

Rothesay International

Wednesday, 28 June 2023

Eastbourne, England, UK

Devonshire Park

Coco Gauff

Press Conference

C. GAUFF/J. Burrage

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THE MODERATOR: Coco, another solid match today. Just talk us through your thoughts on the conditions and how you did.

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, it was super windy today. Happy with how I played. I mean, it was a fairly straightforward match. Looking forward to taking this momentum into the rest of the week.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Would you prefer a straightforward match, as you have described it, at this point before Wimbledon, or something that really pushed you into three sets?

COCO GAUFF: I mean, I would like to make the matches as easy as possible (smiling). Yeah, I would try to keep it as straightforward. That's just for every match, but obviously things happen, so yeah.

Q. It was on grass as a 15-year-old that you obviously came into prominence globally. Does that give you a good feeling, or does that slightly take you back to the pressure days when you were having to deal with something that you were very young for?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, I don't really think about it. If anything, I feel at that time I had no pressure. The world was rooting for me. I mean, they still are but, you know, at that time.

So I didn't have any expectations, and people were just happy to see me get through another round. Obviously now, ranked higher, older, I think people are expecting a little bit more. Same with myself. I expect a little bit more.

But yeah, I mean, every time I go back to Wimbledon, I get those memories of that run. I feel it's just going to be like that for the rest of my career. I think that's kind of the thing that happened to me as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and once-in-a-lifetime experience. I don't think I will experience anything like that ever again.

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Q. There is a saying, among the media certainly, that Eastbourne is, because of the weather here, can often be a challenge and say Wimbledon doesn't have the same challenges. Do you, as a player, feel that the weather conditions can more of a challenge than you face at Wimbledon?

COCO GAUFF: Definitely with the wind. I mean, I'm from Florida, South Florida, small beach town, Delray Beach, quite similar. A lot hotter than here, but other than that, quite similar with the wind.

I'm used to the wind. I'm used to it. Obviously Wimbledon doesn't have quite as much wind. But also, I don't have the pressures of a Grand Slam playing in Eastbourne, so I think it's like a give-or-take situation.

I do think having the unpredictable sometimes bounces and stuff here just with the weather definitely prepares you for Wimbledon, and I think, you know, maybe hopefully when I get to London things will seem a bit easier.

Q. If you had to rank hard, grass, clay in terms of best surfaces for you, how would you rank them?

COCO GAUFF: That's a tough question. I don't know. I mean, I'll just go based off results. Clay, I think, it's not my favorite surface but, you know, I made the slam final there. I guess that would be 1.

But if we're going based off my love, I would say hard court, just because I'm American, I grew up on that. So I don't know.

2 or 3 I think probably hard and then grass maybe 3, but it's so interchangeable, to be honest. Depends how I'm playing. This week I'd rank grass like 1. I'm feeling it really good. But I would say maybe 1 clay, 2 hard, and 3 grass. But it's not like I don't like grass. It's a very close ranking.

Q. How do you adjust to the fact that on hard it's true bounce so you can totally trust the bounce, whereas on clay and grass you do get your odd freak bounce?

COCO GAUFF: It's like a little bit of an adjustment but not so much because it is a true bounce, and sometimes

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you go out there and hit, first couple of hits on hard, it's very nice because you just feel like everything is just working. Then you get used to everything working, and then everything stops working (smiling).

Yeah, I think it's very nice to transfer back. I did do hard court a couple days after French to get ready for the grass. So, you know, sometimes it's good to start on hard and then transfer to grass. Yeah, it definitely gives you a false sense of reality when you spend too much time on hard and then have to go to grass.

Q. Is it difficult not to live in the past when you go back to Wimbledon? Obviously so many people remind you about your first time there. Is it difficult? Do you have to have a mental shift and put all that into the back of your mind?

COCO GAUFF: Not really. It just feels like so long ago, and I feel like people remind me of everything every year. Roland Garros, you know, the final, people reminding me of that.

It's not like a bad thing. I mean, for me, it's not like I'm living to try to repeat or do better than that. So yeah, I don't really feel like it adds pressure or I feel like I have to get my mind out of it. It feels like so long ago. Honestly, feels like 10 years ago, even though I know it's not. I think that's just how the tour year, especially with COVID, it just feels like so long ago.

Q. Are you reminded more of that fourth round at Wimbledon as a 15-year-old than your Black Lives Matter speech?

COCO GAUFF: Yeah, 100%. I mean, I feel like people like pay attention more to the tennis side of it than some of the social issues.

Honestly, you're the first person to ask me about that speech in a long time. So I mean, at that time, yes, a lot of people were talking about it, but yeah, I think you're the first person to ask me that probably since at least 2021 or 2020.

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