

National Bank Open

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Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Coco Gauff

Press Conference



C. GAUFF/A. Sabalenka

7-5, 4-6, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Can you please share your thoughts on the match.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, it was a difficult match for both of us. Obviously we were both struggling with the serve. The conditions weren't easy today, a lot of wind.

Overall I think that I hung in there mentally and that's what I'm most proud of.

THE MODERATOR: Okay. Questions?

Q. I wanted to ask you about through the third set, when you were down 3-Love you started to say, like, It's in my head. It's in my head. And I just wanted to have you take us through that moment and how you overcame it and ended up winning the match.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I was like, pretty much from 3-Love up in the second to that point I was reverting back to old mentalities. And I said if I was going to lose, I'm not going to lose like this. So I had to change. And that's what I did.

I think I got to a point where I was being too negative on myself. And she's a frustrating player to play. I mean she plays big tennis and sometimes you hit a good shot and she hits a winner.

And I think I had to remind myself that she's capable of playing great tennis. There's a reason why she was No. 2 in the world. I don't know what she's ranked now, but top 10.

So for the most part I think I was falling into those frustrations just because I felt like I was hitting good shots and she wasn't giving me anything. But that's Aryna, that's how she plays.

Maybe against another player for sure those shots would give me some more defensive balls back. But I think that's

why she's doing so well and is such a good competitor too. So, yeah.

Q. When you look at the last two matches, given the quality of opponent, winning in three sets, you needed a third set tiebreaker. Just curious how big of a confidence booster has this been for you these last couple of matches?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, it definitely gives me a lot of confidence because I know I can tough it out in those tough moments. These are the type of players that I need to have to beat if I want to win a Grand Slam.

So these matches are giving me more confidence. And I know how it feels in those moments against these players. They're not going to give you anything and you shouldn't expect that.

So I think it gives me a lot of confidence. Especially from both matches I was down a break and had lost a lead. So I was experiencing everything in both matches. From having the lead, to not having the lead, to fighting back.

So I think it's these type of matches, you know, the goal, yeah, to win the tournament. But I feel like for me I needed these matches leading up into the US Open. So if I have a tough moment, I can look back on this.

Q. What are your thoughts on the next match with Simona Halep?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, it's going to be another difficult match. Three for three. Well actually, no, four for four. Madison is not easy either.

So, yeah, I don't even know. I have no thoughts. I'm just happy to get through today. If it takes another three hours, then we're going to do it, get it done.

But I know it's going to be a tough match. I think I definitely have to be mentally engaged the whole match. I mean, I had to the last three matches. But even more so against Simona because she's just a tough player. And she's a vet on the tour. So, yeah.

Q. So you don't have a, do you have a particular plan



going into the match?

COCO GAUFF: I mean I will have a plan. Not now. I mean I just got out of the shower, so I have no plan (laughing).

Q. Usually when do you make your plan for the match? Like the morning of the match? When you're in the shower sometimes maybe some players actually make a plan?

COCO GAUFF: Usually for the scouting, I mean, my coaches do it. But also at the same time when you played someone so many times you don't really need to think much about the plan because you already know what you have to do. The real question is actually executing it.

And that's pretty much everyone on tour. No one, I don't think anybody has some elaborate scouting report where it's like, I mean, so many pages of stuff. Because you can do that with each player. But it's all about execution.

I mean, for me, I feel like I have a scouting report built to me. I feel like players play me the same way. Now, are they able to execute? That's the question.

Q. I know you said today you kind of revert to some of your old ways. But mentally I feel like that's been a huge part of your growth this year. Last week against Naomi you said, I think it was like match point number seven, you said you were thinking of your brother or you looked down at your shoes. And are those the type of things that you're kind of telling yourself to slow down in these big moments? Like are those the type of cues that you use?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I definitely try to get myself to slow down and just think for a second. Because when I'm rushing, sometimes it's good, sometimes when I'm rushing I win a lot of points in a row. And then other times it's not. Usually I recognize when it's good for me and when it's not for me.

I mean, it also depends on your opponent. You know, if your opponent is, like me, negative today, you're going to go faster to make them keep thinking like that.

But today I kind of slowed down at 3-0. And, yeah, usually when I need to dig deep it's usually in those moments. When people are cheering for me I think it helps. Because these people waited three hours with me and I don't want to, not that if I lose I'm going to disappoint them. But I don't want to like lose like being like a brat on the court (laughing) and like being mad at myself.

So, yeah, it's usually like looking at my laces or somebody in the crowd, like a little kid or something. And I try to say if, like tell myself, what would I want to see if I was that kid. And I wouldn't want to see someone being down.

