

China Open

Saturday, October 5, 2024

Beijing, China

Coco Gauff

Press Conference



C. GAUFF/P. Badosa

4-6, 6-4, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Coco, congratulations. Into your first China Open final. Can you give us your overall thoughts on the match and the comeback today.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, it was a tough match. Paula has been playing some great tennis. Yeah, it was very physical. I was happy with how I was able to turn it around.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Down a set and a break, you had all those very long service games that you kind of had to come through. What do you think was the trigger for you to be able to win six consecutive games from that point?

COCO GAUFF: I don't know. I feel like I was playing the right way the whole time, other than maybe a lot of double-faults. But other than that, I was playing the right way. Just missing sometimes. She was playing a very high level.

I was just trying to get on the scoreboard and keep trying to get points on the scoreboard. They turned into games.

I was trying to stay in the moment.

Q. You noted in a recent press conference that you tend to play much better after the first set. Why do you think that is? How do you think we saw that ring true tonight?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I mean, usually the first set... I always grew up on the philosophy that the second set is the most important set, which it is because you either win the match on that set or you stay in the match with that set.

Obviously I want to win the first set. It would make maybe my life easier. It's tennis. Yeah, there's matches I win straightforward, there's matches you have to split sets.

That's just the sport.

But, yeah, I'd rather be able to raise my level in the second set than kind of crash after the first.

Q. We've seen yourself, Iga, Naomi all change coaches in recent weeks. I'm not going to ask you to comment on those specific cases. But when you're looking for a coach, what sort of things are you looking for? In terms of the relationship, what is sort of the most important dynamic between them?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, honestly I think it just depends at what point in your career you're at, what you're looking for. Obviously right now I'm very young, so I'm looking just for someone to help me develop in the long-term process, try to help make my game as complete as I can be.

Yeah, for me, I mean, with the relationship, adding Matt to the team, we literally just started like two weeks ago, so really only had a week to work with training-wise, then we had to come to China and the tournament.

We're working on a lot of developmental things. He's great. Obviously I still have JC on the team. For me, it was trying to find the mix of two people that work together well. So far, I mean, it's obviously working result-wise.

Just even behind the scenes and everything you guys don't see, I think it's great. I'm happy with my decision regardless if I lost first round or in a final this week.

So yeah, I'm happy to have him on the team. I feel like he's already making significant progress. Him and JC are working well.

Q. Have you had a chance to see the championship photo of Carlos Alcaraz where he's sitting on the traditional Chinese chair? The chair is a big deal in Chinese culture, symbolizing the top spot, all the honors come with it.

COCO GAUFF: Oh, wow.

Q. Now you are one step away from potentially sitting



on the same chair. What are your thoughts? Any excitement or thoughts about what it might feel like?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I saw him sitting in the chair. I didn't know what it had meant. That's cool. It would be great.

Yeah, my thoughts? I mean, I'm just focused on the moment. Obviously it would be great to be there and sit on it and hold the trophy. It will be my first 1000 title of the year. Yeah, but I think for me, you just can't look too far ahead.

We both made the final. We both went to the Forbidden City together. Somebody asked me in the beginning of the week if that would give us luck. So far it's working. Hopefully I can follow in Carlos' footsteps.

Q. You have a really good record in finals, like 7-1.

COCO GAUFF: I didn't know that. I definitely know the 1 (laughter). Roland Garros, for sure.

Q. Didn't want to bring that up.

COCO GAUFF: It's okay. You live and you learn (smiling).

Q. 7-1 in finals. Throughout this week you've been very open about working on a lot of things, treating it like a practice week, taking the misses if that's what it takes.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah.

Q. Going into tomorrow, how different of a mindset do you think it will take to capture this title? Separately, if you can break down the matchups between the two potential finalists.

COCO GAUFF: I think the same mindset. I mean, I'm happy to be in the final. Like I said, I wasn't expecting it. Has this week been like my best tennis? In moments, yeah. I think today I reached some levels where I was playing my best tennis. Obviously that's not the case for the whole match. That's tennis, that's life.

It would be cool. But it's so far. Everybody thinks the final, you're so close. But you're not. You're so far away.

I guess it's cool. Regardless of what happens today, I'll still have a winning record in finals. Hopefully I can add one more. If not, it's okay.

The matchups? Karolina, I played her twice, both on hard court. She's a tough opponent. I think she's one of the

best players on tour. She just had some unlucky breaks with injuries. But it's good to see her back healthy. That's going to be a tough matchup. She's dangerous. Yeah, I think it would be tough.

Qinwen, the same. She's a tough competitor, tough opponent to play. I think she plays very physical tennis. Playing at home, I have experience playing at home, it brings so much more energy and adrenaline to you. I know that she's going to come out swinging.

Yeah, so both will be tough matches. This is what makes tennis exciting. It makes me excited to play the best of the best.

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