

Miami Open presented by Itaú

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Miami, FL USA

Coco Gauff

Press Conference



C.GAUFF | K.Muchova

6-1, 6-1

Moderator: First question from me. Coco, congratulations, into your first Miami Open final. Just let us know what this moment means to you and your thoughts on the match today.

Coco Gauff: Yeah, it means a lot to me, especially, again, not expected. But yeah, this tournament obviously means a lot, and to be in the final is pretty crazy and I'm very happy with how today went.

Question: You have a really good record against Muchova. You won 12 of the last 13 sets, six matches in a row. How do you guys match up against each other that makes it tricky for her?

Coco Gauff: I don't really know, because she's such a great player. So, I don't know honestly. I think maybe athletically, like, we're both pretty athletic players and can cover a lot of court, and I feel that maybe I have to make her go for the bigger shots sometimes. Honestly, I don't know. Every matchup, it's not you would think maybe this is one of those matchups I would enter with a little, enter with a little bit ease, but every time, I'm just as nervous as the first time we play, because I know how great a player she is.

Question: Talking about the final, you'd be potentially playing Rybakina. I think it's really interesting that you've played Aryna a lot, and Elena has played Aryna a lot, but you've only played

Elena, I think once, four years ago. Do you kind of find that funny? What are your thoughts about potentially playing her?

Coco Gauff: Yeah, tennis is like that. It's funny. Even with Iga and Aryna, I played them, I think both double digits. And I feel like Elena and I, it's not like we've been on opposite sides of the draw often, but I just don't know why we have never played each other. I think the last time was in Montreal or Toronto, one of the Canada tournaments, and that was like a three set match, I think so, yeah, I guess that's just tennis. But it is weird, because it's not like she had a big break, or I had a big break playing. It's just, I guess that's how the draw fall sometimes.

Question: On Tennis Channel you said that you didn't like your look in the hat. But sort of two things. You said on the court that you felt that if there was a tournament where you were going to get your groove back, it would be this one. The past history wouldn't suggest that you would feel that way. Where, why, and how you got that feeling? And also, this isn't your first sort of out of nowhere almost run in your career, is it just, sort of the way you think your career might go?

Coco Gauff: I think, well, uh, I feel like it could have been this one because of just being home and also knowing that I haven't done well in the past. So there's no high expectations, not coming here, knowing, okay, this is an event I play really well at, so it's just kind of one of those things, well, if I don't do well, it's another year that I have to learn

from. But I think just being at home, it's the support. When I lost here last year, it was just, honestly, I lost and I drove home and I was fine with my family and stuff, and I think that's one of the things I was thinking about this year. But, I don't know if that's going to be my career or not. I definitely had some tough matches this year, for sure, but it's better than last year, the start, like, if you like, go results-wise based, versus from this year to last year. So, it is better. And I think just comes with growing my game and trying to make my game more sound. And I think I feel like the improvements are happening, especially with my forehand. I think I was really happy with how it's been this whole tournament. And, yeah, I said earlier this year that I felt like I was practicing well and just waiting for it to click. And I think it's not obviously fully clicked, but I think it is clicking.

Question: You were just saying that you've had tough matches this year, and I appreciate every player is different. But how do you go from all the three setters to a 6-1, 6-1, today?

Coco Gauff: I don't know. Well, I think in the first match against Cocciaretto, I was just trying to overcome that Doha loss, and it was kind of following a similar path, and just trying to learn from that. And then I think I played Alycia next, and honestly, she blew me off the court in that first set. Not too many things I could have probably changed about that set. I played one bad service game, and after that, she outplayed me. And then I think the Cirstea match was one of the matches that I could have probably got out in two sets. I was up a set and a break, and pretty comfortably had,

maybe some points that I could have gone up a double break. And then Bencic was just, again, every time I play her, it feels like three sets. So I don't know why today was one and one. I didn't expect it today. I came to this match, especially after the two games we played, it was like 20 minutes for two games. So, I don't know, but that's the sport. I think it's just ups and downs. Sometimes you play and you do well, and the next day you play bad. And some weeks, you know it's just going to be a struggle. And then you enter the match today and you're like, I don't know why the scoreline was this way, but I'm gonna take it.

Question: I think you look nice, whatever you're wearing.

Coco Gauff: [Laughs] I didn't think I looked that bad [referring to the hat], and it's not my favorite look, but I don't think that it is the worst look on tour. Well, it's sideways because I've got big hair.

Question: On the ATP side, a lot of the guys, especially American guys, have this term they use when you beat someone three times in a row. You know what I'm talking about? Do the women have any equivalent term? Would you like them to? They say "Dad."

Coco Gauff: Say what they actually say.

Question: Daddy?

Coco Gauff: We don't have anything like that. I don't know. I mean, guys, I feel like they're able to just, well, I don't know. I feel like a lot of American

guys are a little bit on the uppier side, so they're able to say this and, but for me, I don't think of it like that. But I've also been on the other end of it too, so I don't want to, I guess, another, I mean, like, Iga. She beat me so many times in a row, so I don't want her to be considered my 'Dad.' But then I was able to reverse it, so now we are both each other's Daddies (laughs). I don't know, um, but yeah, I don't think there's a term, as far as I know, among the women. Maybe there is. It's, yeah. I don't think Daddy is the term. I don't think Mommy is the term either. I don't know. Dominatrix? I don't know. But I don't want a term because I have some matches where I'm on the losing end of that, too. So, I'm just gonna say it was a good day. I don't know why the matchup is like this, but I'm gonna take it, but I don't think it's gonna last forever.

Question: I'm writing a piece about a random subject. I've been asking players about technical changes they've made. Some players don't make technical changes. Frances said he hasn't changed his backhand in like, 20 years. Others do. And obviously, you've had a very public technical change on your serve. What is the actual process was like? Did you use video when you were starting to make that change, or were you able to just kind of follow Gavin's guidance and at what point did it kind of feel like it moved from being like in flux to be in your motion?

Coco Gauff: We did use a lot of video and realizing where, you know, the things happen, and I feel like I'm still in that process. I feel like I do it now a little bit right more than I did wrong. But I think it's just trying to remind myself that in the pressure

moment. I think this week was better with the serve, for sure, a lot less double faults than before. And obviously I held a lot of the games today in my previous matches too. But I think the hardest part is not faltering back to something that you have done for six years, seven years, probably me my whole life, and trying to not falter back onto old habits, which is really hard because at the end of day, when you step on court, you practice so that you don't have to think, but when you're actively like working on something, and in the way our sport is, where we don't have a lot of off time, you have to actively think. I definitely think that I'm thinking a lot less than before. So I think once I get to the point where all I have to worry about is just hitting my spot, I'll get there. And I feel like, with my forehand, I'm getting there. I don't think about it too much on the court, and I think it kind of shows that I'm just hitting it where I want to hit it. And yeah, my backhand, luckily, has always been technically sound, so I never had to change it. I don't recall having to change it much in my life.

Question: As you walked off the court, you signed all those autographs for the kids. And this five-year old girl jumped up and down, so excited getting your autograph. She then turned to her mom and dad said "we got to go home and hit because I got to practice more to be as good as Coco." How is that like? Somewhere in Florida, some girl is hitting just because you inspired her.

Coco Gauff: Wow, that's really cool. I don't know. I always don't take it for granted. It feels weird when some people say I actually, every time someone says I want to be like you, I pretty much always say,

just be yourself. I say that because, you know, obviously there's been a lot of comparisons with me with the Williams sisters and things, and since I was a young age, even before those comparisons were made, I would always say I wanted to be me, and I think, you know, that's the best you can be. You can't be like anybody else. But I was inspired by them, so the fact that somebody else is inspired to follow their dreams because of me is honestly pretty cool. And I don't know, I always feel shocked when someone says I'm their favorite player, because I'm like, really? There's a lot to choose from, but I'll take it.

Question: Do you feel like an imposter today? And also give us a matchup on Sabalenka and Rybakina. I know you played Sabalenka in both your finals. It's pretty cool.

Coco Gauff: Yeah, today I didn't feel like an imposter. I feel like I played some good tennis today. So I'm gonna take my win with my chin today. And, yeah, I'll start with Aryna, because we played each other so many times. Last time we played, I think, was WTA Finals, and I started that match off great. And I think, at the end of day, I just felt like I was entering that tournament maybe a little bit low in confidence, and I just didn't trust my shots in that moment. And yeah, we've played so many matches, and it's physical when I play her every time, it's going to be tough. And she's playing great tennis. She's definitely world No. 1 for a reason, and it's going to be a great challenge. And then with Elena, I think it's even probably going to be more difficult because we haven't played each other in a long time. I just think it's just harder to

play someone you haven't played in a long time because you don't have the familiar patterns. You don't really have a lot to go on. And honestly, when you're scouting someone, you're not going to use much from a match four years ago. So, you treat it like a new match. Both matches are difficult. They're the best players in the world. I'm excited for the challenge, and I wouldn't have it any other way.