

Roland Garros

Monday, 5 June 2023

Paris, France

Coco Gauff

Press Conference

C. GAUFF/A.K. Schmiedlova

7-5, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Coco, back in the quarterfinals again this year. Just talk us through how happy you are with your form and how you played today.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I'm really happy. I mean, today was honestly a difficult match. I mean, as every match is. But the wind was something that, I don't know, I wasn't really that prepared for it going in. The one side was gusting like really crazy. Usually, like, I like to play in the wind, to be honest, but it wasn't something I was prepared for.

Overall I'm happy with how I played.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. You were posting a little video of you and Jessie, the one backhand smash. I was wondering, not to bring up age again, but she's a little older than you are. Of course she has a different background from anybody here probably in this room.

COCO GAUFF: Yes.

Q. How do you interact during tournaments? You have been in Madrid for a long time and in Rome for a long time.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, there is times where there's obviously the age gap isn't noticeable and then there's a lot of times where I'll be talking to her about something and she has no idea what I'm talking about, usually like a TikTok reference or something. I'm like, You haven't seen that? She's like, No. She's not on TikTok.

I did get her to finally do a TikTok video with me. I guess with the on-court dynamic it feels like as any other partner. Obviously I used to play with Caty McNally. We're a lot closer in age.

But, yeah, on the court I don't really notice it as much. It doesn't really matter.

For sure there's moments I think, especially when we first



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started playing together, there were moments I would say she's definitely more mature and behavior-wise than me, but off-court is when the difference is noticeable.

Q. When you go into a match against somebody who's ranked 100th versus somebody who is ranked No. 1, just to pick a random number, how, if at all, is your mindset different going into that kind of opposition?

COCO GAUFF: I think, you know, the ideal would be to treat every match the same, no matter the ranking.

Obviously I do think in the back of your head it does come into play where you're playing someone No. 1 compared to somebody in the 100 range. You can't treat the ranking as a ranking.

But sometimes I feel like you just feel like if you just hang in there, even if you're not playing your best, you might come out with the win. Whereas obviously someone's who's No. 1 you can't just hang in there. You have to be more in the match.

But, like, then also you can't approach the match like you're playing someone on their ranking, especially in a Grand Slam because she is in the second week. She beat the seeds on her draw, her side of the draw, so you can't approach it like that. But I do think from a mental standpoint it's slightly different.

Q. If I could just ask what exactly happened with your knee there? How is it doing now?

COCO GAUFF: Oh, it's fine. I just scraped it. I did it in the match before also, on a different knee. It's something that, I don't know, reminds me as a kid I used to always scrape my knee as a kid. I've never gone to clay season without scraping my knee. Last year here I had that crazy fall too.

Yeah, it doesn't hurt. I just had the ref ask if I wanted it to be clean, and I kind of forgot about it. I looked down and I saw it's bleeding. I was like, Oh, yeah, it's probably wise if I get it cleaned.

I didn't really want it covered, so I ended up taking the cover off. You hear about infections and stuff so I didn't want that. But yeah, no pain, it's just bleeding.

Q. I think you said earlier there is no point revisiting

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last year's final against Iga, but if you do end up playing her again, what you have taken from last year and whether you might watch the match back again going into this year's match and how you think the pair of you have evolved since last year?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I mean, I guess obviously from a scouting standpoint, yeah, I have to rewatch that match because I don't think I've played her on clay since, I've played her on other surfaces. I don't know if the surface will matter that much. So I will rewatch some previous matches to see where I've gone wrong (smiling).

But, yeah, I guess the revisiting part for like the mentality, yeah, I mean, it's in the past. You know, in a positive way, not like I lost in the final, I don't want to think about it. It's more so I don't want to make the final my biggest accomplishment, I guess. I want to keep moving forward and keep reaching further heights.

Q. The Roland Garros crowd is quite notorious for being very enthusiastic and sometimes harsh.

COCO GAUFF: Yes, I know.

Q. I wonder just what you heard about it before you started playing here and what it's been like, compared to how you've seen it while you've been here and while you've played in front of you it?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, obviously I played juniors here and no one came really until the final. They were really enthusiastic in that final. Even like the last couple weeks, like, I don't know, they like to boo sometimes (smiling).

So I actually enjoyed it. I remember my doubles, I had missed, like yesterday I missed like a super easy overhead. I like dropped my racquet on the ground and got mad, and then they started booing slightly. Then they started cheering. It was one of those moments I started laughing because I was so confused. I was like, Are you guys booing because I missed the overhead and then cheering because the other team won the point? I was confused.

Yeah, I honestly like it. I don't take the -- I don't even want to consider it booing because it doesn't sound like boos. I don't know what it sounds like.

But I like the crowd here. I like that they're not afraid to, I don't know -- I mean, obviously there's a limit but they're not afraid to express themselves. I think this makes the atmosphere a lot of fun for me to play in.

Q. At some events you were excellent and aggressive on the return of second serve. Can you tell me these last weeks how you have worked with this shot and this aspect of your game.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, it's been something I have been trying to work on a lot. I really started doing it more in doubles and I think I got more confident doing it in singles. I think I realized that I could start using my return as more of a weapon than just getting the ball back.

