

Miami Open presented by Itaú

Thursday, March 19, 2026

Miami, FL USA

Moïse Kouame

Press Conference

MOÏSE KOUAMÉ/Zachary Svajda

5-7, 6-4, 6-4



Moderator: This is your first week, how many messages did you get, and which one surprised you, the best one?

Moïse Kouamé: Well, I've read only one message for now, and it's from a really special person to me. Well, of course, my idol, Novak Djokovic. So, yeah, he texted me something really, really nice. So yeah, I don't know how I'm going to answer, but I think I will take time to answer, to search and, yeah, hopefully I can meet him. Maybe someday it will be, it will be my dream.

Question: Hi Adam Ross, Florida Tennis. Congratulations on your victory. I hope I have my facts right, but in 2024 you're the runner up at the Orange Bowl. Now cut to today. You win your first-round match at the Miami Open. Can you take us through all the hard work and everything it took to get here?

Moïse Kouamé: Well, of course, it's never easy. You know, in a daily life, it's never easy to be 100% focus on everything every time. But that's why I have a team around me. Obviously, my family, my mother, my sister, my brother, are helping me a lot on that point and, like you said, it's really daily work every time. You know, even after tough matches, you still need to think about the next one, to think about going on training after and, yeah, I feel like

I'm a little bit on that mindset, you know. I won today, but tomorrow I have another match, So, the most important for me is to recover well and to be ready for the next one tomorrow.

Question: Moïse, this tournament can change lives. Carlos won his at 18. Then Eala, Mensik, Fonseca. What do you think this could do for you if you win a few more rounds?

Moïse Kouamé: Well, it will be huge for me. Of course, it would be huge. But, you know, I'm not thinking about if I can do something in the future. I'm just thinking about the present, which is recovering, you know, and yeah, going to work after, but after, the matches will come after, you know, the matches or are not the most important, you know, the most important is just to work and to be 100% focus on what you can control.

Question: Congratulations. You were cramping out there. Has that happened to you before? And then, can you also talk a little bit about that one fan who was to the side of the court screaming very loud for you. Could you hear him?

Moïse Kouamé: I heard him. It was a really physical match against a really great opponent. The guy had really good attitude. He was going for all these shots every time. So it was really difficult for me to stay on form, physically. But yeah, managed to do it

well, you know, at the end. Yeah, cramping isn't easy to play with, of course. But yeah, mentally, just to cover, control over physically state, you know. And yeah, I managed to finish at the end. So I'm really happy with that.

Question: Has that happened to you before?

Moïse Kouamé: Well, on really difficult trainings, of course, you know, I think we've all cramped at some point after, it's really managing the cramps during the match, how you can make it less painful, or something. And, yeah, this is something I gotta work with the team, of course, among other things, of course. But yeah, I mean, I'm really happy to go through it.

Question: How does it feel to have even better numbers at the age of 17 compared to biggest, big legends of the sport. And also, do you have a relationship with Djokovic or this message came like out of nowhere?

Moïse Kouamé: Well, it's, it's really pleasant to know that you're among the best at this age. You know, it just for me, just comforts me in a way that I have to move even, I have to work even harder, because it's good. But like I said before, already, I want to do something even bigger. I want to win the title, of course, but this will come only if I keep working mentally, physically, you know. And, and, yeah, but this, this is the first step, of course. So, so I'm quite happy. But, yeah, the major thing is after. For now he [Djokovic] just texted me, you know, so I will take time to answer. Of course, Novak is someone that I respect a lot, really, outside or inside the court. So yeah, it's my dream, honestly,

to meet him, to have a small chat with him. But yeah, I think for now, we're just texting,

Question: You're so young, you're still so young, and you're pro athlete, and here you are. You're breaking records, you're doing all these things. Do you still have time to just be a teenager? What do you do for fun while still being a professional athlete as well?

Moïse Kouamé: Like you said, yeah, it's quite difficult, besides tennis to have to, have to do teenage things. Having tennis means having a lot of sacrifices. You know, missing birthdays, missing parties, missing everything. But this is the life I chose. So far, I'm pretty good with it.

Question: You just turned 17, and Venus Williams is in this tournament, and she's 45. When you think of somebody 45 playing in tournaments like this, I don't know how well you know or if you know her, can you imagine being 45 and coming back here?

Moïse Kouamé: Well, for now, I'm 17. I have time to think after but for now, I'm 17. I'm trying just to enjoy the moment. If she's here, it's, it means that she can play. I mean, she has every assets of the game to maybe win matches or even a tournament. But I'm not in her life, so I won't talk too much of that, I will just talk about me. And yeah, like I said, I'm 17. I'm not, I'm not yet 45 you know? And, yeah, I'm just trying to enjoy the moment.

Question: I read that when you were younger, a few years ago, you went to Belgium and trained there. What was it like leaving home and going

somewhere else, to another country to chase your dream? And also, what does it say about you that you were able to win a match like this today in such crazy circumstances?

Moïse Kouamé: Well, like I said, tennis is a lot of sacrifices and this is part of it. Leaving family, leaving home quite early, is not something easy, but this is the life I chose. So, so I have to, just have to get along with it. And, yeah, to minimize the loss I can see. Well, not being around your sisters and brother is not easy, for sure. But yeah, it was a really important step for me. I mean, in my career at some point. So yeah, I'm really happy I made it and yeah, I'm here to show that it was the right thing to do.

Question: You talked about your team earlier. Can you talk about who you work with and who is with you here in Miami, and where do you normally train?

Moïse Kouamé: I travel around the world, you know, I'm training everywhere. I'm training in Miami, I'm training in Paris, I'm training in Montpellier, everywhere. But, yeah, I have a great team, to be honest. I really have a great team, my agent, my sisters here, and my mother. I have a good team around me. That's the only thing I can say.