

WTA Finals

Saturday, October 29, 2022

Fort Worth, Texas

Coco Gauff

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. What is hanging out with Jess this year on the court? I saw you now practicing together. What are some of the things. You guys are different ages. At the same time it's almost like a parallel year. Talk a little bit about Jess as a person and as a competitor. What are maybe some of the things that can rub off on you?

COCO GAUFF: She's a really great person. She's serious, but she's very chill, which I enjoy (laughing). She always tries to understand my TikTok references, as she mentioned last night.

We don't really notice the age difference until, you know, certain conversations come up. It's definitely a generation divide.

But as a person, she's great. I mean, I don't think anyone has anything bad to say about her. She's so humble, so kind. Her team, too, her husband, everyone, her sister. I've gotten to know her family a little bit. They're all very nice people.

When you are going week in and week out every time, these weeks can be a little tiring, but having a person that you get along with definitely helps.

Q. What significance do you place on being one of the top eight and making it to the WTA Finals for the first time? Also, one statistic was mentioned. Also is that you are the youngest American in almost 30 years to make it to the WTA Finals, the youngest player, period, in I think it's more than 15 years. What significance, if any, do those kinds of things have for you?

COCO GAUFF: I don't really pay attention to it. Not that I'm not grateful. Obviously I'm really grateful. When it comes to these statistics and stats about my age, I guess...

I mean, it's cool, but I feel like it's my life, so I don't look at it as amazing or outstanding as other people look at it.

I've gotten asked that a lot about different things in my age. But it is always crazy to me when I find somebody brings up a stat or something about my age, and I feel like almost every tournament is a new thing. It's going to be somebody else's turn soon (laughing).

But for the most part I just don't really pay attention to it because it's my life, so I don't feel like I'm doing anything. When I'm stepping on the court, my opponent, at least I don't think they look at me any different because I'm younger.

Q. Just the idea of what the significance is of being one of these top eight, the very small field that's only for the top eight players, what does that mean to you to have made it here?

COCO GAUFF: It means a lot to me. I think it proves, just shows my improvement throughout the years. I busted onto the scene in a very big way, and a lot of people were having opinions on whether or not I would do well or not.

I think this just proves that all the work that I've put in is paying off. Obviously I want to go further. The WTA Finals is not where I want this chapter to end. I think it just shows that I'm progressing. Sometimes I forget that I am.

I think it allows me to take a step back and realize that I am one of the top eight players in the world, and I should be grateful for that.

Q. Earlier today you were practicing, and I was wondering, do you have any routines when you practice? If so, what does that look like, and does that ever change at all?

COCO GAUFF: It just depends on what my coach wants me to do that day. Usually closer to tournaments we do more points and stuff with different players, with different hitters, just to try to get a feel of what the match would look like.

But other than that, it just depends on what my coach Diego has planned for me. I'm not superstitious or anything, so I don't have any rituals or routines that might



be specific to that.

Q. Are there any drills in particular that you like to do on court?

COCO GAUFF: I like to play points. I'm going to be honest. I like practice because of the results you get from it, but I prefer to play points because it's just more competitive.

Honestly, no particular drills, just points.

Q. I'm just curious what TikTok trends you have exposed Jessica to, and which ones you're currently obsessed with?

COCO GAUFF: It's not really like trends. It's more just sounds. Sometimes the conversation relates to certain sounds I'll say. And she'll look at me and say, What?

I'm, like, You've never seen that?

She's, like, No.

Then I feel like, (indiscernible), okay (laughing). Then it becomes awkward.

Then I'll show her the sounds or whatever, and then it will make sense. She's not on TikTok at all. If you follow her on Instagram, she's barely on there (laughing). I would say Twitter is her most-used platform, and it's still not used a lot. So maybe I can get her on TikTok eventually. I doubt it.

Q. What is on your Netflix queue streaming queue? What are you watching?

COCO GAUFF: Right now I finished One-Punch Man. What am I watching right now? I don't remember. The School for Good and Evil. It's a movie on Netflix. And All American.

