

# BNP Paribas Open

Tuesday, March 3, 2026

## Coco Gauff

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Coco, welcome back to Indian Wells. How does it feel to be back here in the desert?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, really happy to be back here. So far, so good. The weather is great as usual, so yeah, I'm excited to go out there and play.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. The world of tennis is pretty insular. You guys all know each other, it's a close community, travel all around the world. I'm wondering, do you guys ever talk, have conversations about stuff that's going on outside of tennis, whether it's Gaza or Iran or Donald Trump wanting to buy Greenland? Do you guys talk about this stuff?**

COCO GAUFF: I mean, I don't with other players because I don't think other players are as, not into it, are wanting to talk about it. I talk about it with my friends.

But yeah, I guess this conversation doesn't really come in the locker room, to be honest. Yeah.

**Q. Some of the other top players decided to skip one of the WTA 1000s during the month of February. You didn't. I was wondering if you could go through your decision processes and if you regret it or not?**

COCO GAUFF: I mean, maybe in the future I'll probably skip Doha. I love Doha, but I consistently have not played well there.

Yeah, I think the season is so packed, and I think having a Grand Slam and then one week later two back-to-back 1000s, I mean, I know some people live in Dubai, but especially for American players it's a long trek.

I don't regret it, because it already happened. I have done it before and I have had success later in the season. Yeah, something I would consider, for sure, in the future. Yeah, I think this past tournament in Dubai, I just, I think it was a coincidence, just bad luck for the tournament with all the injuries and player withdrawals and things like that.

I definitely think that goes to show that the schedule maybe is a bit packed in that part of the season. I don't think guys have -- I think this is the first 1000 of the year. So I definitely think it's something that the tour should consider.

**Q. Given the workload on players at the moment, what do you think about the concept of expanding women's Grand Slam tennis to best-of-five sets, which is going to pile even more pressure on you?**

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I mean, it probably would favor me, because I'm physically up there with the best, but I mean, I probably wouldn't want to see that happen, and if it were to happen, I would prefer it to be the whole tournament, not just the quarters. I think changing the format in the middle of the tournament defeats the purpose of the playing field.

Yeah, I think it would be a lot on players and also, like, fans and TV. I mean, imagine, like, sometimes five sets lasts all the way to the 7:00 p.m. session. If all of us were going five sets, I don't even think we would be able to finish within the two weeks, to be honest.

**Q. You're someone who you change your hair a lot, and you're in a sport that where we sweat a lot. It's sunny out, different conditions. How do you take care of your hair and just sort of keep it back to back with the stresses of the tournament and...**

COCO GAUFF: That's a good question. I don't even know. It's just day by day. I do like to change my hair. I am someone who is not married to a look or anything, but yes, day by day sometimes when it gets too much, I just take the scissors and cut it, but especially having natural hair, it is tough.

I always said when I was younger, seeing the Williams sisters play with their beads or changing blonde braids or braids or curly hair, so I always said I wanted to be in that format just to give girls, especially Black girls with natural hair, seeing that you can compete the best and still sport these styles.

I do think it is something, I do take pride in my hair. But, yeah, it's not the easiest dealing with this, especially when

you're in countries and you forget to bring something and you literally can't find a hair product for your hair. It is difficult, but I do feel much better when I'm in Europe and the States where I can find products for my hair in case I forgot something.

**Q. Sharp turn from that to security, given what's been happening in the Middle East over the past week. I know tennis is the sort of sport that does parachute itself into various parts of the world and there are often political tensions and sometimes conflict. How do you feel generally about playing in the Middle East where there are big WTA tournaments at various times of the year? How generally do you deal with that uncertainty and coping with things that are often beyond your control?**

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I mean, I guess, first off, what's happening is unfortunate, and my thoughts and prayers are out there for everyone affected, innocent lives being taken. I think it's a lot of unnecessary violence going on.

As for the Middle East, I have never personally felt unsafe there, playing tournaments or anything like that. I have never felt unsafe. I think what's happening now, I guess people, maybe political experts could see it coming, but I think as far as a tennis player, no one would expect things to happen. Yeah, my coach, Gavin, is actually there right now, he's currently stuck, and I don't know if he's going to make it. I just want him to be safe. I don't know when he can leave and things like that. We are just taking it day by day with him.

Yeah, I have never felt unsafe there, I've never really felt unsafe in a lot of parts of the world. It's one of the things that, yeah, violence can happen, but it can happen in different forms. For example, in the U.S. we do have a lot of mass shootings and there's always uncertainty with that.

Yeah, and I don't think, you know, a lot of hate is being towards the Middle East, but I think it's just a lot of unfortunate circumstances that are happening right now, and the timing of everything makes it difficult that there are the guys that are there still.

But I am thankful that I was able to get out of that before things turned to where it is now.

**Q. Switching gears a little bit from that, at the Austin Open, there was a Rage Room there?**

COCO GAUFF: That was real? I thought it was an AI -- my mom sent it to me, and I told her it was AI. She believes so many AI things. (Laughter.)

**Q. It was real. Obviously given what happened at the Australian Open, I'd love to know what your thoughts are in that room and would you use it?**

COCO GAUFF: For sure it was inspired by me, I guess (smiling). So I'll take it nicely. I mean, I guess I would. I'm someone who doesn't break a racquet like that often, but when it happens, obviously, as you can see, it happens.

So I guess I probably would use it. It's not something you really plan, but I definitely try not to do it on camera or on court.

So, yeah, if I felt like I needed to let go some frustration, I would definitely be in the Rage Room. Yeah, they have ones, I think here, so maybe I should book one of those and actually like break plates and stuff, that would be probably more fun than a racquet.

**Q. How closely were you following the Olympics? And if any particular event or winner stood out to you? Also, if any quotes or something that any of the athletes said stood out to you?**

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I think obviously Alysa's story, there's not even a quote, she had so many good ones. I think her whole story was super inspiring, and I think I could highly relate as someone who was very young put into a sport.

I wouldn't say I have faced burnout, but there are times you're mentally just tired of it and you feel like you're doing stuff and you don't know why. So I definitely could relate to her whole story. I was happy to see her be that voice saying the unsaid things that athletes think but are maybe scared to say.

Who else. Eileen Gu is someone I follow on Instagram and we've interacted. I've never met her, but she speaks so well. Obviously she's super smart. I think she's one of those people you don't want your parents to find out about because she's so accomplished, and they're, like, What are you doing? I could be Grand Slam winner. And my mom is, like, She graduated Stanford and did all this stuff.

Yeah, so her, as well. And then obviously it was unfortunate to see everything that went on with Lindsey, but I think still for her to take that leap of faith was still inspiring.

There were a few stories that I followed. And obviously the hockey, women's and men's hockey was really cool to watch. I had never watched hockey before, but I was watching and I was excited. Maybe I'll get into it.

**Q. A couple years ago here you said that you like living at home because your dad can fix your car and your mom did your laundry. Does your mom still do your laundry?**

COCO GAUFF: No, it's actually quite the opposite. I now enjoy being by myself, and there are times, because I have my younger brothers, they're like, Are you spending the night here? I'm like, No, I'm going back to my bed.

My dad is still, he's very kind. He still does take care of my car for me. When I'm gone, I'll leave the keys, and if it needs to be taken to service he'll take it. Or if the air pressure in the tires are low, he'll take it for me. My dad is very kind. But no, my mom doesn't do my laundry anymore unless I'm literally sick, which I haven't been.

At the tournaments she does it. When she's here and there is a laundry room, she will do it, but not at home.

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