

Atlantic Coast Conference Basketball Tipoff Media Day

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Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Boston College Eagles

Coach Joanna

Bernabei-McNamee

Lily Carmody

Kaia Henderson

Women's Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good morning, and welcome, everyone, to the 2025 ACC Tipoff Q&A. Boston College, welcome to the stage. With me we have head coach Joanna Bernabei-McNamee. We have Lily Carmody as well as Kaia Henderson. Good morning.

First of all, you guys finished 16 wins, WBIT, both a year ago. You got 11 new faces. Of those, six transfers. I think, most importantly, in five of your seven previous years your team has exceeded preseason expectations.

I feel like looking at the roster, this might be one of those years again, because a lot of new, exciting faces. Can you give us a preview of the season?

JOANNA BERNABEI-McNAMEE: Yeah, this team has really embraced that underdog mentality. We have a lot of unselfish players that are also working extremely hard, and I think when you have hard workers that can give of themselves and be great teammates and they've really bought into playing together as one, I think we could surprise some people this year.

THE MODERATOR: Can you just talk about, we're in a very different era now of recruiting. You obviously went to the portal and got some big pick-ups, but how do you and your staff balance portal versus traditional high school, junior college recruiting?

JOANNA BERNABEI-McNAMEE: I think Boston College is an unbelievable academic institution, so it really does feed off of bringing in high school players that can really thrive. I love to coach players for as long as possible, but I also think there's a need for transfers that can come in and make a difference as older and players with more

experience.

So I think having that nice blend has been a good thing for our team this year, and the way they have a great chemistry on the floor and off the floor with each other, they've really embraced all being new and playing this game together.

THE MODERATOR: Sometimes we focus on as the next season rolls around what we have to be better at.

JOANNA BERNABEI-McNAMEE: Right.

THE MODERATOR: What was that area that you thought your team did really well at that you are looking to build upon?

JOANNA BERNABEI-McNAMEE: I think last year we did a really good job of approaching each game just as that game and looking at it, not looking ahead. I think that's something that this year's team is really going to do as well. Don't worry about the next game or the game after that. Let's just control the controllable and worry about today, right?

One thing I love about this team is we have some really good shooters, and we have, like I said, unselfish players that can spread the floor. I think whenever you put that together in women's basketball, you can have a dangerous team.

THE MODERATOR: Kaia, you have your own podcast.

KAIA HENDERSON: Yes.

THE MODERATOR: CompetitHER. Am I saying that right?

KAIA HENDERSON: Yes.

THE MODERATOR: What's been the genesis behind this podcast and what's been your biggest takeaway from it?

KAIA HENDERSON: What started it is me and obviously my friend Kennedy Griffin. We wanted to find something to



do in the summer because we were just, honestly, bored and had nothing to do.

We were, like, let's create a podcast, because I was doing an internship at the time with the marketing department. I thought this would be such a great idea.

Just the basis was I just wanted to empower women, so I got to interview a few of my old teammates, a few women in sports, and it's really great hearing their stories. I wanted that to be the main story is, like, them telling their stories, giving them a platform to share whatever they want to share and just continue to put women on the map.

So I just thought it's a really empowering way to tell our story.

THE MODERATOR: Any chance I can get an invite?

KAIA HENDERSON: Of course. Let's go.

THE MODERATOR: Lily, tell me why BC?

LILY CARMODY: Honestly, I had a really quick turnaround from when BC reached out to me to when I was here. What really sold me was the coaching staff and honestly the culture that they were trying to build.

Obviously a family environment is something that's sold everywhere, but being a part of BC and the girls is something that is unlike no other. It brings a sense of community, and you are kind of doing everything together, whether it's the highs or the lows. I think we'll be a really resilient team this year just from based on that.

THE MODERATOR: She brought up family, and as long as I've known her as a coach, very much about the culture and family atmosphere. What is it that makes Coach Mack so special as a head coach?

KAIA HENDERSON: Just as you said, I mean, she's a mom, and I feel like as soon as I got here, I was, like, this is like a second mom to me. Just her energy --

THE MODERATOR: A young hip mom, to be correct.

KAIA HENDERSON: Oh, yes. Yeah, just the energy and culture she brings to the program is just something I'll never want to leave once I graduate. It just brings us all together in a way I've never felt before.