Q. Just being drawn into Iga's group, so you will face her one more time this year, and then also just your thoughts on potentially - not potentially - but that matchup when you do play her, but then also just your opening match against Caroline?

COCO GAUFF: I think, well, it's going to be a tough match. Obviously, I haven't beaten her yet. It's an opportunity just to try again and hopefully see what I can do.

I definitely learned a lot from that match in San Diego. Learned not just from playing against her but playing

against other players in general. Hopefully I can come back and there change the scoreline a little bit.

Against Carolina, I lost to her at US Open. But yes, no matches are going to be easy here. I really have no words. I think just the way the atmosphere is, I hope that it's a good atmosphere and good turnout.

I think I'm just going to have a lot of fun regardless of how it goes. Obviously I want to win, but I'm just going to focus on enjoying this. This is my first time playing this tournament. Hopefully I'll be here many more WTA Finals in the future, but I'm just going to enjoy the first one.

Q. On tour you usually have your parents because your father especially is part of your career. A lot of the players always say they really like your family, they really connect with your family. Yesterday there were a lot of players who don't usually travel with their parents and had them around, and you guys were all meeting each other. I'm curious, what was that like for you to see everyone with their families at a tour event? Did you interact with any of them at all?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah. The players in general didn't really get to interact that much. At least Jess and I because we were going back and forth a lot between singles and doubles. I have talked to Jess' family, but I have met them before.

I didn't meet Ons' family, but I saw she has her nephew here and her sister, and I think her parents are here. I walked past them, but I didn't know until afterwards.

It's nice to see everyone here. You know, it's very rare. People have usually their whole family. Maybe one or two family members might pop in here or there. But it's nice just to see that everyone -- it feels relaxed. You can tell it's the last tournament of the year. Everyone is just going to leave it all out on the court, and I think that's what makes it special.

Q. How did the court play? I think you're the first people to hit on it. What's the speed like? What are the conditions like?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, the arena is really nice. Really impressed with Dickies Arena. Never been here before. It's really nice. I'm excited to play in it.

The court is slower. When the court is built on top of something, it's slow. But, other than that, I have no complaints. I mean, I like the court. I got to hit on it today. The ball speed felt nice. The stadium looked brand new. I don't know how long it's been here, but they did a good job

on the stadium aspect of it. It looks cool, and I'm excited to play on it.

Q. I'm just curious, with you being so young, and despite having played for a couple of years professionally, do you still get nerves before big tournaments like this? If so, what do you do to cope with those?

COCO GAUFF: Yes and no. I mean, it depends on the tournament. Here I haven't felt any nerves yet. But when I step on the court, it could be a different feeling.

But for the most part I would say after US Open, my last tournaments of the year, I just haven't felt any nerves. I also think that's because the Grand Slams are over. I think that's where I get the most nervous for.

Usually I just enjoying the rest of the year. I fell like when you get closer to the end, the more you want to give because you know this is it, this is all the marbles. I have Billie Jean King Cup too as well, but for a non-team environment this is it.

Hopefully at the end of this I have fun, and I'm going to enjoy this regardless of the result.

Q. And you Jess are two of the four first-time participants in the WTA Finals. I'm wondering whether the two of you talked to each other at all about what the event might be like, what to expect? Do you think there's any significance to the idea that half the field is new faces participating in this event?

COCO GAUFF: I haven't spoken to her about that aspect, I mean, other than doubles and who we're going to play (laughing).

But I think it is significant that there's a lot of new faces. I think it shows that the tour is always evolving. There's always going to be someone coming up and doing well. I think that's what makes it exciting.

Obviously, when Serena and Venus are playing, they were pretty much dominant players. But I feel like now it's just a lot of new faces, which is great because you just never know who it is when you start a tournament.

I feel like, in general as a player, I've always felt that any person has a chance to win, but I feel like the fans now believe that as well. There's not one dominant force there. I think that's what makes it exciting.

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