

China Open

Friday, September 26, 2025

Beijing, China

Coco Gauff

Press Conference



C. GAUFF/K. Rakhimova

6-4, 6-0

THE MODERATOR: Coco, congratulations. Could you please share your thoughts on your match today.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, it was my first match since US Open. Kamilla was playing great tennis. Started off really strong. But I was able to maintain that level throughout the match.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. In other tennis news this week yourself and a group of other top players are continuing your push for greater benefits from Grand Slams. Do you want to share any thoughts on where things stand now, how those changes might help players.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I mean, overall it's been a long, long process with that. We have a player representative. I like to keep most of the comments for him because they did have a meeting this week. I was not a part of it because I had practice at the same time.

I did get a text message of a recap. I wouldn't say I fully know all the details what transpired as of last week. Overall I know this started Indian Wells this year when we all signed the letter, the top 10.

Yeah, I think the goal is just obviously increasing the percentage of prize money, but also making it better not just for us but throughout the field. The top 10 signed a letter as a representation of the entire tour, within the top 200 or top 300 I would say.

Unfortunately it's like that: the top players, you can put more pressure, your voices are heard a little bit more. We try to take advantage of that and use it.

Yeah, I think the biggest message is not just to benefit us, it's to benefit all the players.

Q. When you come back to a tournament like this, the China Open, you've had success here, do you have a completely different mindset coming into a tournament like this where you're the defending champion compared to another tournament where you're going in not as a defending champion?

COCO GAUFF: I think given where this lies on the schedule in the year, I've played tournaments as defending champion. This for some reason feels less pressure. I don't know if it's because the slams are over or maybe because I know I'm, like, basically qualified for Finals. I think that lot of that is kind of pressure off.

Yeah, I think the mindset is a little bit different just because when you play well at a place, you have a lot of confidence. I remember entering Madrid, this was like the first year I actually had a decent result at Madrid, so it gave me some confidence.

Here, knowing that you play well, when those tough moments happen, you feel the familiarity of the conditions from the years before that I did well.

Q. You had an excellent rally in game two and three of today's match. What got you to finally take those games?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, those were long games.

A little bit of luck I think. One of those games she hit like a let cord. That kind of helped me. And then just being solid. We were playing a physical match. I felt like she was getting a lot of balls back. Balls that I thought would be winners, I had to keep hitting it over and over.

The conditions, today was a little bit faster, but the balls are really slow, especially when they get heavier towards the next ball change. It's really slow. I was just trying to stay solid and make her run.

Q. Last week your teammates played the Final of Billie Jean King Cup in Shenzhen. I would like to know if you watched the two matches, if you were expecting the outcome of the final against Italy? In general, did



you speak with your teammates after the Final?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I didn't get to watch. I think on the Final, I was traveling. I didn't get to watch that day.

I mean, yes and no. Obviously I have a lot of faith in my team. I think they're going to do well. Obviously Team Italy is great. I think Jasmine and Elisabeth, I feel like they strive in those team environments when they play for their country.

They're the defending champion, I think, or were the defending champion. I knew it would be tough. I thought that our team was strong. I felt like this year that they could have taken it.

I'm hoping that we can do well and qualify again. I'll probably be playing next year.

Q. It sounds like a lot of the players are finding out their Chinese nicknames amongst fans this week.

COCO GAUFF: Yes (smiling).

Q. What does it feel like for you? What is your reaction to yours? Kind of how interesting is it that this small thing that you do is resonating and becoming a thing halfway across the world?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, well, apparently I guess I have two. Obviously the 'fruit salad queen', they love that one. Then they told me I was 'Ambassador of Beijing' because of all the things I said about Beijing. It's really cool.

I like Jess' nickname. I thought hers is pretty cool. I guess I have a challenge for the Chinese fans: I would like to what animal resonates with me (laughter). I mean, 'fruit salad' is cool, but I think being named after an animal is cooler. I would like to see what animal they think I am.

But no, I think the Chinese fans are great. I have literally so many gifts, more gifts than I've gotten on Christmas in my entire life.

I purposely packed light because last year I packed full and it was a struggle to get everything back. I do keep all of them. A lot of the stuffed animals are a decoration in my house.

Yeah, I think they're the best, most creative fans. Yeah, I love coming here. I came prepared and brought an extra bag.

Q. Regarding the match that just finished, the first set seemed to be a little bit competitive. Did you expect it

to be that close? Then the second set seemed to flow more easily for you. What adjustments did you make in between?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I expected it to be close, A, because it was my first match in a while. Obviously she's a great player. She's had competitive results with top players in the last few tournaments.

I don't know, I think I just found my rhythm and got in a flow. Obviously you're starting off the match, nobody wants to lose first round. I was a little bit tight, I think. I was able to loosen up and I think that showed in the score.

Thank you.

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