

Miami Open presented by Itaú

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Miami, FL USA

Coco Gauff

Press Conference



C.GAUFF | B.Bencic

6-3, 1-6, 6-3

Moderator: Congrats on the win. It was a battle out there tonight. Just your thoughts on the match.

Coco Gauff: Yeah, it was a tough match. Honestly, I felt like that third set, we both were giving our maximum effort with every point. But yeah, I'm really proud of today and even yesterday, I played two back-to-back quality opponents and back-to-back days, and was able to get through.

Question: You talk about physicality. Bencic is an amazing player. You're running from side to side in that third set. It included an incredible match point, if I recall, with an amazing drop shot. So can you take us through what that match kind of, how you got over the, how you how you won that match, and all that it entailed?

Coco Gauff: Thank you so much. Yeah, I felt like in the first set, I was even lost that kind of quote "lead," I felt like I was kind of cruising. And the second, it just got away from me really fast. And yeah, once it was like, 5-1, I was like, Okay, the other third set. And yeah, I think that third set was just really, just will. And I lost that 40-love game, and I was really upset with myself because I had, you know, wasn't like she hit four return winners, it was points that were on my racket. But yeah, honestly, I kind of blinked a little bit. But yeah, that match point was kind of funny, because yesterday, I hit really bad drop shots on some break points. I

told myself I wasn't gonna hit any drop shots on, like, any important like pressure points, and I did, and I'm just happy that I just did it good, because I also stopped practicing them, to be honest, because I didn't want myself to go for that shot on important points. But yeah, as sometimes you just play tennis and you're not even thinking and I think it's the best when you play when you're not thinking.

Question: Well done. Coco, so four matches, all three sets. And obviously you win a lot of three set matches, gutting them out. Is it a different thing each night that helps you find a way to the finish line in that third set, or is it the same thing you go back to? And same, same thought you have, and same process?

Coco Gauff: Um, I mean, I feel like the difference between yesterday and today, I definitely could have won that second set yesterday [and the match] in straight sets. So today I was trying to go in and not let that happen. And, I mean, she played great tennis. I guess there were games that I had on my racket, but I didn't feel like the same where I just kind of gifted that second set today. I felt like she took it from me. And I guess that was the goal today, was to, if I got a lead in the second to keep it, but I never really did. So yeah, once the third came around, I mean, today, I just knew it'd be down to who could be the most physical, especially when we were playing, I think, felt like a high level. I don't know how it was for watching, but yeah, so I

think it was just down to who could be more physical. And you know, I felt pretty confident on my end that I could outlast her physically. I just was trying to make sure that I hit good enough balls and not let her strike clean winners. And yeah, I think I was the one that was controlling a lot of the, in the later half of the third set.

Question: Hey, Coco, congrats. Three set kid. Now you have another one. Tough enough. You got the day off, at least. Then Karolina with that all-court game, really good record against a lot of close matches. Give us a little preview.

Coco Gauff: Yeah, I mean, she is tough. And, you know, every time I was saying this in Tennis Channel desk, I don't think about the head-to-head or anything when I play her, because all the matches I feel like we played, maybe outside of Cincinnati, and also China, I felt like that could go either way. And at the Australian Open I was able to gut that one out. But I definitely think that, every time I play her, it's a tough match, and I expect the high level that she's going to bring, like she does every match. And yeah, I think honestly, I know we kind of know what we're going to do to each other, and it's just about who can execute it better. And I mean, I would imagine maybe she would change some things up, or look back to the Australian Open match and see what she did to win that set. And I guess I have to look back at that match and see what I did to lose that set and try not to do the same things. But it's always difficult, I think when you play someone this many times, because you

kind of know each other's games well, and it's just who can outthink the other in the 30-all or deuce point. That's really how I view matches when I play someone over and over.

Question: A little two parter. One is your arm. Have you been feeling that nerve feeling, or is it totally gone? And then also, you hadn't reached the quarters here before, and you really wanted to what, you know, we spoke in the preview. Now that you're on to the semis and a title is so close, how does it feel, and how much would it mean you to win at this hometown tournament?

