

China Open

Tuesday, September 30, 2025

Beijing, China

Coco Gauff

Press Conference



C. GAUFF/B. Bencic

4-6, 7-6, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Coco, congratulations. A tough match. How did you switch it around?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I don't know. I think I just was able to buckle down and get through that. Yeah, she was playing really aggressive. I feel like a couple points went my way, I could have maybe won that first set.

But I'm happy with how I fought today.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Obviously a little bit of back and forth there in the middle of the second set. Talk about how you saw it and how you were able to react after that. She was leading when it happened. Kind of seemed like it turned things around a little bit.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I mean, I knew she said something to my team, but I didn't know exactly what. They told me she said, Shut up. I didn't hear it, so I can only go based off of what they said.

I mean, I guess she was upset about them cheering. For me, the stadium is silent, so you hear both teams. I played previous rounds, both my matches I could hear the other teams pretty loud and clear, because it is silent.

It doesn't bother me. I was telling her to be respectful. I've been nice with her team off court. We've been nice with each other. I just didn't like that comment towards my team.

Yeah, that was it. I mean, we moved on after that. I haven't spoken to her since. She's entitled to how she felt and I'm entitled to how I respond.

Q. Would you say that confrontation I guess affected your play in the second set? If so, how so?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I mean, immediately after that, next game I was frustrated, threw three doubles. But after that I was just like, Okay, I don't want to lose anymore after this point.

I was able to just buckle down. I think it was almost good for me in a way. I think I can play sometimes a little bit better when I'm annoyed, more so not with myself but with something else.

I don't know, I think it did help me. But I'm not a confrontational person. I don't like having confrontation on the court. I definitely don't like that. I mean, it happens. It's sport. Yeah, I'm happy that today went my way.

Q. Has that sort of thing happened a lot with you? I'm not pointing at you, but generally. You're saying you're not confrontational. How do you handle it if it happens frequently?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I mean, I've only had I think, like, two problems on tour. One was at US Open. That one was pretty famous with the player. Then today, this one.

But yeah, I mean, how do I handle it? I'm not usually someone that will start it, but I'm very quick to respond. I don't like people disrespecting other people. I felt like telling my team to shut up was not something nice. Especially they were cheering after I hit a winner. So yeah but...

For me, I don't know, I was just like, Okay, now I have to win the match, especially now after having that issue. I think for me it was more so a bit pettiness, just trying to win the match. The worst is if you have the confrontation and then you lose. It's like a lose/lose. I just wanted to win to be on the winning side of things today.

I obviously have a lot of respect for Belinda. She's a great player, coming back and playing great tennis as a mom. Yeah, I obviously wish today didn't happen, but it is what it is.

Q. You've had two quite long matches, which you mentioned has been tough for you. Yesterday Iga



came for her press conference and she mentioned after the five retirements yesterday that the second half of the season is tough because people are tired and fatigued. I wanted your thoughts on the rules that are still pretty new and how you interpret them, deal with them.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I mean, obviously with the mandatory rules, I know why it's in place with prize money and everything. Do I agree with them? I mean, I guess on a business point, it can kind of make sense. But on, like, a player health standpoint, I don't really agree with it.

I think I've basically played as much tennis as I possibly can, and it's impossible to keep up with the six 500s. It's just impossible. Especially now with more and more events being two weeks, it just doesn't really make sense to strain your body.

The way the season is kind of built, you have like usually, other than the grass, you have two 1000s back to back and then a Grand Slam, a 500 before. It doesn't always make sense to play the 500 before knowing you're probably going to play four weeks of tennis, then have to play a slam, keep up with sponsor commitments, things like that.

I definitely would like to see in my lifetime on tour a solution be made to make the season shorter. I also think it does some of the 500s a disservice. For example, I wanted to play DC this year. I knew I wouldn't be able to play DC and then play two weeks in Cincinnati and Montreal. I think it does a disservice to that tournament for the scheduling.