That's why we have such a great culture and just an instant team chemistry this year.

THE MODERATOR: I can't believe I'm saying this, but

Joanna, you are now one of the more veteran coaches in the ACC. Can you just speak to what makes the coaching in this league so special and unique?

JOANNA BERNABEI-McNAMEE: Yeah, I think everybody has their own style. The ACC is the pinnacle of coaching. They're all good people, as well.

I think in the ACC the coaches have a lot of respect for each other, have a lot of respect for the game, and they all want to see, like Kaia's podcast, women really excel and be at the forefront of our platform.

Boston College, we talk about being ^ men and women for others, and I think that's the way our coaching staff -- the staffs are in the ACC.

THE MODERATOR: Lily, last year at Butler, but you have a ton of international experience. Is there anything from the international play that you are, like, I'm ready for the ACC?

LILY CARMODY: Honestly, I think playing in the WNBL was something that is an incredible experience, and once in a lifetime. I was able to play against some WNBA stars, like Jordin Canada and Naz Hillman and Tiffany Mitchell. Being able to play against them and training every day.

Being able to be in that professional environment has really, I guess, helped brace me, help me to embrace what's to officially come in the ACC.

THE MODERATOR: Kaia, masters in sports administration. What's the career goal?

KAIA HENDERSON: I really want to get into sports broadcasting, so this is great practice (laughing). I can learn from you.

Yeah, that's always been a dream of mine. Just watching Holly Rowe and these amazing women in the field, yeah.

THE MODERATOR: Joanna, heavy question here. Which coach in the ACC gives out the best Halloween candy?

JOANNA BERNABEI-McNAMEE: I don't know, but I know Coach Walz. I bet he gives out like toothpaste. Remember that.

THE MODERATOR: Not minty flavored. I'll make sure to tell them that.

Ladies, obviously a lot of tradition in the ACC as far as players. Is there anyone that you modelled your game after in the ACC or just someone you looked up to that



played in the ACC?

KAIA HENDERSON: I grew up here in Syracuse, New York, so I really loved watching Tiana Mangakahia. I know you can probably say it better than that. She was always such a role model to me. I even got the chance to play with her.

Yeah, just gets emotional too because she was that impactful for me.

LILY CARMODY: I kind of have to agree. I think, honestly, she was such a powerful woman in the sport in general. She definitely brought that back home to Australia to where I'm from. Being able to see kind of the ripple effect that she's had on just young, little girls and kind of everyone who is within that realm as well.

THE MODERATOR: I'll ask you as a former coach in the ACC, is there anyone that you have kind of looked up to?

JOANNA BERNABEI-McNAMEE: Oh, geez, from coaching-wise there are so many great ones to look up to. You know, Coach McGraw is an amazing coach that, of course, I look up to. Now I think the things that goes with her team, both with Notre Dame there, but I think Tara VanDerveer and now watching Kate fill in those shoes.

I mean, the ACC through the course since I've been here just has so many people. A lot of times I'm just honored to be in the room and be amongst those names, because it is so impressive.

THE MODERATOR: I'll ask the players. Is there a teammate that right now you think people don't know about, but by ACC action everyone is going to be talking about?

KAIA HENDERSON: I think you're going to hear the name Amirah Anderson a lot. Just the energy she brings every single day, her ability to work so hard as a freshman coming in, so I feel like she's going to make a statement right away. She's such a great teammate, and I just think that's a really important thing in the ACC especially.

LILY CARMODY: I think a lot of our freshman class will make a huge impact this year, for sure. I'm just seeing an impact every day and the hard work that they put in and the energy they bring and obviously the skill set and the talent. I think they'll make a huge splash this year.

JOANNA BERNABEI-McNAMEE: I was going to say if you ask me, oh, who is the best player on your team, I would say our team, and I think that's something that's very special about them is any given night somebody different

will step up. There's no doubt in my mind. I'm excited to watch it unfold.

THE MODERATOR: Kaia, we'll start with you. Just one word answer when I say -- or what comes to mind when I say, ACC women's basketball?

KAIA HENDERSON: Competitive.

LILY CARMODY: Talent.

JOANNA BERNABEI-McNAMEE: Intense.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Boston College, and good luck this season.

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