

Roland Garros

Friday, 26 May 2023

Paris, France

Coco Gauff

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Coco, you're back at Roland Garros after your magical run here last year. Has it affected your preparations coming into the 2023 version?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I think it really hasn't changed much. I feel like a year ago is a lot of time. Obviously you think about the result, but I think I'm just more focused on staying in the present.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Welcome back to Roland Garros. Just in terms of practicing, of getting on the courts, of getting into rhythm, especially after having to stick around in Rome until the very end with the doubles and everything, how has that process been for you? How are you finding the courts and everything?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I think that I got here earlier than most. I mean, I got here, my first hit was Monday and I was pretty much the third person in the locker room I think the attendee told me. I had a lot of time to get used to the conditions here.

Obviously a lot different than Rome. It feels good to see the sun again. Yeah, we were just that night just hoping to play that day so we can leave Rome. Rome was great, but the weather did not treat us good at all. We were all looking forward to some well-needed sun.

Q. I remember you sitting here a year ago talking about the years that had gone before, your experience of life and tour and getting used to it and finding out what works for you, and that you were trying to now take pressure off yourself and not be so results-oriented. I just wonder how you feel now. Obviously it's been an up-and-down year I guess since then. How are you approaching this?

COCO GAUFF: I feel like, I mean, I would have liked to approach it the same way but I feel that's not realistic because I am a different person than I was last year. I think I just have to find the way I want to approach it for this version of myself now. That comes through trial and error. I feel like for some reason though I always seem to find that in Paris. I don't know if it's the city or the vibe here that makes me a lot more at ease.



ROLAND-GARROS

I think I'm finding it this week. Yeah, I don't know. I feel like I don't know if it's because I know I need to lock in for this tournament or if it's just I love this city. I don't really know but I seem to always find it here.

Yeah, I mean, it's one of those things immediately when I pretty much touch down here I just feel a little bit more at ease than the previous tournaments this season.

Q. Patrick Mouratoglou seems to be back on court with you or in the previous tournaments. Can you tell us about this collaboration and the fact that he's back here with you on court.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, we started after Madrid, and it was just through the clay season he's helping me out. I'm going in between coaches, to be honest. I haven't really found a full-time coach, I guess. Obviously he's still with Holger. But I have a great relationship with Patrick. I have known him since I was 10 years old and obviously been on the court with him before. I thought he would be a perfect person to help me during this time.

Yeah, I'm looking forward to the next two weeks with him.

Q. Both in Madrid and in Rome you lost relatively early in singles but you had to stay long for the doubles. Did you enjoy that, or was it tough? Was it good because you had practice partners?

COCO GAUFF: Honestly, it helped because I was able to play in practice with other girls when I didn't have doubles. I mean, otherwise I don't know where I would have gone. I feel like I would have just stayed at the tournament.

A lot of players in Rome that lost early stayed in Rome. So at least I had something to do, play doubles. Most of them, the ones that were there, were really bored, waiting around, so at least I had something to do in between.

But, yeah, the last two, I stayed. I think I liked playing doubles in those tournaments, the two-week tournaments, because they can be long and it gives you something to do in case that happens instead of I guess going back into, I don't know where I would have gone in between those tournaments. I don't know if I would have stayed in Rome or went somewhere for a week, but I was happy to be in Rome despite the weather (smiling).

Q. Picking up on the previous question, I'm curious about the ways in which you feel like a different person to 12 months ago, if you can articulate that, and whether there are any particular experiences you feel like changed you over the past 12 months.

COCO GAUFF: I think just transitioning into adulthood really. Last year I was 18. Now I'm 19. I think just transitioning into that, you know, and I also just feel like every year I just feel like a new person. I mean, it's cliché to say, but looking at myself then and now, I get the memories on my Snapchat or whatever from a year ago, and sometimes you look at yourself and you just see a different person.

Yeah, I think I've grown a lot in that year. Yeah, I think there's always things I would like to keep from I guess myself a year ago and things I would like to get rid of. I think I have to figure out what things I want to keep and what things I don't want to keep. I think that's just learning about yourself.

I mean, no matter how young or how old I am, I think I'm always going to be in this process of learning about myself. But I feel like even more in these years as I'm transitioning into being like a real adult.

