

Porsche Tennis Grand Prix

Stuttgart, Baden-Württemberg, Germany

Wednesday, 19 April 2023

Coco Gauff

Press Conference

C. GAUFF/V. Kudermetova

6-2, 4-6, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Coco, congratulations. A very tough match, especially at the end. What helped you through to take it on your side to win?

COCO GAUFF: Just trying to hang in there, honestly, playing every point. I lost to Veronika previously in three sets, so I knew it was going to be a tough match going in today, especially everything that I had to change this week from hard and clay and all that.

But I'm happy I was able to stay there.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. This was your fifth final-set tiebreak win out of sixth. I'm wondering, do you find something more in terms of energy or motivation, or you feel more relaxed when you go to this moment of the match?

COCO GAUFF: Honestly, I did feel a little bit more relaxed compared to, like, I don't know, I felt, for some reason more comfortable in the 6-All tiebreaker than I was trying to break to win the match, even holding serve.

I don't know. I feel like honestly I think playing doubles, we play so much match tiebreaks and those crazy points, and I feel like doubles is a little bit more stressful, the tiebreakers, because there is another person and, like, the points can just happen so fast, and in tiebreakers I feel like the worst things happen in the tiebreakers.

I think going into singles I feel a little bit more relief, because I know I make the return, if I hit it slightly middle, the volleyer is not going to attack my partner.

Honestly, I think it comes from that. I think just playing so many match-set tiebreaks it comes a little bit easier in singles.

Q. Down a break twice in that third set, it felt like you



kind of went into full lockdown mode. You weren't missing a ton. What kind of changed when you served it out, found yourself in the tiebreaker? And in the breaker, it seemed like you played really free. Talk me through like the roller coaster of that.

COCO GAUFF: Well, I knew being down the break, I mean, in the match today I felt like being down a break meant nothing. I mean, I was up a break and had a chance to go up a couple more. That's what I felt. Even watching the matches before this week, I feel like most of them have gone pretty long and even last year.

I think I was just telling myself to try to be aggressive. I know in Miami I said that I was working on it. I think I did better today in certain moments. Again, making that the first decision, trying to retrain my mind, I guess, relearn tennis a little bit in a way. I think I did that in the tiebreaker and in even moments when I needed it.

So in that being successful, I'm going to keep trying to do it. Even if it wasn't successful, I think that's the way I need to play.

Q. You're still the only player under the age of 20 who is under the top 50 on the WTA Tour. Do such things help you relax when the next big step isn't going as smooth, or do you tend to get impatient?

COCO GAUFF: I don't know. I feel like my age has always been a factor for other people, but for myself I don't think I give myself much leeway I guess when it comes to that. I don't want to look -- I guess in the future, I don't want to like look back and be like, you know, I was too lax because I felt like I had so much time and maybe I didn't, so I really want to take care of the present.

Also, I have to keep that in the back of my head, but I think for the most part I try not to think about it.

Q. You said that you expect tough match with Kudermetova. Who are your biggest opponents on the tour?

COCO GAUFF: I mean, right now, head-to-head, definitely Iga. I haven't beaten her. I would say she is the biggest.



Pretty much everybody else I've gotten some wins over.

Obviously everyone in the top 10 everyone I think I have played, or -- yeah, I pretty much played and maybe won and lost to except Iga. I think she's the only one I haven't beat.

Q. You play next round against Potapova. What can you say about her tennis?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, her tennis is great. I lost to her Miami a couple weeks ago, and that was a close one. I had opportunities in that match.

I mean, again, I'm not expecting an easy match. She's been playing better and better each week. I think that I'm just going to have to keep that aggressive mindset, especially against her, someone who can come up with some big shots.

Q. You said like retraining your mind a little bit in terms of how you want to play right now, you have obviously made a Grand Slam final, Roland Garros, playing the way you had played in the past. So how do you kind of trick your mind to, I guess, maybe play it a more risky way that might win you the big matches but could lose you matches like today? You know what I'm saying?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah. I think, I mean, I wouldn't say like I don't think I will ever be like Rybakina who can really literally hit someone off the court. I think more so the way I want to play is being aggressive on the right shots.

I think the tiebreaker I did really well in that. A lot of the shots I hit were kind of close to the line, but I think those are the shots that I know I can make. I missed a couple of those earlier in the match, but it's the fact that I went for them, I think that's when I made them when I needed to.

You know, the final is great, but like I feel like since then last year, I feel like the way I have been losing matches has been because of that, I need to change something. So I think just keeping that mentality I had last year, using my physicality to make them play tennis but also not making them comfortable where they feel like they can just hit me off the court. So I think it's just finding that balance, and I'm still trying to figure it out.

Q. You seem so well adapted to all sorts of surfaces. Which is your favorite one?

COCO GAUFF: Oh, that's a complicated question. I mean, I love hard court because that's just what I know, but I have done really well on clay and grass is where it started

(smiling).

It's a very tough question for me. I would say it varies on the season. I would say last season -- it varies on the season. Obviously grass was my favorite for a while. I would say last season I think I would go clay. I think I was really enjoying the clay last season.

But then the season before, or 2019, was it, or 2020 when I had beat Naomi, then hard was like my favorite surface. I think it depends on what I'm doing the best on (smiling).

But right now, I had a pretty good, decent hard court season, but I think clay, I'm going to say right now at this moment, clay. Sorry, complicated answer. (Laughter.)

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