

Miami Open presented by Itaú

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Miami, Florida, USA

Coco Gauff

Press Conference



A. SEVASTOVA/C. Gauff

1-6, 6-2, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. You get such great crowd support here at the Miami Open and South Florida loves you. Do you look forward to having larger crowds that can really pump you up? Do you enjoy having the big crowd support?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I definitely enjoy playing in front of a big crowd. I mean, today the stands weren't full because of the regulations, but they were still pretty loud, and I mean, they were rooting for me, and I wish I could have pulled it out.

Q. Martina Navratilova recently said some things about you, including that your game has no limit, that she's looking forward to see you evolve, that you're just a great mover. When you hear someone like Martina Navratilova saying wonderful things about you, how does that make you feel?

COCO GAUFF: Definitely makes me feel good. Obviously she was a great player herself and has a lot of accomplishments, and I'm sure she has a good eye for the game, so for her to say good things about me makes me feel good, and hopefully I can keep improving on that and keep improving in the future to even get better.

Q. You have talked about all the comparisons that obviously you have gotten over the past couple of years and obviously with that comes expectations. Can you talk about where you are now as compared to maybe 2019 or even 2020 when it comes to the weight of those expectations and comparisons you've gotten throughout the last couple of years?

COCO GAUFF: I mean, I feel like I don't really think about that when I'm on the court. I'm more focused on myself. I tend to stay off of Twitter and stay off of Instagram or at least the tennis part of it.

I mean, I really try not to think about it. I think it's important

I focus on myself. People compare me to really great, amazing people and I think it's just important to live up to my own expectations and not other people's.

Q. I was just wondering if you could talk about what do you think went wrong? When did the tide change? You were two points from a 4-1 lead at the end there. Then how would you explain what happened then?

COCO GAUFF: Honestly, I don't know. I was playing well the first set. And then the second set I think at 2-1 I lost focus and lost I think it was six games in a row.

3-1, 40-15 I missed second-serve return, and I don't remember what happened on the 40-30 point, but I had a lot of chances where I could have made the lead even larger.

I mean, the game was important, but also, I think what was most important is that I didn't hold serve at 3-2 and I think -- and then I didn't hold serve again. I think the main thing was my serve. Not my serve but my plus-ones, because I served pretty well.

I think I only had one double fault, so I think the main thing was when I had a good serve but I think it was important that I make that next shot and I didn't do that today.

Q. I'm curious now that kind of the spring hard court season and the start of the season is wrapping up and we're going to transition onto clay soon, if you could just kind of reflect on the last three months? How did you think that it went? Obviously you had the great results in Adelaide and obviously in Dubai, as well. And then other results surrounding it. How are you feeling coming out of this section of the season?

COCO GAUFF: I think it was a lot of highs and a lot of lows. I feel like it's something that I can look back on and learn from the matches that I had chances to win. I remember the Bencic match in Adelaide, close match, three sets. Dubai I had a lot of close matches that I could have lost my first round, down two match points.

I think it's something I can take a lot and learn from it and I'm going to build for it. I think my next tournament is



Charleston. I'm excited I can play in the States still, but I think it's something I can still build from and learn from. I'm not mad at it.

Q. And just looking ahead to clay, obviously you enjoy playing on it as far as we can tell, and you're quite used to it growing up on the green clay in Florida in particular. What are you most looking forward to with respect to the clay season and what are the adjustments you need to make in between to get ready particularly for European clay?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, definitely the green clay I'm more used to. It's definitely a little bit -- I guess depends on the clay. Sometimes the green clay is faster than red clay. Sometimes it's slower. It all depends on the clay.

I think it's going to be my first pro tournament on or at least WTA on green clay, so I'm excited for that. But for the European, I think really just getting a lot of height on the ball. I think today I made a lot of errors in the net, so I need to work on hitting, clearing the net a little bit more and hitting a lot heavier.

Q. Naomi mentioned a week or two ago that during the COVID hiatus she used the period as some self-reflection time to look within herself and look at her life priorities. Was there anything within yourself or within your game particularly that you used that time away from the court and that time not traveling to really do and improve on yourself?

COCO GAUFF: I would say my biggest improvement during that break was definitely my serve. I mean, my second-serve percentage has gone a little bit higher than it was in 2019, and today was probably, even though I lost, was probably the best I have hit my second serve at least consistency-wise. So I think it's something to build on and continue working on.

I guess like not tennis I guess I just learned to enjoy the game a little bit more. I think it was a good break for me. Everything was going so fast, from Wimbledon to US Open and Australian Open, everything was going super fast and I never got a chance to like sit down and I guess digest everything that happened, and that COVID hiatus gave me that.

Q. One last question. You have talked a bit in the past about dealing with stress and something we all deal with on and off the court. What particular things are you doing now to deal with stress both on and off the court, again, trying to manage that as best you can?

COCO GAUFF: So, yeah, on the court, I think it's all about

finding a good balance. I feel like in Dubai, I think it was in my first round -- I mean, I ended up winning the match, but when I had those close moments, I was, I guess, taking off pace on the ball and pushing a little bit more, whereas today I feel like I was overhitting. So I think I just have to find a good middle in between.

And then off court, I like to color a lot, color to kind of, and listen to music to kind of get my mind off things, so that's what I have been doing here. I'll keep doing that.

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