

Guadalajara Open

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Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico

Coco Gauff

Press Conference



C. GAUFF/E. Cocciaretto

7-6, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: We'll go ahead and get going with the press conference. Coco, do you want to just give us your thoughts quickly on your match.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I'm super happy with how today went. It wasn't my best tennis. But when traveling back-to-back at tournaments, you kind of expect not to do your best in the first couple of rounds. So I'm happy I was able to push through today.

Q. It's been a great 2022 for you. You were finalist in a Grand Slam, and now you are qualified to the WTA Finals with this victory. How do you feel about it?

COCO GAUFF: I'm super happy. Didn't really pay attention to the race until after the US Open, and that's when I realized I was close. But I'm happy to have qualified for both singles and doubles. It's very exciting.

And it's very hard to qualify for both, too. So I'm just super happy, and I'm happy to be able to play it in the U.S. too.

Q. What's the challenge of being a qualifier?

COCO GAUFF: I don't know. I will see the challenge when I get there. It's, obviously, another event. But I mean, who wouldn't want to play the WTA Finals? Definitely it's going to be hard mentally. There will be no easy matches. Top eight players in the world.

I think I'm just going to enjoy it.

Q. It wasn't easy for any of you, especially the first set. Did the match go the way you expected?

COCO GAUFF: Yes and no. I mean, I had a good feeling about today. Obviously, when you are the higher ranked player, there's more pressure. So I felt a little bit of that today.

But I don't know. I think I'm just happy that I adjusted. I didn't feel my best on the court. I was missing balls I normally don't miss. But that's expected when you come from sea level and then to altitude. It's expected.

Q. The question is, of course, the altitude. It's a big challenge here. Especially because of what you said. How do you handle this after this big win?

COCO GAUFF: Just trying to address. The more you play, the more comfortable you get in it. Having one match under my belt, I think it will make me feel better for the next match. I'm going to change some things with my string and how I approach certain shots.

But it's definitely a challenge, but I think it's what makes you a better player when you are able to win when you're not feeling your best.

Q. Reaching the final in Roland Garros, you won the doubles title US Open. What is the next goal for you?

COCO GAUFF: Well, honestly, just to finish out the year strong. I haven't set any goals for next year yet. But I guess the biggest goal is to do well in the WTA Finals and then hopefully help my team do well in Billie Jean King Cup as well.

Q. You are a very young player. So fresh. We all want to know how do you gain your focus, your energy before a match? Like maybe a good song, a quick snack, maybe a ritual you may have...

COCO GAUFF: Usually before the match I try to stay calm and not worry about anything.

It's not really a ritual. I just go through TikTok and then listen to music. I usually listen to something calm. And then right when I'm about to walk on court, I switch to something like rapping and something a little bit more upbeat.

Q. Since you were very young, many expectations were placed on you for being success for the American tennis. Now that Serena is gone, what do



you think about that? Do you feel any pressure?

COCO GAUFF: No. I think her legacy is something that is going to be hard for anyone to carry out, so I'm not going to place that pressure on myself.

Also, I mean, her legacy no matter if someone does get to - she has 23 - if someone gets to 23 again, I still think that her legacy will stand alone on its own. So it's not something that I feel pressure to fulfill.

But I do feel pressure more so in other things, but maybe not so much with her retiring. I think with her retiring from the sport, I mean, that's just one of the G.O.A.T.s leaving, so I'm not going to try to put myself up there - at least not now.

Q. Young players say they dream to reach the No. 1 in the world, but sometimes they don't explain why. Why would you like to be the No. 1 in the ranking?

COCO GAUFF: I'm going to be honest, being No. 1 is not one of my goals (laughing). I've always not focused on ranking. I think it's just the way my dad taught me, even in juniors.

When I actually reached No. 1 in juniors, I found out on a social media post. I had no clue where I was in the rankings. Now I'm more aware just because of interviews I'm being told where I'm ranked. I don't check my ranking.

If I reach No. 1 it would be great, but my goal is to win grand slams. Obviously, if you win grand slams, the ranking will come. That's always what my dad has told me and that's why I'm not so focus on that number because I feel like when you step on the court, no matter if you are ranked No. 1 or 200, you have equal opportunity to win. So I have never been focused on so much ranking and numbers.

Obviously, if I do reach No. 1, it would be really cool, and I would be really grateful for that.

Q. I'm here to ask you specific questions what players think about the Latinas who are playing here in this category, which is a master. Some of them don't have the same kind of training as Europeans or other people from the U.S. like you. You also represent somehow the Williams sisters. What advice do you give to all the Latinas who have struggled to be able to play in games like this one?

COCO GAUFF: I think for me the biggest advice that I would give, just being a minority myself, is never let anyone dim your light. And I think a lot of times you think,

Oh, maybe I can't do this because I don't see someone like me doing this. But always think that you can be the first or you can be the second or you can be the third.

And regarding the training, it's definitely a problem in tennis. It's very expensive. I'm very fortunate that my parents were able. And I live in a country, U.S., and I'm able to afford, but that's not the case for everyone.

But I would say the biggest example that I would give to that is Frances Tiafoe. If you hear his story, you can see that a lot of his tennis he learned just from watching. He didn't have a coach. He was staying at the site of his tournament.

So I think players like him definitely just make you feel like anyone can do it. So I think you should look more so to him because he definitely is a good representation of that: no matter where you come from, you can do it.

So I think if Frances Tiafoe can do it, then anyone can do it. Love the guy. But he is definitely a goofball (laughing). If he can do it, then you can do it. So I think that's the biggest thing: don't let anyone dim your light, and know no matter where you are from it's possible, the dream is possible to achieve.

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