

Atlantic Coast Conference Basketball Tipoff Media Day

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Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Virginia Tech Hokies

Coach Megan Duffy

Rose Micheaux

Matilda Ekh

Carleigh Wenzel

Women's Press Conference



patience, patience, patience, and more patience, into me, but the team as well.

I feel like she's very -- I'm not going to call you coachable. That's not the word to use. You know what I'm trying to say?

MEGAN DUFFY: I know what you are trying to say.

ROSE MICHEAUX: She's not the word coachable, but the way she's able to break things down and talk us through things. She teaches us a lot. It's just really -- it's a good feeling to know that it's someone there that's very positive, upbeat, and brings a very consistent and outgoing energy every day in practice.

THE MODERATOR: Megan, as a Notre Dame alum, you're obviously not playing in the league that you played in. However, you get to play -- now coach in the league against your alma mater. Just talk us through that. How special is it? You came in here smiling like, oh, today is just awesome. I'm hoping that that's part of the reason that you are in the ACC now.

MEGAN DUFFY: Absolutely. This has been a dream to play and coach at the best and with the best every single day. My Notre Dame background back in the old Big East it was the depth of the conference, how competitive it was, and this is the same in the ACC.

We obviously understand this is the best conference in the country for all different reasons: the talent of the league, guard play, post play, and then some of the best coaches. I've always wanted that challenge.

Just to have it unfold as player and then you obviously build your résumé as a coach. It's special to be here at Virginia Tech and to hopefully be just a small piece of a bigger picture of women's college basketball and continue to put a great product out there.

THE MODERATOR: Matilda, you started every game a year ago, but obviously a lot of new faces and a lot of new transition with this program. What's the same, and what should we look forward to for this coming season?

THE MODERATOR: ...head coach in her first season Megan Duffy. We have Rose Micheaux, as well as Carleigh Wenzel and Matilda Ekh. Welcome. Megan, why don't you get us started? Just give us a preview of this team and what we should expect.

MEGAN DUFFY: This is just an exciting day. I can't tell you how thrilled I am to be the new women's basketball coach here at Tech. Obviously I got three amazing upperclassmen and women in front of me that are going to be the spearhead of what we do this year.

I think with the change that's happened over the last six months we've really kind of been focused in on establishing our culture, really setting the tone of who we want to be identity-wise.

This group here, along with a few others, have just been instrumental in keeping this group together and allowing a new coaching staff to come in and just be a small piece of the bigger picture of what they're about to be. I am just really looking forward to more practices. As a coach knows, we always want more practices. I'm sure they're looking forward to playing.

I think this is going to be a group that's going to be extremely hungry, and you're going to see the best version of ourselves continue to build as we move forward.

THE MODERATOR: Rose, we know what Megan's success has been as a head coach. Tell us about Megan in terms of who she is to you as your new head coach?

ROSE MICHEAUX: Who she is to me -- I would say she's a loving and trustworthy person. She's put a lot of time and



MATILDA EKH: I think one thing we're going to do this year is pushing the pace. We're going to run in transition and play together, move the ball. We're going to have a lot of people involved on offense and defense just playing together and playing hard.

THE MODERATOR: Carleigh, as we go into this transition with three new teams in the ACC, if you could, what would you want to say to them in terms of what the ACC represents and what they should get ready for?

CARLEIGH WENZEL: Definitely competition, just competing at the highest level every night. Obviously we're all loving and we're all welcoming to them, but once you step on that court we're not friends, and we're not there to giggle and things like that. And we're definitely going to go at each other, and I think we're all excited to join them.

THE MODERATOR: What's been the most pleasant surprise since your arrival in Blacksburg?

MEGAN DUFFY: Looking from afar I saw the community and fan base and college game day was in Blacksburg, and I wanted to be a part of that.

When you step into it, you're, like, oh, my gosh, this is for real what people have been talking about. Whether you are at the grocery store, you're at a local restaurant, just the way this community welcomes our women, welcomes myself, our family, and our coaching staff has been -- exceeded all of my expectations.

They care about women's basketball. They want to be with you through thick and thin. They have high expectations, which is great. When it's like that, it makes you want to rise to the best level you can bring. I think those girls feel it.

When you see the young girls and boys around that are stopping them and wanting their autograph or, hey, we'll see you in a couple of weeks at games, it's a great moment. I knew it was going to be like that, and then when I experienced it for the first time, I'm, like, wow.

Then I always ask advice from these guys. You know, your first time playing in Castle in that environment with Enter Sandman, it's going to be a special moment for our coaching staff and these women in new roles and our young players.

THE MODERATOR: Rose, going into your senior year now, is there anything you have added to your game or that coach is making you add to your game as you go into this last year?

ROSE MICHEAUX: My last year, season finale. I would say that I have worked a lot of my versatility, a lot of pulse work getting put into it. Coach Duffy has put a lot of effort and work into getting me on the perimeter more and playing defense on the perimeter.

I feel like I'm going to be able to show my length and my mobility and my physicality as well.

THE MODERATOR: Carleigh, I'll ask you the same question.

CARLEIGH WENZEL: I would say definitely my defense is going to pick it up a notch. I would say coach Duffy and all the coaches that made emphasis on defense, and that's something I can be really good at, and they're pushing me to be the best version of myself in that aspect.

THE MODERATOR: Matilda, we know you can shoot it from deep. Is there anything else we should look for?

