

BNP Paribas Open

Tuesday, March 4, 2025

Coco Gauff

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome to Indian Wells. Your thoughts on playing here and being back on American soil.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, super happy to be back here and back on American soil and playing in front of the home crowd. Looking forward to having hopefully a good couple of weeks here.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Let's talk Oscars. Glamour, fun. Who was the most fun, special people you met? What surprised you? Talk about, aside from your mom's great dress, your dress and fashion?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, it was a super-long day. Started at 9:30 and I finished at, like, midnight. Yeah, it was cool to just be in a different space and a different world. I got lucky that Miu Miu was able to dress me and give me a custom look. That was really sweet of them.

Yeah, the person I was most surprised about was definitely Samuel L. Jackson. He came up to me, I took a photo with him, he took one with me, and then introduced me to Whoopi Goldberg, which was really cool. I also saw Ben stiller out there. I wasn't so surprised at him because I know he's a tennis fan, but I told him he has to come to one of my matches, because I only really see him at the men's matches so I told him he has to come.

Then who else? Yeah, I got to meet a lot of people, Halle Bailey, which was super sweet. Yeah, it was a fun event to, like, meet people and definitely was surprised most people knew who I was, which was weird.

But yeah, it was cool just to be around, you know, a lot of people I look up to and watch them on film and TV.

Q. Your dress? You were talking about your outfits in Australia, talk about your dress.

COCO GAUFF: The dress was a custom Miu Miu look. I got to be a part of that process. They picked out a bunch of sketches for me and colors for me to choose from, and we settled on that one. Then for the Vanity Fair same

situation, a bunch of things for me to choose from.

Yeah, it was super cool just to play dress-up. I don't think I've ever worn a gown quite like that with a whole train. It was kind of hard to walk in with a lot of people stepping on the back of the dress so I would have to kind of carry the dress with me as I walked. The Vanity Fair was my favorite just because it was a little bit more practical.

Q. Speaking of American soil, including the United Cup where you went 5-0, Americans have won half of the WTA tournaments this year. Why do you think that is?

COCO GAUFF: I think just a push, we're all pushing each other to do better. Americans, especially on the women, but now the men have strong depth, and I think that it just inspires us to do more. You see one win a tournament and you also want to do that.

Yeah, I think it's just a healthy competition between us. We all support each other obviously when we're not playing each other. But I root for all the Americans, and all of them are nice. I don't really have any issues with any of them, which I think is great, especially considering how competitive the field is.

Q. Typically mentors are older.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah.

Q. But there are seven under 23 and some of them look up to you.

COCO GAUFF: Oh, yeah (laughter). I guess that's cool. I don't know. I don't really think about it, to be honest.

I don't consider myself a mentor or anything. I'm just me. I don't know, I'm just out here vibing, trying to do my best. But it is cool.

Q. You come into the tournament, not just you but with the American women playing really, really good tennis. What are your thoughts on the women's game, American women's game coming into this



tournament?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I think it's super strong. I don't remember the last time an American woman has won this tournament. I feel like it's been a while.

Q. 2001.

COCO GAUFF: Okay, so before I was born.

Every year they love to remind us of that stat when we compete. We're all like, who's it going to be.

I was in the semis last year so I was hoping it would be me. Hopefully this year we can, and if it's not me I hopefully it's an American. I just feel like this is the biggest tournament we probably have outside of US Open, and we have to somehow figure out how to bring the Cup home.

But I think Taylor was the last American in general to win. So hopefully we can maybe do a double and have a woman and male win. That would be cool.

Q. The WTA is doing a big rebrand. What are some things you're hoping to see in this new iteration?

COCO GAUFF: I think social content. Obviously I'm someone who is on social media a lot. A lot more TikToks and following the trends that a lot of the other sports are doing, which I know that WTA has a plan in place, and, you know, they ask for feedback and that was the main thing I noticed.

I don't personally watch TV or anything like that. That's outside of my expertise, but I think TikTok I'm pretty good in. A lot more of TikToks of just players' interaction. Hopefully some crossover content. I feel like the crossover content does well with ATP, so I would love to see some more crossover content.

