

# Roland Garros

Saturday, 3 June 2023

Paris, France

## Coco Gauff

### Press Conference

C. GAUFF/M. Andreeva

6-7, 6-1, 6-1

THE MODERATOR: Coco, congratulations. Back into the second week here at Roland Garros. What was the key after dropping that first set to coming back so emphatically and winning the next two?

COCO GAUFF: I think just keeping and trusting in my shots and my game plan. I feel like in the first I have myself so many opportunities to close it out and I came up short on a few points, but I knew, you know, the way I was playing and the direction I was going that I would have been able to get the second.

Then the third is always tough because you don't know, obviously she lost the third [sic] 6-1, you don't know if she's gonna make an adjustment or not, but I just tried to stay with my game plan.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. Do you feel like experience played a part today against her? In that third set, how did you start to feel the momentum begin to really shift to your side?**

COCO GAUFF: I don't know if experience played -- yes, maybe. I don't know, to be honest. When I played against her I didn't feel like she was lacking experience. Honestly at the end of the first set it was weird, I had a feeling that, I don't know if it was the energy she was giving me off or anything, wasn't really quite anything she did, but I had a feeling that, even though I lost that set, I felt like I won the set.

I think, I mean, I knew in my head that I was playing the right way. I mean, 6-5 serving for it, 30-Love and she played great in the tiebreaker. I think I had two loose points and that matters in the tiebreaker.

I mean, I can say probably experience played a factor, but honestly what it felt like on the court, it didn't feel like -- you know, I played two other people that were younger than me, and in one of those matches for sure I would say experience played a part but I don't know if that meant today. I think she plays beyond her years, and I don't know, feel similar to how I was.



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**Q. As somebody who's been through it yourself, do you think we focus too much on age with young players, always mentioning their age as they play matches and things like that?**

COCO GAUFF: I'm gonna be honest: Yes (smiling). I mean, the whole -- I mean, it's great. I remember I saw a stat the other day, and they were, like, I have the most bagels by a teenager on tour. It's cool, but it's just like some of these stats, I don't know, just like I feel like some of these stats, I don't know, y'all be finding the smallest details. I'm like who keeps track of this stuff?

I think honestly age does play a factor, but yes, as I've been growing even now at 19 people still talk about my age. It's like people are like, you know, she's still so young. Yeah, I'm 19. I've been young, you know, (smiling).

And I don't know if Mirra feels the same way but people love to say, You're only this, you're only that. When I'm on the court, we're not thinking about our age. I don't think she was thinking, Oh, I'm only 16 and she's 19, she's older. If she was thinking that she wouldn't win a match because she beat people older than me. And at my age I wasn't thinking about that, I was just thinking about playing the ball.

Age is important to mention sometimes but as a player and going through it, yes, it gets a little bit annoying. Because I feel like I'm the type of person, I don't need to be praised because of my age or anything. I prefer just to be praised because of my game, not because of things I'm doing at whatever age.

**Q. I don't know if you saw because it happened quickly after a point but at the end of the day of a tiebreaker when she turned and she shoved that ball into the crowd, we all were like, is she going to be disqualified? Were you thinking maybe the match was over at this moment?**

COCO GAUFF: I didn't see it, to be honest. I saw, I heard the code violation obviously. I didn't know if he said racquet abuse or ball abuse. I assumed it was the racquet. So I just thought maybe she banged the racquet or whatever. She did that a couple of times in the match.

So I can't really say if she deserved to be defaulted or



not. I mean, obviously you're not supposed to throw the ball in the stands. I mean, it happens. I mean, I wasn't -- if I saw it, I don't think I would be hoping for a default. I would prefer to play the match out. But it's up to the umpire's discretion.

But I didn't see it so I can't really give you an opinion on that.

**Q. Compared to your last match, I think you raised your level quite a bit. Quarterfinals it might be Iga once again who didn't drop a game today. How far do you look ahead?**

COCO GAUFF: I mean, I'm just looking at my doubles today and then the match after. You know, even though the quarterfinals seems close, it's still so far away, and that's the only way I can look at it, really.

Yeah, I mean, I don't pay attention to the draw. I mean, I know she was on my side because we're playing on the same days. I think in these Grand Slams, if you look too far ahead, you kind of forget the present. So I think now I'm just focusing on the present and I'll think about that if and when it happens.

**Q. Sorry to mention age again here, but in the match there was quite a bit, including the hitting the ball into the crowd, there was quite a lot of teenage behavior and body language from your opponent, particularly in the second and third sets, which is very understandable, given her age and experience. You've never behaved like that on the court, certainly not that I've seen or can remember. Is that because you're a great actress? Have you had moments where you felt that way but not wanted to show it or you've never been that kind of a teenager?**

COCO GAUFF: I mean, you haven't seen but my quarterfinal here two years ago I broke a racquet on the court, and then US Open doubles final I lost, I threw the racquet to the side.

So, I mean, generally I would say yes, I'm pretty well-behaved, quote, well-behaved. What she did on the court, it's not an age. It's just being an athlete and being frustrated, to be honest. People do it at all ages, so I'm not gonna blame it on her age.

I mean, the ball thing, I guess maybe keep that in control. But the banging of the racquets and all that, I mean, you shouldn't do it, but, you know, it's part of growing up and part of life. So I'm not gonna sit here and berate her for it. I hope you guys don't either.

I'm sure no one means to do these things but it just kind of happens. So I'm not gonna sit here and act like I was on a pedestal because I've acted bad plenty of times.

Sometimes in practice -- I try my best not to do it in the matches -- but sometimes at practice a couple racquets get thrown in the trash. I'm not going to sit here and act like this.

