

Gippsland Trophy

Monday, 1 February 2021

Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Coco Gauff

Press Conference



C. GAUFF/J.B. Teichmann

6-3, 6-7, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Talk us through that three-setter against that tough lefty opponent.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, it was especially difficult, especially like this is my first match since Abu Dhabi after a tough loss, and I just wanted to get back in the swing of things. She picked up her play level in the second set, and that tiebreaker could have been anyone's but she came out on edge and I knew in the third set that I just had to continue to stay aggressive and stay on her.

Then in the tiebreaker just kind of just went for my shots and just see what I could do. I knew eventually I would get back and the momentum would be back on my side.

Q. That seemed like a real mental victory for you. There were a lot of times where you could have just gotten down on yourself, but you seemed to be resilient. Do you look at it that way, that in the long run you learned something about yourself today?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, definitely. Yeah, especially like my last match in Abu Dhabi I wasn't mentally there the whole match, and I knew today I had to come in and be mentally there from start to finish, and that's what I did today. I just kept telling myself, keep trying, have another chance and just keep fighting, and that's what I did.

Q. Were you in a hard 14-day-long lockdown?

COCO GAUFF: No. Luckily our flight was safe, I guess, I don't know, clean (laughing). I was allowed out five hours, and also my dad, me and him were the two that went out and then the rest of my team stayed inside.

Q. There were videos of you whacking the ball against the mattress; that was in addition to hitting the ball?

COCO GAUFF: It was like the first -- so the first five days we stayed in the room because I think with all the

flights and everything I think they weren't sure which flights were COVID positive and which ones were not, so I think initially we were supposed to get out Sunday but they had to push it back a couple days just for like safety reasons. So we didn't know if we were going to get out of the room when I did that video, and then after that, once I found out, I didn't do any extra work in the room, no.

Q. So how hard was that period of uncertainty, and given what you have gone through, would you do this again throughout the rest of the year if this kept being required for other tournaments?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, so the first five days I was fine. The person who was taking it the most was my dad because he was very anxious, and we heard on the news that another flight from Abu Dhabi tested positive. We didn't know if it was our flight or not, and he was reading and I was fine. I was watching Netflix. I was just chilling.

I'm the one who puts my mind ready for the worst situations, so I already just assumed that it was us who had the hard quarantine, but luckily it was not.

I mean, obviously it's not possible to do a two-week quarantine for every tournament, but for coming back to Australia since there's not many COVID cases here, I would do it again next year if we had to.

I was happy on court to see some fans in the arena today and be able to walk around. We're staying in the crown, like the crown area, and like seeing like restaurants full and stuff, it was very relieving, and like it was so weird like not walking around without having to worry about getting sick and stuff.

Q. Do you want to stay?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, it would be perfect if my brothers were here, then my dad was like we could stay here forever. But they're back at home, so I'm still going to be here for a long time, but I would try to stay here as long as possible if my brothers were here with me.

Q. Can you describe what that contrast is like, because in Florida it's not that the restaurants aren't packed, it's just that the virus hasn't exactly been contained there. Just how the feeling is different for

you to have gone through this in order to be safe.

COCO GAUFF: Well, yeah, unfortunately in my state not everyone follows the COVID guidelines, but I mean, I do, my family does. My grandmothers and my grandparents are compromised, so we try to make sure we don't get them sick.

It was definitely tough, like especially in the holidays not seeing family and everything, but we tried our best to stick with the COVID guidelines, and yeah, it's definitely different. In Florida I wasn't really going many places just because I didn't want to get sick. So yeah, my outings would basically be to the store, grocery store or something or going to Chick-Fil-a in the drive through or going to the beach or at least -- which the beaches at least where I live in a small city, they aren't that packed. So that's pretty much the only things we did do.

Q. Venus said her motto is test negative, think positive.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I saw that on -- I saw somebody else say that: Stay positive, test negative. And that's my motto.

So yeah, I remember one week, unfortunately my brother ended up getting COVID. He was the only one in our family who got it, but that week we spent like so much money on tests and everything. I think it was like over a thousand dollars on tests (laughing). But luckily he was the only one who was positive. He had to stay in his room. I felt bad, but we moved to a hotel and quarantined there.

