFF: Just dinner tonight, which is normal, I



think, because I do play tomorrow. Yeah, usually afterwards, I'm not a huge party, celebration person, so I don't have anything afterwards. I'll probably do maybe another dinner when I get home before Miami Open, just so my brothers can also celebrate it with me.

Yeah, I think just open presents and answer text messages, and yeah, that's it.

Q. Are there presents you get for yourself, presents from others?

COCO GAUFF: Others. No, I haven't gotten anything for myself. I always forget, to be honest. I always say I'm going to get myself something. I still haven't gotten myself anything from US Open. I always say I'm going to buy myself and I just forget. I do have gifts in my hotel room that have to be opened today.

Q. I know you just said you want to win slams, but where does winning this tournament rank in terms of goals in sort of the lexicon of the sport for you? Do you have, like, a list? Being an American, is this more important? You're from Miami, so probably next week is something you really want to win as well. What does your list look like?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I think, obviously I want to win this tournament, I'm playing in it. But I will say, yeah, it's definitely one of the tournaments I want to win at least once in my career. Hopefully it can be now. I feel pretty good about my chances.

Obviously Miami being a home tournament, that would be a dream to win, as well.

Where does it rank? I don't know what the ranking is. Every slam would be ranked before this. But I would say out of the 1000s, probably the second. I would say Miami is just going to be No. 1 just from being there, and I would say this is No. 2 out of the 1000s or any other tournament on tour. Yeah, I would say this is No. 2 besides the slams.

Q. I'd like to ask a real general question. Most young people who turn 20, I don't know if they're worried about midterms or spring breaks or how things are going with their boyfriend or whatever. You've had this truly incredible life for many years now, one of the most famous young athletes in the world, such accomplishment. Do you ever step back and say, Why me? Or is it more, Hey, I've earned it? Do you realize the uniqueness of your situation?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I definitely do recognize the uniqueness of it. It is a contrast of why me and also the

work that I put in. Yeah, I mean, honestly it's, like, yeah, I don't think it's solely because of work, because a lot of people work hard. Some people, I don't know, just -- I'm lucky that I was born with a great athletic ability, which kind of helps me. I also was born with, like, a worth ethic and learned how to work hard and can enjoy working hard.

But yeah, it is sometimes, like, Why me? Because again, on tour, and even when I was playing like 25s and you just see girls are really working hard, it's not like they're not working hard but they just can't get it. Not that I say I have it all figured out, because I don't, but I am very blessed to be in the position I am in.

I guess everything with off-court, that's definitely more the "why me" part. Because, yeah, winning was always something I just envisioned myself doing, just because that's just what every tennis player envisions. Definitely the off-court stuff when it comes to the covers and the attention from other celebrities or just people in general, it is kind of like, I don't know why people gravitate to me so much, but I definitely do appreciate it and it makes me feel loved and I hope I can make other people feel the same way.

Q. Does it give you particular satisfaction that you've been able to use your platform in so many different ways?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, definitely. I think for me that's just one of the main things that I knew I wanted to do obviously since I was young. 15 was the first time I kind of really spoke about it. Yeah, I just knew I was going to do that regardless of how my life went, even if pro tennis wasn't the way for me, I would have been very active in other areas of, you know, life and the world in general.

So I think that's just more where I come from and just the people that raised me always taught me to uplift the other people around me. I was taught from a very young age of the privilege that I have, and the way that my dad grew up was definitely not, you know, not the best childhood. So he always instilled that into me and always instilled how to uplift other people. Because it took, you know, one person to help uplift him and that made a difference in his life which by-product made a difference in my life and maybe I can continue that cycle with some other kid.

Q. You have spoken about presents and gifts and birthday presents and wishes, et cetera. What would be the ultimate present you'd like to buy for yourself or get for yourself?

COCO GAUFF: Oh, I think the things that I want I can't buy (smiling). I mean, the things that I want I already have.

You know, I'm healthy, happy, on tour, living the dream.

I guess materialistic things, I don't know. I mean, I could buy myself a lot of things and I feel like if I wanted something I could find a way to get it.

You know, I don't know. I'm looking for places for myself, so I guess that. But, you know, I don't think there's anything materialistic that I really can tell you that, like, I need to get this right now.

You know, all the fancy stuff, I still feel like is way above me right now. If anything, I have learned from going to the Time Gala event and them asking me what outfit I'm wearing, I'm lucky, it's just a regular easy Prada pronunciation and not these other things. I'm a pretty simple girl, to be honest.

Q. Daria was hyping the interview she did with you for her vlog and you were mentioning what a fan you are of the channel. Curious what you made of the experience of being on it and what you make of the way that she and Natasha present the tour?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I've watched a couple of her vlogs, parts of each one. They are an hour long. I think it's really cool, and I see her interviewing other players so literally asked her if I could be on it because I was practicing with her. I think what her and her girlfriend do is really great just to give fans a player perspective of the tour and of other players.

I think, you know, when you're doing another interview with a colleague or a peer and everyone loves her, I don't know any players that dislike her, you get a more authentic version of yourself because it is a peer. You know, I always try and present myself authentic with interviews and press conferences, but I don't know, it just comes out easier when you're talking to someone that you always talk to.

It was really cool, and I told her the way she edits it, she says it's all her girlfriend. So Natasha is the one behind the camera doing the hard work and Daria is the muse. That's what she told me. I was glad I could be the muse for -- I don't know if the vlog is released or not -- this week's episode vlog. Yeah, so cool.

Q. Another birthday-related question. In Japan, turn age 20 is considered, like, officially adult and you are allowed to drink. I know in this country you have to wait for another one year.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah.

Q. For you, what is the definition of being adult or being grown up? At what age did you feel like you are already adult or belong to that kind of adult world?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah. I think in certain aspects I have always felt like an adult, when I got on tour. But then obviously at home I still live with my family. My mom still washes my clothes and still helps me unpack my clothes.

My dad is kind of the one helping me with my car. If I need the tire to be changed, he'll do it, or wash it for me.

There's parts that I don't know if I'll ever grow out of that, because who's going to say no to free help? (Laughter.)

Yeah, I guess at 20, I mean, I would say, like, really at, like, when I got a car, which was when I was 18, I really felt like an adult because I was driving myself places. I didn't have to ask my parents, Hey, can I go? It was more, I'm going. That was a weird transition too.

Yeah, I think maybe when I got my car is when I felt like an adult. Also, when I get home, like, you know, my mom's telling me to clean my room. You know, she's washing my clothes. To be honest, I don't really do that many chores. I say I bring other areas of support in the household (smiling). That should be enough (smiling).

Then I have two younger brothers who, you know, don't listen to me at all. I don't know. Maybe when I will move out is when I will really feel like an adult, because I will have to do everything on my own. Honestly, I told my parents when I do move out, I'm still going to leave a lot of my stuff at the house, because they're healthy. As long as they are healthy they can do the stuff. (Laughter.)

I'm sure some of you guys relate if you have kids.

Thank you, guys.

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