Coco Gauff: Yeah, honestly, my arm, I didn't feel at all today, and it was funny, because I was thinking, like, mid-second, I was like, Oh, I didn't feel it at all. And then I felt it in the third set, one was at 40-love and that, on that one forehand, and I just took some Advil, and was fine, but I think it's doing well. I feel like, I think, for the fact that I didn't feel it until the third set today, and it was only on a sporadic kind of shot. It's such a weird thing because I only feel it sporadically. But yeah, it's way better than Indian Wells, where I was feeling it on everything, and then here is sporadically. So, I definitely think it's trending in the right direction. And yeah, and it's not to the point where I think it's affecting my play, just something, just feeling like okay. And then the second part, oh yeah. Honestly, I'm not thinking about the title. I think I played enough of these tournaments to know the semis is just as far from the title as the first round, almost in the way. So, I'm not thinking about it honestly. I'm really just happy and proud to be here. Definitely didn't think this

was the year that it would be my breakthrough here, but I'll take it.

Question: I'm curious. Well, first of all, what do you think it says about you that obviously the preparation wasn't ideal, you're dealing with the arm injury, yet you've scrapped through four, three setters, and you're in this position.

Coco Gauff: I think it just shows, like my mind, and it's just all about mentality out there at the end of the day. And I think I have to believe that I belong where I am. I think sometimes I can get imposter syndrome. And even when they're saying my accomplishments when I walk, or during the warm up, it doesn't feel like me. And I'm like, "Oh, actually, I do have a good career." But it doesn't feel like that sometimes in the moment, because you're working on things. Especially with my serve, it just feels like I don't know that I shouldn't be where I am, but tennis doesn't lie. The ball doesn't lie. So I just have to believe in myself. My coaches have been reminding me, like, you know, remember who you are, and you're a good player. And I think they've been putting that into my head. And, at moments, I believe it and at moments I don't. So I'm just trying to believe it more.

Question: Just wanted to ask also, obviously, your defense is one of your best parts of your game. And a lot of people consider you the fastest player on the tour. Like, do you back yourself the fastest player? Like, if you were to line up 100 meters against the other fastest players. Do you back yourself?

Coco Gauff: Um, I mean, I definitely think on court I'm the fastest. I know people don't like it when I say it, but I feel that I have enough tape to show that. Um, 100 meters? I feel like it'll be pretty good. Sloane is pretty fast when she's in her prime. Obviously, Iga is really fast. Sakkari is fast. So, I think 100 meters is different. I feel like I definitely would be on the top three, top four, for sure. Now 200 meters I think I'm definitely the fastest. The longer, the better. The race for me. Seems like that in tennis too, the longer the better. But yeah, that'd be interesting. How good, yeah I mean I would be down to try it but I don't think the 100 meters is my race but I feel like I'll do well, I don't know.

Question: Tonight's crowd was pretty energetic, and I was wondering how that impacts your focus during your game.

Coco Gauff: Yeah, yeah. I think today was much better. I felt like when I played Alycia in this 7pm match couple days ago, it felt a little dead, but I think it was because we were both American. So I think, you know, when they have, like, a clearer person to root for, they're much more energetic. And I definitely think it affected just my fight and today, especially moments where it was physical and I was just thinking, like, oh my god, I have to do this, like, so many times to win up there, there was a couple games I felt like I had so much energy just to win the game. And, you know, just a crowd believing in you. I think there was like a little girl just cheering for me. And you know, I told myself, I just want to try to be the best version I can be, so that you know they have someone good to look up to.

Question: You said that you felt like you controlled some point, most of the points in third set. In the points that she controlled, your scramble was amazing. When you're scrambling like that, and stay in those points, what are you trying to do?

Coco Gauff: Unless you're in a complete defensive position, like you're trying to get it in, but I'm always, when I'm scrambling, is trying to get back on offense and not just hope that the person misses. I really am trying to get back on offense, but we're playing someone like Belinda. She takes the ball so early and she takes a lot of time away from you. So I think the biggest thing for me was just trying to get the ball deep and in the middle of the court and try to find some kind of opening to reset the point. But yeah, I know when I play here, I mean, anybody who plays Belinda, you have to run, unless you're Aryna or Elena, who have the firepower to maybe make Belinda do the running. So yeah, I think the main part is just trying to get it deep in the middle of the court and see what happens.