Q. Did he have mild symptoms?

COCO GAUFF: He just couldn't taste. He came in my room -- like he's very paranoid person, so every month he thinks he has COVID and so we just thought he was fluking it again, and he was like, I can't taste this piece of chicken, and I was like get out of my room. Then we went and got tested at 8:00 a.m. the next day and everybody's results came back negative except his.

Q. So you had to pay for the tests?

COCO GAUFF: Oh yeah, at home the tests cost money. Yeah. I don't know how they are in Australia, but at home -- or you're able to get free -- there are free testing sites, but we wanted the results back pretty quickly so we paid for them.

Q. During this match today how anxious were you really feeling in that especially that final set?

COCO GAUFF: To be honest, I felt really relaxed the whole time. Like sometimes I get nervous, but today I wasn't nervous because I knew I was trying my hardest,

and that's all can you really do out there on the court.

I had this new mindset; I mean, you just keep fighting to the end and if it goes your way, that's great, and if it doesn't at least you know you did everything you can. But being anxious never helps me when I play, so I try not to do that.

Q. Where does that come from, that mindset?

COCO GAUFF: Honestly the last past two weeks thinking about it in the room, I think having some alone time definitely helped, and I journaled a lot and had a lot of time to think being in the room, so I think that was a positive.

Q. The practice in your room, was it the curtain you were hitting against or was it the bed?

COCO GAUFF: It was the bed. So my dad -- this is something that my brother did when he was in quarantine. He came up with this contraption. He plays baseball, and hitting it into the mattress so he was able to practice. So my dad kind of took that for tennis. But yeah, nothing was broken. I know a lot of people were worried that something was broken, but no, having two younger brothers we do all types of stuff in the house, especially now with COVID contraptions and stuff. So yeah, nothing was broken. He put the mattress on the thing against the window and then I just hit into mattress.

Q. So were you watching some of the Tweets from other players, their imagination on what they could do in the room, and if so, who do you think really was the most imaginative and creative?

COCO GAUFF: I didn't see. I wasn't on Twitter that much. I never really use Twitter that much. I try to, because Alessandro, my agent, wants me to use it more, but it's just not an app that I do well on.

But I did see like Ons Jabeur made like a funny video of her and her coach, and she like threw real tennis balls and one of the tennis balls was chocolate and she ate into it, and I thought that was pretty funny.

Q. I want to ask about Haikyuu. You mentioned on Twitter -- what's the attractive point for you?

COCO GAUFF: I'm sorry, the audio's not, what did you say?

Q. I said sorry, can you hear me?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I can.

Q. Yeah, I want to ask about Haikyuu. You mentioned on Twitter. How did you know that and what is the point of it for you?

COCO GAUFF: So Haikyuu is just -- my friend is really into anime and she got me into it. And she's been, I've known her since I was 10 and she's been trying to get me into anime for years. And I finally was like, okay, I'll try it and she recommended Haikyuu. And like I fell in love with the show because like I could relate to a lot of characters on the show and honestly people are going to think I'm crazy, but I think that show definitely changed my mindset coming into this week and like I was thinking about it today in the match when some tough moments.

Q. Earlier in the press conference you said that you have this mindset that generally assumes the worst. And that's kind of -- I'm curious if you could kind of explain that a little bit and does that impact your tennis and the way that you approach your tennis as well?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, this is something, this is like a funny thing of my friends, I'm always the blatant truthful person. I'm not -- I'm not mean, but like I'll let you know the truth. And like in tennis I definitely I feel like I go on court with a glass half full, I feel like mine like on-court me and off-court me are two different completely different people. So off-court me, I'm thinking half full most of the time, but like situations like that I think it's better to prepare myself mentally to think half empty, just because if actually the cup is actually empty then I know what to expect.

But if I think of it half full and it comes out empty then I'm going to be pretty upset. (Laughing.)

Q. Fair enough. Looking ahead you'll play Katie Boulter next in the next round. How familiar are you with her as an opponent and what do you take from this match specifically that you want to for sure apply to your next match?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I never played her before, but I know she's tall and she has a big serve and has some big ground strokes and to be honest I'm just going to take the same mindset that I had today. I think I play tomorrow, in tomorrow's match, and I haven't really thought about the next round that much, but, yeah, definitely the mindset will be something I'll take into that.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports...