

China Open

Monday, October 2, 2023

Beijing, China

Coco Gauff

Press Conference



C. GAUFF/E. Alexandrova

7-5, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations, Coco. Your thoughts on the match today.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, it was a difficult match. I didn't think my level was, like, the best it could be. But I'm happy to just get through the first round. First rounds are tough, especially coming from everything that happened a couple weeks ago.

So I'm happy with how I was able to fight through.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. You got off to such a fantastic start, 4-Love up in the first set, then things got tougher. Could you talk us through that period in the match where you had to dig in.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, 4-Love... I mean, she was giving me a lot of errors so I don't think the 4-Love was completely my tennis. I think once I got to that point, I definitely started making more unforced errors. I think I had a point for 40-15 and I double-faulted. I don't know what happened on the 40-30 point. I was able to buckle down when I needed to.

But obviously I think in these moments I want to do better in closing out those sets when I'm up, especially a double break.

Overall I'm happy with how I was able to push through. Is it how I like to play? Probably not. But I knew coming in was going to be tough, just coming from across the world. This is the first time here. I knew it was going to be a tough match for me regardless. Especially Alexandrova, she's a great player.

I'm happy with how I was able to manage.

Q. On the fact that this is your first time in China,

making the flight and everything, how has the jet lag been and the adjustment? How are you finding the conditions, how your game plays into them?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, honestly the jet lag has been really tough. I'm usually someone who can adjust so quickly to, like even Australia I adjust in a day. Tonight was like the first night I slept more than five hours. I slept seven hours, which usually I like to get nine before matches.

It's okay. I've been here for enough time, had enough time to adjust. I think it's just first time here. So maybe next time I'll do a different adjustment.

Other than that, I mean, the weirdest thing for me is just I feel like my stomach is working backwards. I've been waking up at 5:30 in the morning starving. Then at dinner I've just not been hungry at all. That's the only thing that's been different.

The fans here have been really great. I enjoy it. I've never seen so many people passionate at just like practice. They were really clapping and rooting for me in practice. I'm just really happy to be here.

Q. I'm a little bit surprised that you took the wild card into the Zhengzhou tournament next week. How will you set up your schedule before the WTA Finals?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I mean, after that tournament, assuming if I do well, I would have two weeks before the Finals. Really I wanted to have a second tournament in case this one doesn't go as well. I wanted matches before the WTA Finals because from the US Open to the Finals is a long stint. If you lose early here, the Finals is a long stint. I wanted to play at least two tournaments down here.

Playing the last week would have been tough, too quick of a turnaround before WTA Finals, so we decided to play that tournament.

Yeah, I mean, assuming all goes well, I could do well there, then be in good form for the Finals.

Q. Actually your trophy speech at the US Open



inspired a lot of people, especially female athletes. I don't know if you know last week in the WNBA, the MVP award ceremony, the reigning WNBA MVP Breanna Stewart commented that she drew some inspiration from your speech. Do you know Breanna?

COCO GAUFF: Yes, obviously I know who she is. I saw her MVP speech on Instagram. It was really cool to be quoted by such an incredible athlete as her, especially someone that's older to me, way more established in her field or her sport than I am, draw inspiration from me.

Congratulations to her for getting the MVP. I think in basketball, it's something that's difficult 'cause you can play great, and it's really up to other people to decide if you deserve it.

I think she had an incredible season. I've been following the WNBA a lot more the past two years, also following women's college basketball. It's really entertaining.

I'm really happy for her. I know the Playoffs are going on right now. Hopefully the rest of the season can be really good. I've been rooting for more individual players. South Florida doesn't have an WNBA team, so I've been rooting for more players than actual teams.

Q. During the US Open you said you read comments on the Internet. How do you find the key to find the motivation from the comments instead of being distracted?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I don't know. I feel like my brain just works different. I've tried to not -- I still have the filters on my Instagram. I don't see anything. I see the comments.

I used to not be on Twitter at all. I'm still really not on Twitter much. But sometimes you get caught up in the scroll. The way the page is, the accounts that you interact with, you see yourself. I interact with tennis a lot obviously, so those tweets come up. Obviously I see about myself, positive and negative.

I wouldn't say negativity is something that's welcome. It's more, I don't know, something that I draw inspiration from. I wouldn't recommend everybody to do that (smiling).

Yeah, I mean, most of the time it's negative things, but it's not like life-threatening things. Some of those comments can get out of hand. But for the most part, I don't know, it's weird, maybe I feed from negativity. That's weird. A lot of players don't like it. For me, I'm very stubborn. I like to argue. I like to prove people wrong.

My agent and my team advise not to comment back, so I use my racquet to do it (smiling).

Q. The fans here are very passionate and knowledgeable. They know a lot about each one of you guys. Have you picked up on that in terms of not just how much they are excited to see you, but they know little details about you? Have you had interactions or gifts?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, that was really surprising. Like I told my physio, I wasn't expecting to get much support here. I mean, I've never been here. There hasn't been tennis here in a long time. I had no clue how they were going to receive me.

Yeah, I mean, the fans here are definitely I almost compare them to the fans in Mexico where they're really knowledgeable of every single player. Not just me, but I'm practicing or walking around, even players who may be a little bit lower ranked, where in the States don't get asked as much, they're really knowledgeable.

I think that's what makes it exciting to be here because you can tell they really love the sport for the sport and not just some of the personalities.

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