Q. Can you talk us through what's been kind of a weird month for you, starting out so hot and then February seems like Middle East is not your favorite place to play. Then again, you won the Tour Finals in that part of the world. How do you get through a month like that and turn over a new leaf? What's the process for dealing with that sort of thing?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, for me, I don't know, everybody makes a bigger deal what it is, I lost two matches. I'll lose more matches back to back, it's going to happen. Everyone is, like, oh, she's sinking. Okay, we've been through this. I'll pick it back up.

To me, for me I guess it feels like a month but it's just two

tournaments, and at this calendar I have so many other opportunities, and I can't win every match.

Yeah, it is a tough part of the swing for me, just I think mainly because the conditions I don't think are in my favor. But at the end of the day, like, yeah, I was upset that I lost, but it's a loss, like, it's going to happen again. I'm going to lose back to back again. Hopefully it doesn't happen too many times in my career.

But yeah, it's just one of those things that you just move on and get better. You know the results will come. It's, you know, just normal, I think. I'm only 20 years old, going to be 21 next week. It would be kind of silly for me to think it won't happen to me again if I'm going to be out here hopefully at least 10 more years.

Q. How are the conditions different from there? Like, regular people, we just say, like, hard courts, hard courts outside.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I don't know if you guys notice, but in Doha a lot of the flatter-hitting girls did better there. The ball doesn't bounce as much a little bit for us who play with more spin. Yeah, I think that was one of the things.

In Dubai, I mean, I'm not using excuses, it's just being real, some conditions don't favor certain people.

But yeah, a lot of the hard courts are different. They're slower. The ball doesn't really -- I play with a little bit more spin -- doesn't really bounce as much. I think a lot of those who play with spin struggled. If you look at all the matchups, a lot of the flatter-hitting girls end up doing better there, whereas maybe here it's a little bit better for us who hit with more spin because the ball bounces on the court more.

So there is different conditions. It's not just a hard court, but at the end of the day, it's what we have to deal with and at some tournaments you do better at and some you don't. That's just kind of how it is being a competitor and you just learn how to do better in those conditions. Maybe next year I'll try to take some things I learned and hopefully do better.

Q. Cincinnati is a place where you have had a lot of success, and they are basically rebuilding that tournament from the ground up. It's going to be bigger draw, bigger site. I just wondered if that's an exciting thing for you to look forward to.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I was very happy to see that it was staying in Cincinnati. I know there was talk about it moving. I'm happy that I feel like that's such a rich



tournament in tennis in general. I was happy for that to stay.

Yeah, that's cool they are getting a revamp. For me, I always liked the tournament. I didn't have any issues. But obviously it's great for the fans, also, and players, just to have a whole new revamp, especially leading into US Open.

Yeah, I'm excited. Like you said, it's one of my favorite tournaments to play, and I really do think that community loves tennis, and it's great to play in front of a crowd who are like true tennis fans and maybe not so much casual. You know, there is nothing wrong with being a casual fan, but it's a different energy when you are playing with people who really know and love the game.

Q. You became the face of Carol's Daughter last year.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah.

Q. How has that process been like, showing sort of what you can do with your hair on court, especially in sport where for Black girls like sweating and getting your hair wet can be such a thing?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, like, yeah, I mean, I have natural hair, so it's very tough sometimes to manage, but one of the things I pride myself in is changing my styles. I get a lot of talk about it in the locker room about how I change a lot.

I don't know. I think hair is so versatile, especially black hair can be so versatile. For example, like this, I had three styles with just this hairstyle literally at the Oscars. I had three different looks with this hairstyle.

I think that's just something that's fun about hair that this was kind of the foundation of it, but I could add some to make into the bun I had at the Oscars and then change it to the ponytail for the Vanity Fair and now wear it for braids for when I was playing.

That's one of the things I pride myself in. I love to play with colors, with textures, I love curls, I love it all. Partnering with Carol's Daughter has been such an ease, because they actually help me experiment with more styles.

I have always used Carol's Daughter since I was young, so it was cool to be able to be in partnership with a brand that I already know and love. And, yeah, I'm very thankful for them. They helped style my hair alongside Dhairius for the Oscars and Vanity Fair.

So basically every hairstyle that I have done, pretty much

Carol's Daughter has been behind it over the course of the last year.

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