It's okay to be negative too. Because it's impossible to be positive on the court. Unless you're Roger, probably. Which I'm not.

So I think it shows growth. And I think that match, if you were somebody, a kid watching it, I think you learned a lot about growth and learning how to get yourself out. Because you're not going to be perfect. And especially not at 18. I have a lot to learn.

Q. You've obviously played on the biggest courts in the world. But you talked about it last week in San Jose. And that court out there on the grandstands I think two or three matches in a row now. What do you love about having the fans that close? And what do you feel like you get from, in a venue like that as you are going to, as you are playing in more bigger stadiums now?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, it's nice. It's nice going onto the court and it being jam packed. I mean, people were waiting on the outside to see the match from the side.

And I like those environments. I like when anybody watches me play. I'm grateful to play on the big courts, so that's cool too.

But honestly, like I definitely prefer a super engaged smaller crowd than, you know, spread out stadium where the energy's not there.

So I don't really care the size of the court. As long as there's like maybe, I hope, a group of people super engaged to the match. It means a lot.

Even if they're against me. I think even like today and yesterday there was some, the crowd was having some chants, especially yesterday, between chanting my name and Elena's name. And that's the type of atmosphere I like.

Because it just, sometimes you want to be the villain and sometimes you want (laughing), I know it's bad to say this, but sometimes you want to win and make somebody else mad (laughing). Not the player but I mean the fans.

Not that I hate, not that I dislike them for cheering for me. But, I don't know, it makes you feel like you're in a movie or something. I don't know. I'm just rambling now (laughing).

Q. Just want to go back to Simona Halep. This will be your third time facing her this year. What about her game makes it such a tough match for you, since you haven't taken a set from her yet?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I think she probably has probably the best, one of the best movements on tour. Like running wise and changing direction and hitting those angles and getting to those shots. And she's also a fighter. I think that's what makes her game most difficult for anyone.

But I feel like the last match was Madrid, I was up 4-1 and I think I kind of had the recipe, but I think I lost it mentally.

So I think she's a player that you have to be mentally engaged every point. You can't give her anything because she will take it. And I think that's what makes her such a great player too.

Q. It's very easy for people to reduce players into kind of these one-dimensional descriptions. And I think for you the idea was always, the lazy idea was your speed. That we focused on your athleticism. But over the course of this year you've become a much more positive, aggressive player in taking your shots. Can you talk a little bit about how that transition and how much more dangerous you feel right now because you're doing that.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I definitely feel like I'm more of a threat. I think for sure I was relying on it a lot. And it's great. But also I needed to rely on it on a more offensive way.

I feel like everybody knows I'm fast. Like I'm not trying to be cocky, (Laughing) but it's the truth. And I know that too.

And I know that, I think sometimes I, you know, just go and just put the ball on the court because I know I can run it down. That was my old mentality.

But now I think I'm trying to take my chances more and be more aggressive. Because playing that way would definitely get me quarterfinals or fourth round in slams. But to get to that final moment you need to take care of those details.

I think I'm slowly taking care of those details. And I think a lot of people have been telling me they notice a difference in my game.

And sometimes it doesn't feel like it, but I'm glad that people are noticing. Because it's been a lot of work and I have a long, long, long way to go. But I think I'm heading in the right direction.

Q. Speaking of those details. Diego Moyano joined your team this year. How has he kind of helped yourself specifically with your forehand and maybe even your serve as well?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, Diego's been great. I think definitely one of the best decisions that I've made.

First, it wasn't really about the tennis too, it was about, I would say the first half of the year I was not believing in myself at all. And when I had him join the team he was super positive. And it made me believe.

I mean, yes, my dad is always positive about my game. But, you know, you hear it your whole life so you don't really believe it. So I think someone outside... and sometimes you're like, Oh, it's just my dad. So of course he's going to say that. But having someone outside come in and say these things.

And obviously, yes, he's made some improvement. I think you guys can see on my forehand and my serve there's definitely been a drastic improvement.

But I think it's really on the mentality. I feel like I was almost afraid to lose at one point to disappoint people. And after every match, win or lose, he always comes to me with such a positive attitude.

And I think that's transferring into my attitude. Because I'm typically a negative person (laughing). Just because I like to be perfect. But I'm learning that it's impossible to be perfect. And I thank Diego for that.

So, yeah, he's been great. And I'm glad, I can see us working together for a long time.

And off the court also I think that's important too. I enjoy him off the court. His family, I hang out with his daughter sometimes.

So I think it's really just my team right now it feels like family. And that's why I can't ask for anything better.

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