

# US OPEN

Friday, August 25, 2023

New York, New York, USA

## Coco Gauff

### Press Conference



**THE MODERATOR:** How is your August going?

**COCO GAUFF:** Oh, semi. Not too bad (smiling).

**THE MODERATOR:** Could you give us your thoughts as you get ready for the Open.

**COCO GAUFF:** Yeah, August has been a great month for me. Obviously did well in D.C. and then even in Montreal, and obviously Cincinnati. It's been a great couple weeks for me. I'm really excited to go into the rest of this month. Hopefully a little bit into September, as well.

**THE MODERATOR:** Questions.

**Q. In Cincinnati you talked about the difference in your game not being so different after all, just a matter of you executing. Can you elaborate on what has enabled you to hit this high level of execution in the month of August.**

**COCO GAUFF:** I think just confidence and trusting myself. I think I trust the work that I've done in practice. I hope that I can continue to translate that into matches. I think just trusting myself.

Obviously have the new team around me. Seeing a different perspective can sometimes just change things completely. I think I have a new perspective and I'm enjoying it a lot.

**Q. Sydney McLaughlin, the great commercial you had with New Balance, she said you're a great person, you talk about that bond. Has BG given you any nickname? Have you tried to [indiscernible] him this year for Kawhi Leonard and his Warriors?**

**COCO GAUFF:** Yeah, meeting Sydney, I met her at the Open. Obviously she's a really nice person. I think she comes off as very genuine. That was only for a brief second, to be honest, because it was right after my match. Then obviously I got to know her a lot more when we filmed that. We spent a long day on the set. I was learning about her life, she was learning about mine. There's a lot

of similarities. She's an incredible athlete, one of the greatest athletes on the track for a reason.

Yeah, BG, he hasn't really given me any nicknames. He has a lot of nicknames for other people or like shots and different tennis shots and everything. Yeah, I don't think he's ever called me anything. If he has, I didn't pay attention to it.

Yeah, he has a lot of unique stuff. I'm learning, like, some of the shots. Sometimes he'll call the kick slice serve, he'll be like, I want a KS right now. I didn't know what that meant at first. Now I know what it means.

Yeah, he hasn't given me any crap about Kawhi Leonard or anything yet.

**Q. The 50th anniversary of equal pay at the US Open. Still lots of existing inequities. What changes would you like to see?**

**COCO GAUFF:** Yeah, I mean, I think for the US Open, 50th anniversary, they're having the gala tonight, I'm going. I'm really happy to be a part of that.

Yeah, there's obviously a lot of inequities on prize money, more on the 1000, 500, and 250 level. They have a plan in place, from what I'm told, like a 10-year plan, to kind of improve that situation.

I definitely think a lot of it needs to be improved, especially in these events. I mean, at least when I really paid attention this summer, just the crowd at the 500 and 1000 events that I've played, where it was combined. I will say, at least my matches were pretty much more crowded or the same crowded as some of the top seeds on the men's side. I don't think it's an attraction issue. Obviously in some tournaments, yes, but especially in like the 1000 events, I don't think it's necessarily an attraction issue.

I think we have a long ways to go, but I am proud to say that where we are now, especially in the Grand Slams.

**Q. How do you contrast or compare how you feel going into this Open to the last few that you've played given what you've done in August?**

**COCO GAUFF:** I think I'm obviously a lot more confident



and, I don't know, I think the mindset is different. Having like that first-round loss at Wimbledon shows that it wasn't really as bad as it could happen, so I'm not going into this tournament worried if I lose early or not. I can't really control that result.

I think now I'm going in with a lot more confidence. I feel like no matter the score line in the match, I can be able to problem solve and troubleshoot my way out.

I know I can win matches not playing my best game now. I think I wasn't playing my best in every single match in D.C. and Cincinnati, it's impossible. I do feel I'm much more confident in my B or C game.

**Q. Related to the equal pay question, WTA Finals could be going to Saudi Arabia. Your thoughts on that matter, considering treatment of women there.**

**COCO GAUFF:** Yeah, I mean, to be honest, we don't know much about it as players. Right now it's just a rumor. I don't know what's going to happen.

I saw the whole discourse going on Twitter, so I don't really have a lot of information regarding that. I'd rather not speak on it until it's set in stone.

**Q. You've spoken after defeats about learning from them. What about learning from victories? What has helped you learn from victories perhaps that you've been able to build on those?**

**COCO GAUFF:** Yeah, I think I learned a lot over this last couple weeks more so on my wins I think than I have in the past. I think especially in that final against Muchova, I wasn't playing my best tennis, but I was still able to win that match and win it in straight sets.

I think the most I've learned over the course of this summer is that I don't have to play A-plus tennis to win. Obviously going into the match, you hope to play the best tennis you can play, but it's not possible all the time.

I think I have much more confidence now in other aspects of my game. Maybe if my serve isn't working, I have confidence in my groundstrokes or vice versa. I think I'm more confident being able to problem solve.

I think that just comes with experience, too. Sometimes I think when I wasn't playing my best tennis or wasn't playing great, I would kind of shut down a little bit mentally. Now I'm just figuring out as I go.

