

Roland Garros

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Paris, France

Coco Gauff

Press Conference

C. GAUFF/A. Kronic

7-6, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. You have known Naomi for a good while...

THE MODERATOR: Because of the time, first question about the match. Do you have any? We start with questions about the match.

Q. I could ask a question about the match. Can I ask a question then about Naomi Osaka, her friend?

THE MODERATOR: Absolutely.

Q. How did you grit out the match? Good win. Tough tiebreaker. How did you produce it today?

COCO GAUFF: I was super nervous going into today's match, to be honest. Just because I knew she's a tricky player, and she went through quallies and had some, I guess, matches behind her. You know, I went through qualifying before so I know how, like, how confident you are playing in the first round.

I was nervous going in, and I think it showed. She played really well, great tennis. I didn't play my best today, but I'm happy that I was able to fight through it. You know, the first set was, there was many moments I could have gave up but I didn't. I'm happy with the result today.

You know, the first rounds are probably some of the hardest matches in the tournament, just because you're probably the most nervous.

Q. Can I ask my other question now?

THE MODERATOR: Go ahead.

Q. I was saying, you have known Naomi for a long time. You had the moment at the US Open. But what makes her so special as not just a tough player at crunch time but as a person? Why do we find her so appealing?



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COCO GAUFF: I mean, she's a really nice person. You know, obviously I have some great moments with her on court and off court. You know, it's unfortunate that, you know, she's going through what she's going through.

I just can only lend out, like, a hand for support. You know, tour, it isn't the easiest, you know. You know, I talk to other players and they have gone through similar things in the past.

You know, I feel like every day people go through some of the things she's going through, maybe not to the level just because they are not -- spotlight, mental health isn't shared out with the world. It's definitely a lot harder I feel like when you're a public figure.

So, I mean, she's just a really nice person. Obviously is kind. I mean, I have no bad things to say about her except that I hope she can push through this. Mental health, it's a dear subject to me and I feel for her. I just hope that, you know, at the end she can beat -- I guess depression is what she says she's going through, so I hope that she can beat that and come out better and stronger.

Well, I hope as a tour that we can find ways to help her and help players going through situations like her. You know, that's the only thing I can do is just reach out and be supportive.

Q. What help is there on the WTA Tour for players who are going through difficult situations?

COCO GAUFF: For me from what I'm seeing what's been, from my personal experience, for us they have a lot of -- I don't know the correct, I guess, term. But I would say therapist? I don't know what the correct term of the job is. But they have someone on tour to help you with mental health. They have reached out to me a couple times about it.

I've accepted the advice sometimes and sometimes didn't, because life is like this, sometimes you need it and sometimes you don't. For me WTA, they have a lot of resources to help you mentally and physically from my perspective.

Q. Please don't take this the wrong way, but it's also a question regarding Naomi. With the whole aspect of her, one, not wanting to do postmatch media conferences because she didn't know our questions,

et cetera, et cetera, do you not think that that would have actually been in one sense a better way to highlight this entire aspect of her mental health issues because she could really lay it out there for the media to understand and appreciate it a lot more than it has been instead of making the statement of not wanting to do any postmatch media conferences which are mandatory once a player is asked?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, for me, I'm going to be honest, I don't know her situation, so I don't know what she's going through. So for her that could have been the best decision for her situation.

I've never been put in that situation yet, and I hope that I haven't, or I won't have to go through what she's going through. So I can't really answer that question, because I have no idea what's going on behind closed doors.

I only see what, you know, everyone else sees. I have no idea what's going on. For her, maybe doing press conferences could be a trigger for her and maybe not. So I can't really answer that question just because I have no idea what's going on behind closed doors.

I don't want to make an answer to that and assume something, because assumptions can end up leading to false information and I don't want to put out false information on something I have no info about.

Q. I wanted to ask you about doubles. Exciting that you're playing with Venus here. You're somebody who likes to play doubles all the time. I wondered whether in the time of pandemic when you're in a bubble outside of the tournament, et cetera, you're in the hotel all the time, is doubles a nice way of keeping the routine going? Does it help you mentally as well? You could get sort of stuck sitting in a hotel doing nothing for a long time.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, for me, I love playing tennis. I try to play all the events that I can. If I could play mixed doubles too, I would, but that's probably a bit much (smiling).

I enjoy playing doubles. I'm actually super happy, because I reached out to -- well, my dad reached out to Venus' team last minute, because unfortunately my partner, I was playing with Caty, she got hurt in quallies, and we thought it was best if she rest and get ready for the grass. So I reached out last minute and I wasn't expecting a yes, to be honest. It was worth the ask. I'm happy she said yes.

It's going to be super exciting. For me, I love playing doubles and hopefully I can pick up some things from her. She obviously has so many Grand Slams in doubles, and I want to win Grand Slams in singles and doubles. Maybe this week we can have a good run

these two weeks. I don't know. It's going to be exciting, and I'm excited.

For me, you know, I feel like doubles gets out all the nervous, you know, stuff. Hitting extra balls is what I need. I'm happy. I play tomorrow so I'm happy.

Q. You had some pretty magical moments at Wimbledon. Sadly nobody got to play there last year. What do you look forward to most about going back to Wimbledon, and how hard will it be for someone like you who really probably has -- when is the last time you even played on grass?

COCO GAUFF: Last time I played on grass was against Halep in the fourth round. So, yeah, it's going to be -- I mean, for me, it's going to be exciting. It's going to be interesting, you know, coming back. Me, I don't know how I will feel just because that was the start of everything.

You know, I think, to be honest, I don't really have any nerves or anything. I'm still in the French Open, but I don't foresee myself having too many nerves just because it happened two years ago, so it's not like fresh, I guess, if that makes sense. I feel like I have grown a lot as a person in these last two years, and I'm thankful for the experience.

I know it's going to probably be a limited amount of fans, but hopefully I can get a similar crowd experience, even though with a little bit of less people, but maybe they'll be just as loud as two years ago.

Q. You have had this incredible life, just from the juniors and so much has happened in your life. I'd like to circle back to a comment if I could that you just made, and don't tell us more than we should know. But you said that mental health issues are important to you. Can you just reflect on that, please.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I mean, for me I just feel like my life has had some pretty high ups and some low downs. I don't know. You know, it's hard for me to talk about, but I just really am happy with, like, the person I came here today. I don't know. My parents, you know, know what I have gone through, and I'm just happy, you know, I'm just happy to be, like genuinely happy.

I feel like especially, I would say pre-Wimbledon was the time I wasn't really the happiest with tennis and with life. Then Wimbledon happened, and it gave me confidence on court and then I started to take that on-court confidence to off court, if that makes sense.

Now I feel like I have a good balance of confidence on and off court. I want to continue that and I think that experience I went through only made me a better person.

So, yeah.

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