Obviously, you know, they're serving great, whatever. I mean, what can you do?

But I think it puts pressure on the person, especially when they know they can't just roll the serve in and know you're not going to go after it. I think I've been more okay with missing. Like, a couple of times if I'm up in the count, you know, still be aggressive but if I miss by like an inch or two, which I did that a couple times, especially in my previous match, it ended up paying off later on.

I think now I'm more so seeing that, because usually I'll make the next one or the one afterwards. It's something I've been working on, for sure.

Q. Congratulations on the Heat win. You said on court, I believe, that Paris was your favorite city.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah.

Q. Just give us some thoughts on the vibe, what you love about it, the scene, the feeling.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I mean, I just like walking around here. I know some people think the Parisians are rude, and I know that's the reputation that they have. And, it doesn't bother me. I mean, I just kind of mind my business. I don't expect any pleasantries or anything like that, so it doesn't bother me at that point.

But obviously in the summertime is the only time I've really gone to Paris, so I'm sure at other times of the year it's not as pretty. But the weather is great. I just love walking around the city. I love to people watch here. I think the fashion here is really cool. That's one of my favorite things.

Q. Do you get a kick out of it, the other day a lot of kids were yelling out, Allez, Coco?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I love the "allez," I think it's a cool way to say, Come on. I don't really say it in the match sometimes. Sometimes in practice matches if I win a point, like that's funny, I'll say it.

But my fitness coach, he's French, and he's been asking me to say "allez" like for the longest. It just doesn't come naturally. Maybe one of these days I'll remember to actually use that part of my French learning language.

Q. You've got lots of fans around the world. One of them who has paid you a good luck message is the



actor Samuel L. Jackson, who starred in "Snakes on a Plane." Do you like snakes, do you like planes, and how bumpy has the ride been so far at Roland Garros?

COCO GAUFF: I haven't seen that movie. I'm a true Gen Z'er. I know Samuel obviously for a lot of his films but the most prominent would be, I would say, for the Marvel films for me. I haven't seen that movie.

But if I like snakes, they're cool animals. I know they get a bad reputation, but they're pretty, some of them are pretty, but pretty from afar.

And planes, I mean, I like to travel.

But yeah, Samuel L. Jackson is a legend. I really appreciate, I saw that tweet, and I freaked out a little bit. I remember he tweeted about me before during the whole Wimbledon run and that was a cool moment for me. It's cool to say Nick Fury knows I exist. Maybe I'm just going to say I'm Cannon in the Marvel Universe since he tweeted that.

Q. I'm no technical expert, so please correct me if I'm wrong. A couple of people that do know better than me remark that maybe there is a minor technical tweak on the forehand side. Is that right?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I mean, other people from the outside think that there is, and I'm sure, I mean, it's something that I need to improve. That's for sure.

But this week, in the last couple matches, my forehand has I think improved a lot, and I think it's gotten me to win a lot of points. Also, I mean, a lot of people play that side. I think the last couple of matches that I have just become more and more comfortable being aggressive on it.

But I think really it's more so something that I just have to continue to improve. I'll probably work on it more during the offseason, but right now I'm happy where my forehand is at.

Q. I'm probably forgetting, but I don't remember seeing you hit a lefty shot before. Have you done that in the past?

COCO GAUFF: I did, I think maybe in the Miami Open last year, but I barely got to it. It wasn't quite a forehand. Yeah, today I thought I had it, and then I chickened out last minute. I was so mad, because I had it. I was there.

Then I realized, why am I hitting a lefty forehand? I kind of like pushed it. I think if I maybe ripped it, I don't know if it would have gone in, but if it did, I think it would have been the highlight of my career.

Q. I just wanted to ask, sometimes we will speak to athletes when they don't yet know who they're going to be facing, whatever the sport might be, in a situation like this where maybe they will say, Oh, I want to face Iga because of what happened last year or because I want to beat the best in order to be the best, but sometimes they will say, Are you kidding? Why would I want to play the best player in the world? Give me anybody else kind of thing. Curious, as you sit here, waiting to find out whether it will be against her or not in the quarterfinals, which of those viewpoints do you take?

COCO GAUFF: I mean, honestly, since last year I have been wanting to play her especially at this tournament. I figured that it was going to happen, because I figured I was going to do well and she was going to do well. Didn't know what side of the draw we were going to be on obviously.

But I'm the type of mentality if you want to be the best you have to beat the best. I think also if you want to improve, you have to play the best. I feel like the way my career has gone so far, if I see a level, and if I'm not quite there at that level, I know I have to improve and I feel like you don't really know what you have to improve on until you see that level.

So I would say out of the two, I mean, I'm pretty sure, you know, I'm not gonna put the other opponent down, but the way Iga's form is, I probably will play her.

Yeah, I think it would be almost cowardly to say that I want to not face the noise and not face the challenge, but I think that I'm up for it. I have improved a lot since last year, and she has too.

I think it would be a great battle for us and for the fans too. I'm sure they would appreciate that matchup, as well.

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