**Q. Outside of endorsements, what are some of your business endeavors, aspirations?**

**COCO GAUFF:** Yeah, that's something that I've been thinking about a lot. I haven't really found what I'm quite passionate in outside of tennis, to be honest.

I mean, I really do love fashion. I love makeup. I love that type of thing. I just haven't really thought about how I would build that into a brand, per se.

But I think it just comes with growth. I mean, I'm at the age right now where I'm really trying to find myself I guess outside of tennis because I do want to venture out into other things. I just haven't found what really speaks to me.

Usually growing up I've always been the person to hyperfixate on hobbies and move on after a month on one thing. I'm really trying to find something that sticks. With tennis being so much a part of my life, sometimes it's hard to find passion in other things, to be honest.

**Q. You mentioned the work you've put in, the new team you have. Since Wimbledon, what messages have you had from your new team, Brad in particular, that maybe you haven't had before?**

**COCO GAUFF:** Yeah, I think for me with BG, I think I have a lot more confidence in my game. People can say you play good or the opposite, but I think hearing it from someone who probably has seen countless of my matches, I don't know how many he's maybe commented on, but for sure watched countless of my matches and worked with some of the best players in the game, I think you just really believe it.

The way that he says it. Sometimes it's not always about the message. I don't think the message has changed for me, it's more about how the message was relayed to me. I think hearing that from his perspective helps a lot.

He's a very relaxed guy. He's very relaxed. Sometimes I'll be practicing, maybe practice points with another player, it's 30-All or deuce, he'll say something completely random like a joke or something. It's just little things like that that made me realize that tennis is serious but it's not as serious as sometimes my head makes it out to be. I really should enjoy it out there.

Pere, he's the same way. He's a little bit more into the game sometimes. I think being around Brad and learning I think we've just learned a lot just having fun. I think the last couple weeks I've had fun in the wins and losses, even that match against Jess where it was 5-All in the third, I got broken, I was still, like, enjoying the match and having fun, where other circumstances I would be stressed out.

I think he's really gotten me to have fun in those tough moments and embrace the hardships of tennis.

**Q. Everyone has spoken about how you had a great August, you're riding momentum. Obviously expectations come with that. How do you mentally and emotionally handle that? How has that changed over time?**

**COCO GAUFF:** I think for me, that mindset has changed throughout as I've grown up. But now I'm just going in and I feel confident in my preparation, and I feel confident in my execution. I hope everything works out. At the same time I'm not too worried if it isn't. I'm really just enjoying the process of having a tennis career, the ups and downs.

I know I'm up right now, and I know I'm going to experience a down, hopefully not this week, but it could happen (smiling). I know it's going to happen. It's impossible to stay up all the time.

I think that's really where the mindset has changed. I think sometimes I'll let a loss get too much into me. I realize that everybody loses, even the best of the best. I think that I really have to apply those mistakes and learn from those mistakes and apply it into future matches.

That's where the mindset has changed. Before I would think too much on a loss and let that loss affect me for some weeks. Now I'm losing a couple matches in a row or not winning consecutive matches. I think now I'm just doing really well bouncing back.

**Q. You worked with Barilla for a while. Do you have a favorite pasta shape?**

**COCO GAUFF:** That's a good question.

Uhm, really I guess it depends. Before matches I just go with penne pasta because I don't like the long pasta before matches because I'm not the cleanest eater, it gets on my kit. I do like penne pasta.

I guess other than that, just spaghetti. I like cacio e pepe with the spaghetti-shaped pasta. Yeah, those are my favorites.

**Q. Penne with the lines or without?**

**COCO GAUFF:** Really the tournaments, whatever they have. We don't have much choices with lines or without lines. I honestly never really paid attention. That's the first time I've heard there was a difference. I guess now I'm going to pay attention to see if they have lines or not (smiling).

**Q. Six years ago you lost the junior final to Amanda Anisimova. She has taken an extended leave from the game. Can you understand a player that just doesn't want to be out there?**

**COCO GAUFF:** Yeah, I would say when she announced the initial break, I was surprised. I don't think anybody was expecting it or anything. But I can understand really. There is probably a lot of players who need to take a break who don't take a break.

Not putting this for myself, maybe one day I'll need to take a break, I don't know. I definitely can understand when tennis has been so much a part of your life. She's been good also, a great player in juniors, obviously in pros doing well.

I think it's a much different pressure when you're good I guess throughout pretty much when you hold the racquet. Amanda always has been one to watch, at least since I was a little girl, since she was. She was always considered to be the next thing. I can really understand the pressure that she's probably felt.

She had a lot to deal with with the loss of her dad. I could be wrong, but I'm pretty sure he started her in tennis. I was really surprised personally how she was able to be able to continue to play.

She ended up beating me at Wimbledon I think a year or two after. I was really amazed how she was able to overcome all of that. I completely understand.

I think that's a thing that people forget, that she's human, athletes are human. Everybody needs a break from everything. Maybe college has always been one of her aspirations, I don't know. I think as long as she's happy and healthy, I think everybody should support her decision.

**THE MODERATOR:** Thank you, Coco.

**COCO GAUFF:** Thanks.

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