I do try to act better in the matches because I don't want to get a code violation and I don't want to get fined. I remember I got fined like 7 grand after the breaking the racquet here in the quarterfinals two or three years ago. So I was like, I'm not wasting 7 grand again. That was more than a lesson learned for me.

For Mirra, what happened today, I think she's gonna learn from it, for sure. It's frustrating. Tennis is a frustrating sport. I completely understand it. I've been there.

I think for the most part, other than the ball thing, the banging the racquet, that stuff is quite normal. I think she has a good head on her shoulders, and just from the personal interactions I've had with her, I think she has a good head on her shoulders. I think she's gonna be fine.

**Q. Not to belabor this topic and not to ask specifically about today and Mirra, but in general, when you do see or hear the code violation announced or there is body language on the other side from the opponent, do you take note of that, and does it ever make you think, oh, maybe I've got her off her game? Or maybe my opponent's head is not focused on the next point? Does that factor in for you at all?**

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I think definitely, especially the body language thing. I think that's just in all sports. That's something I've been really trying to work on. I didn't realize how much my body language showed until I started watching the film of me. I'm, like, yeah, if I was the other side looking at me, I'd be like, yeah, this girl is down.

Today when I heard the code violation, yes, naturally you think she's frustrated, so just make her play.

But there are certain players that honestly once they get the code violation, once they let out their anger, they play better. Today, I never played her before, so I don't know how she was gonna -- some people once they get frustrated they start playing unbelievable.

So with her today, I mean, I just tried not to -- just tried to ignore it, to be honest.

Yeah, body language, I would say, I would say even more so the body language part than the code violation because sometimes codes can just be a spike of anger, but if the body language after every point keeps showing, yeah, it gives you confidence.

**Q. I have heard other players say that there can be an advantage for newcomers on tour, people in Mirra's position, nothing to lose, no pressure, free swing, things like that. Did you experience that when you were first on the tour? At this point, do you feel like you're a newcomer still? Or do you put yourself in the next group?**

COCO GAUFF: I would say, well, I'm four years on tour, so no in the newcomer aspect.

I mean, I hate to bring up age, but yes, in the age part, then maybe yes. But, I mean, I feel like the amount of years I've been on tour I would say I'm not in the newcomer stage anymore.

Yeah, I mean, today, I mean, I feel like playing against her I didn't think about age either. I was just thinking about playing the opponent. To be honest, you don't really think about that as an athlete. I feel like people more so from the outside think about the age factor.

**Q. When you were younger, did you feel...**

COCO GAUFF: Oh, yeah, sorry. I forgot the first part of your question.

Yes, I think a little bit. I mean, I don't know. I feel like yes and no. There's moments in the match that I was tight. I feel like really the big advantage to newcomers is that no one has a scouting report for you. And I did feel that, to be honest, when I first got on tour, I don't know, people weren't really playing me in a set way, and I feel like as I have gotten older, more people were starting to play me in a set way. I think that's where the advantage comes because no one knows from the scouting report.

Also, yeah, there's less pressure. But it depends on the person. I don't know if she had pressure on herself today. There's been times when I was young I would put way too much pressure on myself, which I stopped myself from free swinging.

I definitely think when you're younger typically you swing a little bit more freer because you're not thinking about points to defend or, like, little things like that.

But I don't know. It depends on the person.

**Q. Apologies, Coco, but my question also relates to age. Sorry.**

COCO GAUFF: It's okay (smiling). I'm making it seem like I'm 40 years old. I'm sure 20 years from now I'm going to be like, oh, I wish you guys would start bringing up my age again.

**Q. In our sport, you know, many players do break through when they're very young, and some go on to**

**really make it, make it big. Others fall by the wayside. So you broke through essentially when you were 15. Now you've really sustained it. Hung in there and done really well. Obviously still very young. But what was the key to sustaining it over these years? What advice would you give to her to sustain it and keep it going?**

COCO GAUFF: I think really your support team. I never felt pressured by results. I had a great family surrounded by me. Great agency surrounded by me. Great sponsors surrounded by me where I never felt pressure to do anything result-wise. Really, all the pressure was the pressure I was putting on myself, and that's always going to be the case.

So that would be my advice to her. I would say more so to her parents, because I feel like at that age, I mean, even now, it's hard to control who you sign with, what sponsors you have, because you don't know. You're just doing it based off what your parents or whoever is telling you.

So I would say that advice to her parents, because I'm so grateful that my parents always protected me in that sense, so I think I really was just focused on the game and not so much everything else.

I guess the advice to her, just to do it for you. I mean, don't do it for anyone else. When you step on the court you want to make sure it's for you, and I think life and the game will be a lot more enjoyable that way.

**Q. I don't know if you saw but Sabalenka and Sloane Stephens have been scheduled tomorrow on Chatrier for the night session. It's the first women's match to be scheduled for that slot. I just wonder, do you think it's a bit disappointing that it's taken over a week for a women's match to be scheduled for that slot?**

COCO GAUFF: I didn't see that they were scheduled. To be honest, I mean, I didn't realize only the men have been scheduled in that spot.

I mean, I really don't have much of an opinion on it. I don't know if the night session amongst the players is a popular hotspot, to be honest. I guess for the TV and that's the prime spot, maybe yes, it does suck in that sense.

But amongst the players and from my conversations, I don't think a lot of people want that spot just because it is a late night.

Yeah, I really don't have much say on that. Yeah, I mean, just speaking to the players, I don't know if Sloane or Aryna wanted to play at that time, but I know the ones I spoke to, no one really wants the night session.

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On that sense, we were happy with the men taking it, but obviously it is the prime spot. So it does suck a little bit in that way. It depends on how you think about it, to be honest.

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