

# China Open

Sunday, October 6, 2024

Beijing, China

## Coco Gauff

Press Conference



C. GAUFF/K. Muchova

6-1, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Coco, congratulations.

COCO GAUFF: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Winning your first China Open, your second WTA 1000-level tournament. Give us your thoughts and emotions right now, how it was to win that match today.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, it was a tough tournament. I think today was obviously by far my best match in a while. I'm really happy with how I managed to play. Despite the way maybe I was starting the tournament playing, I still stuck in.

Yeah, I'm really happy with how today went.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. You served incredibly strong and you opened the match very well. Overall you dominated from start to finish. How did you mentally prepare for tonight? What was different?**

COCO GAUFF: I was super relaxed going in. I was just like, I don't know, this match is not going to change my life. When you go into matches like that, it's super relaxed.

I think also the experience of winning a 1000-level title in the past. Yeah, that tournament, it was great confidence. Again, it didn't change my life.

I knew regardless of the result today, I was proud. Honestly, I was just telling myself the whole match I'm proud of myself, how I was able to overcome and still work on things that I've been practicing on, too, and stick to it.

**Q. You're now 8-1 in tournament finals. I'm curious how you manage to block out all the noise and remain focused in such a setting?**

COCO GAUFF: Honestly, when you get that far, you're just happy to be in the final. I don't know (smiling).

Yeah, I think it's just being relaxed. My first final, which is when I was 15, is kind of like the worst because you're like, I'm never going to get this opportunity again, which is completely not true. That is how I felt in my first Grand Slam final, as well.

Yeah, I think the experience of winning in the past, I realize that, yes, winning is great. It feels great right now. But tomorrow I'm going to wake up and it's a different day. 70% the world doesn't know anything about whether I won or lost. Probably even more...

Yeah, that's how I kind of treat the mindset honestly. But it feels great. It's a personal achievement. I think I'm realizing more and more each day that tennis is not a measure of my value as a person. I think the more you realize that, the more relaxed these tournaments become.

I'm still going to experience pressure. It's easier said than done. I'm sure at another tournament, I will be like, I felt so much pressure today. But it's up and down.

**Q. Not sure if you're aware of the stat, but you made tennis history today. First player in the Open Era to win seven of their first hard court finals on the WTA Tour.**

COCO GAUFF: That's cool.

**Q. Curious about your reaction doing something no one's done before.**

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, that's pretty cool, considering there's been so many great players before me in the Open Era.

Honestly, with the stat things, I feel like every tournament, it's a new stat or new record. I'm very thankful. I would be excited to see when the next stat is, the next girl, I don't know who, will be the first person to do this since Coco Gauff. I'm excited to see that, honestly.



Especially honestly it means a lot when I saw that the last American woman to win this was Serena Williams. Honestly, anytime my name is mentioned in whatever sentence hers is, it's like a huge honor to do something no one has ever done before. It is pretty cool. I didn't know that was on the line.

I don't know if it would have affected my mentality today. That's pretty cool. I hope somebody else breaks it. I think records are meant to be broken, honestly.

**Q. With tonight's win, you've effectively solidified your place in the WTA Finals. There's a lot to still work through, a long way to go. I'm curious to get your thoughts on that, how you take that momentum with you through the final stretch of the year?**

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I guess making Finals honestly wasn't the goal of this tournament. Honestly, I kind of told my team I wanted to play Beijing. We were planning on just coming to Wuhan. I just felt like I needed to play, have fun.

I enjoy Beijing. I feel like here, it just makes me more focused in other tournaments just because it is so different from where I live, where I'm from. I think it enhances my game.

But yeah, I'm looking forward to playing the WTA Finals again. I think this is my third year in a row. Yeah, I'm pretty proud of that. It's hard each year to make it. Especially with the depth of the women's game now, I think it's even harder. I'm really honored to make it.

I don't know if it's like official, official. It is? Okay, that's great.

Wuhan is my last tournament till then. Regardless of whatever happens, I'm not playing anything till Finals.

**Q. On today's match with Karolina, you said it was your best match in a while. What were you particularly happy about? What is it about this matchup? She just beat Sabalenka three straight times, but she can't get a set off you. What is about the matchup that shifts in your favor heavily?**

COCO GAUFF: I don't know. Every time I play her, it's so hard. Honestly, when you're on tour, you don't really think about what you beat somebody, whatever. Last time I played her was a year ago. So much can change in a year. I've learned that probably a lot more than probably most people.

So yeah, honestly I wasn't even thinking about that. My

coaches told me, Yeah, don't even think about the Cincinnati final or US Open, all of that. So I wasn't even thinking about that.

I didn't watch any of the matches in the past that I played against her. So yeah, I think the matchup, honestly I've played her at some peak times in my career, so maybe that's just the unfortunate time for her (smiling). Yeah, I don't think it's anything like matchup-wise.

Today I just felt on, even from the first game. I had that feeling that I felt last year, too. Sometimes you just wake up and you're like, Today is my day. There's no science behind it. I think that's just when I played her.

Then the same when I played her at US Open semis. Honestly, once I got to the semis of that tournament, I felt like there was no way I was losing. I think the Cincinnati final was kind of up in the air because it was the first time I played her.

Honestly, I played her on some really good days. I don't think today was like her best tennis ever. So maybe I got lucky on that.

She's a great player. I think she's one of the most talented players we have on tour. It's great to see her back healthy. I think everybody agrees, if you're a tennis fan, I don't get how you can dislike her because she's a nice person. Just her game is so fun to watch.

Honestly, I don't like playing her. She said that in the speech, but I really don't. You don't know what she's going to do. Sometimes I'm holding my breath when I play her.

**Q. Am I right in saying you were wiping away a few tears at the end there?**

COCO GAUFF: Oh, no, I didn't cry. It might be something in my eye. Trust me, I have cried after winning before. No, I didn't cry today. Must have been something in my eye.

But I am the first to admit when I cry. No, I don't think I'll cry. Today was just like, Yeah, it's cool. It was not a crying day (smiling).

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