MATILDA EKH: I've been working on my versatility doing different things on offense and taking it to the basket, posting up some. Shooting the pull-up and not just shooting the three. That's something I've been working on this summer.

THE MODERATOR: Megan, we know everything is new for you as far as all these new opponents, but there's also three new teams coming in the league. It's probably not fair to ask this, but did you have to do anything different in this offseason, or was this offseason purely about these young ladies and getting ready?

MEGAN DUFFY: For us starting it's been so much about us. We've been focused on, like I said, building our culture and identity and making sure the development of this group is at the forefront of our minds.

From the holistic side, to bring Stanford and Cal in, have great tradition. I mean, you talk about the success of what Tara did at Stanford, and Kate was right alongside with her through all of that.

I remember Cal was in a Final Four a little bit ago and then the uniqueness of SMU. I think it only makes our conference stronger. You add those West Coast teams that are obviously very good and great academic institutions, and I think it only enhances what we're doing here.

Then the schedule, it's a little bit different where you don't play everybody twice, right? You have one shot to knock somebody off, and you have to be extremely focused on

that. I think it's a combination for us of staying focus on who we are, and as it gets closer to that conference play, it's going to become pretty real.

THE MODERATOR: Rose, there's a lot of talk right now about the women's game, and we're seeing a lot more fans attend games. But for the last couple of years especially, Blacksburg has been the place to be on game day for women's basketball. That is one of the loudest environments that I have ever called a game in. What makes your fans so special and that game day environment so unique?

ROSE MICHEAUX: I would say what makes it so special is the loyalty that they have. Just the fact that you can walk into Castle, and it can be 90 minutes on the clock, 07, it doesn't matter. You're going to see fans pouring in from any and every entrance. They come with a smile on their face, and the fact that they're consistent with the energy that they bring and how upbeat they are, it really pours into how we do on the court.

THE MODERATOR: Carleigh, is there a spot in the ACC that -- outside of Castle, that you just love visiting and playing in?

CARLEIGH WENZEL: I think we can all speak on this when we go to North Carolina, NC State, I think those are all great, I guess, gems, coliseums, whatever you want to call it. Great fan bases over there who pour into their women's basketball team. Hokies travel well. There's always going to be Hokies fans. Sometimes more than the home team fans for sure.

THE MODERATOR: Carleigh said everyone should speak to it, Matilda, what would your answer be?

MATILDA EKH: I agree. I think all the North Carolina schools, so UNC, NC State, and Duke are all good places to go to. Good environments; good gyms.

As Carleigh said, we usually have a pretty good fan base over there too.

THE MODERATOR: Rose, you have anyone in particular?

ROSE MICHEAUX: I would say me personally one of my best experiences would be UNC. I feel like I really did enjoy how Tar Heels, they had a really good crowd. They showed up and showed out like they always do.

But I feel like they had a great crowd behind them and a lot of people poured into their women's program.

It's really good to see that it's not only just with Virginia

Tech, but how great and outgoing the fans are with other programs as well.

THE MODERATOR: Megan, what we can expect from these three young ladies, but is there a player on your roster that's not here that you have been really impressed with that you know in order for you guys to make a run that they're really vital, a glue piece for you?

MEGAN DUFFY: Yeah, there's more than just one, but I would start with Lani White. She's a transfer from Utah. Three-level scorer. Really long on the perimeter. She can get deflections. She can impact a game on the defensive side. She's coming into a new role being more of a scorer. Really excited just to see her develop.

Then we have a really good sophomore group. Samyha Suffren and Carys Baker and Mackey Nelson who have a year of college basketball experience. To put them in new roles, they're versatile. They're really hungry to improve.

That will be the key to our success, how quickly we can develop our players.

THE MODERATOR: Ladies, I want to ask each one of you to give me one word that you think will encompass this coming season for your team. We'll start with Matilda.

MATILDA EKH: I'll say passion.

CARLEIGH WENZEL: I'll say sacrifice. Keep it going.

ROSE MICHEAUX: I will say relentless growth. I feel like we're really hitting the flail on our head with our core values and showing that this is really going to be the reason why we're going to be successful this year.

MEGAN DUFFY: They're good. They know our core values. This is a good first step.

THE MODERATOR: That means you're doing your job well.

MEGAN DUFFY: I'm doing my job and they're buying into it.

The last one is connected and how close we can stay together, kind of turn off the outside noise, pour into each other. Connected would be my word.

THE MODERATOR: Lastly, the ACC talks about accomplish greatness. For each one of you, what does that mean to you? Coach.

MEGAN DUFFY: Just to be a part of this bigger picture of

women's college basketball. All of our programs have high expectations to win national championships and cut down nets. So we're going to continue at Tech to hold those standards high and hopefully be there at the end of the year.

ROSE MICHEAUX: I would say being a part of something as spectacular as the ACC and what everyone is doing here, but then also being able to have an impact on what's going on.

So that's kind of like the real meaning is having an impact and being able to show that we all are here for the same reason. We all want to make a difference.

CARLEIGH WENZEL: I would say just pouring into each other. I say we can't do anything we do without the person next to us. So continuing to be great together, every consistently on a day-to-day basis, whether that be in practice, off the court, whatever may be. If we don't do it together, it's not going to get done.

MATILDA EKH: I would just say being the best version of yourself every day and giving to others consistently. Being a great teammate, great friend or whatever it can be.

THE MODERATOR: Well, I learned that Hokies travel, and it's also a lot of fun to have a home game in Hokieville as well. Good luck to you guys this year. Thank you for your time.

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