

Roland Garros

Tuesday, 31 May 2022

Paris, France

Coco Gauff

Press Conference

C. GAUFF/S. Stephens

7-5, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: First time in semifinal of a Grand Slam. How are you feeling?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I'm feeling super happy. I'm super happy with my level today, both singles and doubles.

Today is a good day for me.

THE MODERATOR: Questions in English.

Q. A question on unknown territory, semifinals. How are you dealing with preparations for your semifinals, knowing you have been in the quarters before, you know that. Now it's something new for you.

COCO GAUFF: I mean, I think it's just another match, to be honest. You know, I don't know. I feel like last year I was looking at the finish line, and now I'm not looking at anything really except that ball in front of me.

So I think, to be honest, going into the next match I'm just going to approach it the same. I mean, I care about the results, yes, but also at the same time I don't. Like if I gave it my all I'm not going to be upset.

Q. You are now qualified for semifinals in singles tournament and in doubles. How do you manage two commitments in terms of energy and recovery? Are you at 100% for each match, or do you preserve yourself for the final stage of the singles tournament?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I 100% prepare for each match. Physically I'm 100%. I think I put in so much work in the offseason. I mean, cardio and longevity was never been a problem for me in the past.

But, I mean, in general I just work so hard off the court and off -- not during the tournaments, that for moments like this, if I felt like I couldn't give 100% in both singles and doubles then I wouldn't play doubles.



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But I feel like I can give 100% all the way to the end. The intention for me when I enter the tournament is to try my best to win both. So I know going into that I'm going to be playing double matches in some days. For me, really, I'm used to it, playing juniors we would play three matches in a day. So this is light work (smiling).

Q. We know you are a big basketball fan, especially Miami Heat. I wanted to know, when you step on the court, how important is it for you to bring the intensity and the heat into your game? The way that you're playing both singles and doubles, why is it that you're just too hot to handle right now?

COCO GAUFF: I don't know. I think, I mean, going onto the court, I just try to bring my best every match. I fight for every point. You know, if it doesn't go my way, then, you know, you gotta look at the match and figure out what I need to work on.

I feel like a lot of my losses in the past were due to mental errors of just getting used to being on tour and getting used to playing these intense matches. I feel like now, really, mentally I'm in a great place. So I know if I do lose a match it's not going to be because of that. I'm okay, if it is because of my game, because that's something that I can work on.

Q. Curious how much you took from the US Open match against Sloane that helped you today? And also with your next match against Trevisan, having played her here, how much do you think that will help in this next match?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, playing against Sloane US Open, I mean, that loss hurt a lot, but it definitely better prepared me for today. I knew going in she was going to probably go on a more consistent side, and which she did.

I know her forehand when it's on it's on. So I think I was trying to do my best to push her back and then wait for my opportunity to step forward.

Playing Trevisan, yeah, I remember that match pretty clearly. I threw in a lot of double faults. I think I was in double digits with double faults. I'm not going to do that this time around.

And also, I mean, she's a tricky player to play on clay, a tricky lefty. I watched a little bit of the match of her and

Leylah.

Yeah, I think we're both playing free tennis, and I think that's going to be a good matchup.

Q. I know Alcaraz and Fernandez fell just short today, but how impressed have you been by the teenage success here so far?

COCO GAUFF: Oh, yeah, really impressed. I was rooting for Leylah, even though I knew I was going to play the winner of that match, but she's been a friend of mine for a long time.

Carlos Alcaraz, I'm always rooting for him. I don't know him as well. But, I mean, just from walking around, you know, the players lounge and players area he's always nice, always speaking to everyone. I was really rooting for him.

I'm always rooting for the younger ones, because those are the people I played juniors with and know them a little bit better.

But I'm sure that even me and Leylah and Carlos and Emma and all of us, I know, I think it will be a great generation of tennis that's kind of transitioning into now.

Q. It's obviously a great thrill and exciting every time you win any match. But you were beaming after today. How much more special did it feel with this win today?

COCO GAUFF: It felt a lot special, just because, not because it was a quarter or anything. I think because really last year I lost in the quarters and I had some set points, I think I had six or something set points in the first set.

I think that that match helped me today, and I think that I was playing way too passive when I get the lead in whatever. Even today I threw in some double faults at 5-1. I think I was, in that moment, was back in that mentality of that match and I think having that match I was like, I know I'm falling back into this mentality so I need to change it up, and I did.

I think really every match I was super happy, even when I beat Kanepi, I think that's when I really started having just so much fun after each match.

Q. You have just told us that you learnt a lot from the quarterfinals last year. And you also said after today's match that you were conscious at the time of other people's expectations. How do you reflect on that? What did you do to change?

COCO GAUFF: I think I was, you know, ever since I joined the tour, or even when I was young or eight, even

eight years old, the next Serena, next this, next that, and I think I really fell into the trap of believing that (smiling).

And, yeah, it's important that you have high hopes for yourself, but also, at the same time, it's important to be in reality and I think that's where I am. I'm in reality where I'm enjoying the moment and enjoying the situation.

I felt like I was to the point where even when I made the second week or beat Naomi at Australian Open, I remember like I was happy but I wasn't like that happy because, I was, like, I feel like that's what I should do.

Whereas now I'm really appreciating each win and loss.

Q. With Naomi, you lost to her at US Open and beat her the next time you played her at a Grand Slam. Is that something you take particular sort of satisfaction from or something you're able to find different ways to solve the problems against these opponents the second time around on these big stages?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I think a lot of the times when I play someone two or three times, even back in juniors, I would at least by the third time hopefully figured it out (smiling).

But, yeah, I think it gives me confidence. I mean, losing to Sloane at US Open and here, and then losing to Naomi and I lost to Trevisan, so I'm hoping the trend keeps going.

No, I think that it helps, because I feel like I know what's going on on the court and I know why I lost the match, and I know what I need to work on for the next time. I remember each loss pretty well. I mean, my grandfather always told me: Forget your wins; remember your losses. I remember each and every loss.

So when I play the second time I try not to lose, at least if I'm gonna lose, try not to lose the same way I did the first time.

Q. The only time I have seen you struggle today was at the end of your singles match when you were struggling for what to write on the camera, and you had to compose yourself a bit. But you did actually come up with something quite inspirational: "Dream Big." Why do you think it's important to dream big? Also, do you have any recurring dreams or anxiety dreams?

COCO GAUFF: No, honestly, my dreams are just weird. I don't know what's going on in them. But, yeah, I wrote "Dream Big." It's something that I say all the time, just because I really feel like people -- you don't want to let other people limit your dreams.

I think for me, especially to the youth, I think, you know, a lot of times a lot of kids -- or even like talking to my parents who said I wish that I had parents like me, because, you know, his parents kind of limited him in just being a D1 college player. I feel like that probably, you know, as a mindset as a kid, puts you into this box.

I think it's important that you don't put yourself into a box. So I always try to tell young kids that, to dream big, and you never know when your moment is going to happen.

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