

# Australian Open

Friday, 19 January 2024  
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

## Coco Gauff

Press Conference



C. GAUFF/A. Parks

6-0, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Coco, I know you had a few words you wanted to say.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I wanted to start off this press conference spending my condolences to Mike Dickson and his family. I know for you guys, it was a huge loss in the press room.

Life is really precious. I couldn't imagine what you guys and his family is going through. I've had a couple conversations with him in the past. I know he's been promoting the sport of tennis for a long time. It's a huge loss amongst you guys and the players.

I hope that his family can rest in peacefully. Yeah, thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coco.

We'll start with questions, please.

**Q. Congratulations to your victory.**

COCO GAUFF: Thank you.

**Q. Then I would like to ask, what song do you listen to when you enter the arena? What songs and what artists do you usually like to listen to before a match, and what do you want that music to do for you in the moment?**

COCO GAUFF: Before I go on court, I listen to "Icon" by Jaden Smith. I try to listen to some pump-up rap music to kind of get my energy up. Sometimes I'm a little bit nervous before matches, which I haven't been the last two rounds.

Music has always been a way to calm my nerves or get my energy up if I'm feeling a little tired, or calm my energy down. So yeah...

**Q. In terms of today's match, how did you kind of go into the match? What was the game plan? How did you kind of see it play out as you were playing it?**

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I mean, the game plan was, well, just to on her serve just make returns. She has a big serve and she goes for it every single serve, which is something I really respect. She has a big game.

If she keeps working, she's going to be at the top of the game, too. Yeah, it wasn't really like a huge game plan. I've never hit with her. It was tough to kind of put something into action. I was really just trying to do what I do against everybody else: keep the ball deep, open up the court, try to move her as much as I could.

I don't think she played her best tennis today. I know when she's at her best, she's a tough player to play.

**Q. You were playing somebody who hadn't been in that spot before. Was that in your head as you were preparing for the match, knowing there might be some jitters on her part, it might play to your advantage?**

COCO GAUFF: Not really because I feel like Alycia, she has a lot of big goals for herself. I think she expects a lot from herself, just knowing her for a long time. I don't know if she was nervous or not today. I don't think she was. It was not something I was thinking about before the match.

I just know her as a person, that she's a similar mindset to me, has a lot of big goals and expects a lot from herself. I feel like she wouldn't have been nervous in the moment.

I don't even think she was. I think today just wasn't her day. But, yeah, it wasn't in my mindset before the match.

**Q. Your younger brother is a great catcher, young prospect. You call pitches, signs, things like that. From a returning and a service standpoint, there is a little bit kind of similar patterns or intentions of what's going on. Do you ever talk about it or exchange notes?**

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I think the biggest thing I talk about with Codey, not necessarily the aspects of the sport, but more so the mentality of the sport.

He's someone that I think puts his competitors on too



much of a pedestal, or he used to. I think it's like a fine line of showing respect to your opponents, still putting them, but believing you can do it.

My dad has the opposite mentality where he'll just disrespect people (smiling). I think I have the balance of knowing like, yeah, she's great, she's good at what she does, but also I can beat her. I think that was one thing I spoke to him about.

Also just being a leader on the field. The pitcher and the catcher probably have the most leading roles in baseball. Sometimes the catcher oftentimes is the most leadership role. You have to notice when your pitcher is off, when to call time and all of that.

That is something I did speak to him about, be more of a leader on the field. Tennis is that sport where you have to lead yourself, not other people. It's not as easy when you're not somebody who is as social as easily to lead a whole team. But he's done a lot better the last couple months.

I think it just makes a difference because I tell him, like, the little differences, the little things matter so much more, especially in tennis and in baseball.

**Q. When you are serving, do you ever think about it in baseball terms, curve ball, off speed, placement?**

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, honestly in a way, yeah, you can go T, but it may not be a flat T, it could be a slider T or wide. Yeah, in a way 'cause I don't want to go mach 20 every serve. Like, yes, it can be great but girls are going to get a rhythm. It's all about mixing up the paces.

At times I think about it as a catcher would, because the catcher is usually the one that calls the signals. You have to kind of know the returner as well as the catcher needs to know the batter. Luckily in tennis we only have to focus on one person at a time. They have to know a whole lineup. So it's a little bit easier for us. But in a way, yeah, I do think a bit like that.

**Q. What do you know now about getting across the finish line in a slam at this point going into the second week that you didn't know in September?**

COCO GAUFF: Have fun and relax. I think as you get later, the trophy obviously gets closer and closer. You have to treat it that it's as far away as it is if you're in the first round. That's what I approached that final. I didn't approach it as I just need to win two sets and I have it. I approached it as I need to win seven matches again and then I'll get it.

It was actually something my brother told me, which is crazy.

**Q. Codey?**

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, Codey. He told me, Pretend that you have to win three sets instead of two. If you put your mindset into the extra mile, then it seems easier I guess in a way.

He would say, Okay, if you want to win the Grand Slam, say you have to win eight matches instead of seven. It's like changing your mindset so it feels further.

He said that, like, to me maybe a year ago. It always stuck with me about that because it's, like, I think at French Open I felt like it was so close, and I just got so tight. At US Open it just felt so far away from the very first point of the match literally until match point was over. 'Cause even though I had one more game to win, I was telling myself, Okay, you have a whole 'nother set to win. Well, not a set, but another set to win before you can get this trophy.

I think tricking your mind kind of relaxes the body because your mind controls your body. You have to trick your mind a little bit.

Obviously you know what's real, but you have to trick it a little bit. I don't know, everybody has their twirks [sic] that makes them feel better. That made me feel better.

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