Q. I just want to ask you about cyber bullying, with the French Open introducing this Bodyguard app. Could you tell us about your use of social media during the tournament and if you're using this app and what your reaction to the app is.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I saw the Bodyguard.ai app. I didn't apply it to any of my socials. I'm not on Twitter, which I feel like that's probably the worst of them all. So I don't really see anything on there. I'm not on Facebook.

Instagram, I just filter everything to making people, the messages I can only see are people who have followed me for some time, I would say a couple of weeks I think I set it to. You have to be a pretty dedicated person to leave a hate comment. That means you would have to follow me for a while to do that.

I don't really see too many bad messages online, honestly. Before I implemented that, yes, I would get them on Instagram pretty much daily, hourly.

I think it's really nice that French Open is stepping in and finding ways to protect the players. I think fans would be surprised some of the things you get, not just you, your family get. I think that's why I feel like I've become more private with my life. I don't like to subject my friends and family to that.

I think it's really cool that they are implementing that, and I hope more tournaments do that in the future.

Q. You were talking a minute ago about the idea of becoming an adult. I'm wondering, do you mean in terms of off the court as well as on the court? In the scheme of things, you're still incredibly young, but you have been at this for a while now at the top level in terms of playing tennis. I'm wondering, do you think of yourself as young, which of course you are in the real world? Do you think of yourself as a veteran by now on tour? How does the off-court life and the on-court life, how do those sort of mesh for each other with you?

COCO GAUFF: I feel like on court in a way I've been an adult my whole -- since I've joined the tour. For sure I would say, I think you could tell in the way I handle myself on the court mostly good. You know, obviously there is moments, but I feel like in that aspect, yes.

Off court, I would say I'm definitely a person that would consider myself mature. I mean, a lot of people consider that about me, so I do think being on tour has forced me to grow up faster.

When I say "adulthood," I think just I guess becoming more independent and finding myself off the court. I feel like I'm sure of who I am on the court, so I feel like because tennis has been so much a part of my life and it's always going to be, but I think now that I'm going to have to -- I haven't moved out, but eventually, in a couple years, you know, living on my own and I have to realize the things that I actually like to do.

I think that's like the weird part I feel like of being on tour so long, because you've lived a certain way so long, but I don't know if this way would be substantial as I continue to get older.

Q. Just wondering if you're keeping track on the Heat while you've been in Europe and what your thoughts are on where they are at right now?

COCO GAUFF: Yes, I have been keeping track. It's probably pretty much the second thing I do in the morning, pray and then look at the Heat score. I saw that we lost, unfortunately.

I would have loved to sweep the Celtics, but I have very much confidence in my team and Jimmy Butler that we will make it to the finals. I have a funny story about Jimmy Butler, but I'm going to save it until the finals. I don't want to jinx it. I will save it for another day for you guys (smiling).

Q. I demand to hear the Jimmy Butler story right now. Just kidding.

COCO GAUFF: I don't want to jinx it (smiling).

Q. I'm just shinin' ya. Was watching you practice the



other day with Patrick on Mathieu. Clearly you were trying to work out the bugs in your forehand. Do you know what's wrong with it? Okay, the tournament starts this weekend. If you've got an hour on a practice court, how do you figure out how much time to spend on your strengths instead of something that's troubling you?

COCO GAUFF: I mean, obviously the forehand is something that I have to improve on, but on clay especially I feel like it's one of my weapons. Last year, I mean, I have won a lot of points using that heavy forehand, and I think that that's something I continue to do this year.

Regarding the strengths and the things that I guess what I would do in an hour, I think that's part of the part of adulthood, I guess. I'm used to being told what to do and I just do it. So I guess now I'm trying to find, and I think Patrick and in previous coaches want me to be more vocal about my game and about what I want to do. I'm just used to doing what I'm told. I think that's what made me a good student in tennis, but obviously to make it to that next level I have to do the things.

So I would say it's just whatever my coach tells me. I mean, right now I feel like my forehand is a strength on clay. In all my practice matches, obviously I have the advantage. I know where they're going to play me, which is a lot, as some players don't know that. I know exactly what they're going to do and now it's all about executing it.

So I guess in a way I'm using it more as a strength. Obviously it's something I need to work on, but I have to work on everything. My last match I think I honestly hit my forehand well. I think the backhand was the problem in my last match. I wouldn't say "the" backhand but a lot of mistakes on that side.

So it's something that I'm working on, and we'll see. I mean, I feel pretty confident going into this tournament regardless of how other people view my game. But none of that matters when I step on the court.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports