

# Pac-12 Conference Basketball Media Day

Tuesday, October 25, 2022

San Francisco, California, USA

**California Golden Bears**

**Coach Charmin Smith**

**Jayda Curry**

**Kemery Martin**

Women's Head Coach



CHARMIN SMITH: Just thank you for having us. Super excited about this season and this group that we have. Great group of veterans returning, and then a lot of great additions for our team. Looking forward to getting back on the court.

**Q. Coach, you guys are going to be playing in the first nationally televised game on NBC for a women's college basketball game when you go back to your hometown of St. Louis to take on Notre Dame. I was just curious your thoughts on kind of the growth of women's basketball to get to a point where NBC is airing a game, and also what it's like for you to come home? And I think I read that this is your first time as a player or coach after high school back in St. Louis.**

CHARMIN SMITH: Yeah, this is my first time returning to St. Louis for a game. I've been to visit my family, but this is the first time that I'll be participating in a basketball game in St. Louis, so I know my family and friends are super excited to see me at home.

It's just a great opportunity for our program. Credit to Citibank and just honoring Title IX and gender equity. There's a lot surrounding this game. We'll be doing some activities in the community in St. Louis. The Matthews-Dickey Boys and Girls Club, which is kind of where I learned the game.

I know it's special to Niele, as well, and happy for her that she gets to experience this in St. Louis.

**Q. To come off of the season that you have, the first freshman to ever lead the conference in scoring for a season, how have you felt your game has progressed from where it was in March to where it is as we get ready for November here?**

JAYDA CURRY: Yeah, I focused this summer a lot on improving my mental side of the game. Also a big emphasis for me is being able to be a better two-way player, a big emphasis is the defensive end for me this year.

But yeah, like I said, watching a lot of film, watching the film from last year and just learning from it, yes, I had a pretty good season, but I think there's so much more to learn and improve on.

**Q. How do you improve the mental side of that? Is there anything that you were specifically working on that way?**

JAYDA CURRY: Yeah, film. I watched a lot of film. I was at home during our break. I probably went through like just watching the raw uncut of every game. Got through most of them.

But really just trying to see every aspect of the game that I might not have seen when we were doing film at the school.

**Q. Charmin, how much are you looking forward to or hoping for something resembling a normal season because you guys were -- of anybody over the last couple of years with COVID stoppages and the breaks, you guys took as big a hit as anybody?**

CHARMIN SMITH: Yeah, I think that's a really accurate statement. It's been tough, and we've fought through it and we've stuck together. Jayda missed eight conference games last year. We didn't get to play, and it's challenging to get into a groove and get into a rhythm.

I just remember my first year, we get the win in the Pac-12 tournament and we have momentum and we're super excited and looking forward to the next year, we've got six freshmen coming in, and bam, those freshmen spent time on tennis courts and not passing the ball to each other. It's been a struggle ever since.

So yes, I want COVID to be behind us. I want a healthy



squad, and I think that's where we are. I feel really good about the physical health of our players, about just our mental state and where we are, and the fact that we can get through the season and play every game on our schedule.

**Q. Charmin, you added a Colorado transfer in Peanut Tuitele. How has she fit in, and what are you expecting out of a player who's already been a four-year starter in this league?**

CHARMIN SMITH: Yeah, you know, it was a great addition for our team. Peanut, first off, she's just a phenomenal leader, and like a great teammate. This team absolutely loves her. The coaching staff loves her. When she's on the court, she's a talker. She helps people be in the right spot. She's extremely intelligent, high basketball IQ. It's really made a difference, and we're super excited to have her.

I think just watching Colorado's growth, and had some struggles in Peanut's earlier seasons, and then they end up in the NCAA Tournament. That's the same type of growth we want for our program, and we think Peanut can be a big part of getting us to the postseason.

**Q. Jayda kind of talked about it, but last year you guys really struggled on the defensive side of the ball. What are some things you saw over the off-season and really worked on to try to improve on that side of the floor?**

CHARMIN SMITH: I mean, I think the new additions that we have to our team, and again, getting people healthy will allow us to be a better defensive team. But we've emphasized ball containment and also our rotations when someone does get beat.

I think we can be a lot better at moving early and anticipating things as opposed to reacting and moving late.

We'll definitely be a better defensive team.

**Q. As a fellow Cal alum, just want to get you guys' thoughts on what do you most enjoy about being a UC Berkeley student and being in a very unique challenging academic environment like Cal?**

KEMERY MARTIN: I think the community is amazing, very diverse. Schooling has been definitely challenging, but it's super important. Obviously school comes before basketball, and I think a lot of us, like my teammates and I, like we always are on top of that and put that before basketball. Big emphasis.

JAYDA CURRY: Just going off that, I think that academics isn't a second thought for us. It's definitely a balance between basketball and school, and our coaches and our staff do a great job of staying on us about that and making sure that we're getting the work done in the classroom so we can get the work done on the court, as well.

**Q. Coach, what do you want your Cal Bears to be known for this season?**

CHARMIN SMITH: I don't think that's changed. We play extremely hard, and we're going to always be a team that plays hard and competes. Regardless of the circumstances, we compete. You guys have seen that. You'll continue to see that.

Now again with Kemery and Peanut and Claudia and Amaya and much improved Jayda, Leilani, Eve, Karisma being healthy we're going to compete and we're going to win.

It's time to take that next step, and I think we can really be successful, not only in the non-conference but carrying it over to Pac-12 play, as well.

**Q. Will this be a guard-oriented team at first that will get the bigs a little bit more in the flow, if you will, but a little guard emphasis at first?**

CHARMIN SMITH: That's a great question. Interestingly enough, was it Saturday at practice we had Ashley Walker and Devanei Hampton come to practice. Ashley was inducted into the Cal Hall of Fame, so they were both there.

I was like, you guys got to come. Those two are the reasons why I'm at Cal. I just remember being a coach at Stanford and watching that and being like, I want to coach that. Like it just was -- they were so dominant.

That has been Cal basketball for some time. You go to then Reshanda and Talia and Gen Brandon, and you keep going to Kristine Anigwe, and now there is a big of a shift in that we're trying to spread the floor and give more space for these dynamic guards that we have in Leilani and Jayda and Kemery and Amaya and KO and Mia.

It's going to be something really special, but that doesn't mean we don't have a post presence. It's a different type of post look in that our post players are extremely versatile. Peanut can shoot it; Claudia can shoot it; Eve's has been working on her three-point shot. We've got some perimeter oriented post players that can work, and so it's not that pounded-in Devanei Hampton type look.

But we need our posts just as much as we need our perimeter play.

**Q. Kemery, as somebody who faced Jayda last year in the conference, then has been playing against her for the entirety of the off-season, what I guess has maybe either surprised you or hasn't surprised you about playing against her now as often as you have when you see her game as close as you're seeing it?**

KEMERY MARTIN: I think something that I kind of was thrown off about was how goofy she is. Like she takes the game super serious. She's super competitive in practice. When her team loses, it's always, we're not losing the next one.

But then we get those little breaks and she just like shakes it up and kind of lightens the mood when she feels like she needs to, which I feel like that's a great trait to have to kind of even out some of the feelings we get in practice sometimes.

**Q. Jayda, the same question.**

JAYDA CURRY: I think honestly the same thing. I didn't if Kemery was going to be quiet at first. When we first met her I was kind of like, Oh, she's a little quiet.

But no, she has opened up a lot to us now. But yeah, she always brings great energy to practice. When Kemery talks, you can hear her, and if she's not talking, it's like, okay, where is Kemery at, because she's a talker.

We need her presence. I feel like with all our new people, too, they've brought the talk and the communication and the energy and just kind of helped us in that aspect, and continue to help us grow in that aspect.

**Q. Charmin, I follow the Cal social media. You guys seem to have a really lot of fun together. What kind of things do you do for chemistry? What's your favorite platform? All that stuff. You do a really good job with the social media stuff.**

CHARMIN SMITH: Thank you. I'm going to let the players answer that, but I will take the opportunity to give a shout-out to Kiaira and Karen who are basically our creative content people, and they're doing a really good job of promoting the program.

But these guys, give them -- they make it easy, right? What are your favorite platforms? What do we do for chemistry and camaraderie? What do you guys think?

JAYDA CURRY: So if you see our Instagram page, you

might see the TikToks that we make a lot. We do TikToks, but I think a lot of the content that gets posted is really just us goofing off. It's nothing where it's really planned. It's more kind of uncut and just catching us in the moment. Even in the sense of team bonding we do fun stuff.

We went to this ropes course a couple weeks ago or something like that, and obviously the Spain trip we went on was super fun. But I think as a team we just have a really fun time and we know how to have fun with each other, and it's very natural and not awkward with nobody.

**Q. Coach, looking at your non-conference schedule, you've got the Raising the Bar Invitational that you'll be hosting again under that new name. How excited are you to run that back, and how powerful was that to be a part of last season?**

CHARMIN SMITH: Thank you for bringing that up. It is something really special to me and to our program. The Raising the Bar Invitational, we rebranded the Cal Classic for that, and with the bar standing for basketball, activism and representation. The reason I wanted to do that is because I felt like after that summer of unrest and the murder of George Floyd and others, I felt the conversation shifting and people getting back to work and going back to their everyday things, and this isn't something that I wanted to disappear. I didn't want the conversation to end.

Having this tournament gives us a platform to continue the conversation, and so the raising the bar tournament will always feature four Black female head coaches, because representation in our game is extremely important, and we're now stepping it up to where sponsorships and all of that, we want it to be something that really emphasizes representation, and I hope that this tournament will grow and become something really big.

Excited about the coaches that we have kind of on a waiting list to be a part of the tournament, and I think it'll be something really special for years to come.

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