I definitely would love to see somehow how we can balance that out to make it a little bit easier for players in tournaments to make those decisions.

Honestly, as a top player, you see most of the top 5, top 10 playing very limited 500s just because when you make it deep in a two-week tournament, it doesn't make sense to play one.

Q. Have you tasted any of the fruit in China? Which one is your favorite? Any other kind of food in China?

COCO GAUFF: I mean, like a fruit native to here?

Q. Yes.

COCO GAUFF: I don't think I've tried anything native to here that isn't native to anywhere else. At the player area they only have watermelon, melon, dragon fruit. I've just been eating that.

I guess I should ask. I never thought about what fruits are

native to here. Maybe I'll do some research tonight and see what I can find.

Q. I notice that after the match you spent so much time with the fans. I want to know, what is your favorite gift from the fans now? Could you share a touching story between you and your Chinese fans.

COCO GAUFF: That's a hard question with the gifts. I've gotten so many. There is one person that gave me, like, a spoon and a fork set that had my face engraved on it and my name. I thought that was cool. Basically every stuffed animal I get I think is precious. Someone gave me a Hello Kitty one that I really like.

Then my most special moment... There's a fan here named Hans. He's going to see this because he sees every interview of mine. I'll probably see him tomorrow. He's so sweet. He's been here since the first day. He gifted me CDs because he knows I like to listen to physical forms of music.

He made a Love Island poster for me. He gave me a letter the other day. I think for me, he's the most touching fan that I've met here. He's always so kind and respectful. He helps out other fans that couldn't make it that give him stuff for me to sign. He brings it back to them. I think that's so nice, he's not only giving stuff for himself but for people that couldn't make it.

Q. You got qualified to the WTA Finals. How do you feel about that?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I'm really happy. It's my fourth one in a row I think. That's pretty cool. Yeah, I mean, it wasn't a shock this year just because of the Grand Slam rule and how well that part of my season was.

To see a checkmark by your name definitely gives you a sense of relief for sure.

Q. Back to the requirements, tournament requirements. You mentioned about a shorter season. If the season is shortened, a discussion that's been going on since the year dot...

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I know (smiling).

Q. ...should there be a line in there that if there is a shortened season, no exhibitions? Because so many players will go off and play exhibitions, they've got extra weeks, then they're complaining at the beginning of next season, We're so tired. What do you think of that?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, that's a good question. I'm generally not someone who does too many XOs anymore.

Hmmm... It would depend on what that shortened season looked like. I definitely think if it were a shortened season, there was a definite end to the season, maybe that is something that could be added, or at least no exhibitions within that time period of the season.

I feel like once the season's over, you should be able to do whatever you want to do, like in other leagues, like NBA, WNBA, if they want to play overseas, they can.

But that is a good point.

I do think that, yes, people will play exhibitions. But exhibitions, honestly, is no different than me practicing with another player. It's not that much energy spent. No one really ever plays full out on the women's side because we don't have things like 6 Kings Slams and Laver Cup where they're actually playing full out. We don't have that.

For the guys, it can make more sense to have that kind of thing, but for us, most of the exhibitions are literally one match.

I definitely think, yeah, if there's cooperation, if the tour wants to shorten thing, I think players would take leeway. That's definitely a discussion that has a lot of nuance to it.

I definitely think that could be something that players would agree to if it meant having a season ending around this time instead of November.

Q. Your former Team8 management company is going to get you.

COCO GAUFF: I mean, that's a guy's problem (smiling).

I don't know. Is it an exhibition? Do they get points for it?

Q. No points, but it goes on the official records.

COCO GAUFF: Oh, I didn't know that.

Well, I guess it's not an exhibition. I don't know. If I can play Laver Cup, I would. It seems like a fun event. Yeah, I didn't know. I'm sorry. I thought it was an XO. I don't really watch men's tennis that much, so it's not my fault (laughter).

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