

Atlantic Coast Conference Basketball Tipoff Media Day

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Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Stanford Cardinal

Coach Kate Paye

Nunu Agara

Chloe Clardy

Women's Press Conference



KATE PAYE: I think, like I tell our sophomores, Shay Ijiwoye, Kennedy Umeh, Harper Peterson, gosh, it feels so good to be a sophomore. We learned a lot and there was a lot of change last year. I think experience is the greatest teacher, and we can make a few tweaks to kind of the way we travel, we have more experience with the coaches, style of play, different players, and I think that's really going to help us moving into year two of the ACC.

THE MODERATOR: Welcome to the 2025 ACC tip-off Q & A. I'm happy to welcome Stanford to the stage. Welcome ladies. You guys won all five of your six games in the ACC regular season. You returned 54 percent of your points, 50 percent of your rebounds; 57 percent -- let's get out of stats that's a lot of production.

More importantly, I think in this day and age you've got 10 returners led by these two on the stage. Give us an overview of what we should expect from your team this season.

KATE PAYE: Christy, I am so excited about our team. As you point out, we have 10 fantastic returners who busted it this off-season. All spring long, on the track, on the turf, on the sand, in the weight room, on the court.

Our 10 returners really recommitted themselves to the Stanford way, which is working really hard, being really unselfish so when our five fantastic freshmen arrived on campus for summer quarter, they were ready to mentor them, to help them, and that's what we call the Stanford sisterhood.

The team is working really hard. Our fall practice is off a great start. We know it's going to take everyone. Our five freshmen are great and we are counting on them to make immediate impact.

But we know our success this season, our goal of having a championship season, it will be determined and we will be led by our returners.

Q. So much transition a year ago, first-year head coach, new players, new conference. For you personally, what was the biggest takeaway?

Q. Nunu, I don't know a another player in the country that had a bigger jump from freshman to sophomore year than I saw in your game last year. What was the focus this past off-season for you to continue that improvement?

NUNU AGARA: Yeah, I think my main focus was probably my leadership. Like she said, our five freshmen coming in. I think for me, I just wanted to set the biggest example that I can to make sure that they know how the Stanford way, the way they do things.

So yeah, I guess that was the biggest thing.

Q. Chloe, from the first 15 games to the last 16 games, you doubled your production. Was there a lightbulb moment? What happened there, and how do you build on that going into this season?

CHLOE CLARDY: Think it was just, like, things change, things happen all the time in basketball with different teams, so just stepping into my role and really taking that on and just trying to be the best that I could be for my team, and I think that just continues into this year, like Nunu said, being a leader.

Our five freshmen, they all are doing amazing, so just really helping them, and like Kate said, mentoring them, and getting all of our team together and just ready to compete this year. We're going to be a championship team this year.

Q. Everyone has mentioned the five freshmen, and I see the smile when we say the five freshmen. Should we expect a similar style of play or will there be adjustments with this influx of talent?



KATE PAYE: You know, the Stanford way, we're going to play up tempo, we want to play fast, we want to play what we call tag team. I think we have a lot of depth. We really have different weapons out there. We need everyone. It's a long season. We have championship aspirations, championship goals.

We know we're going to see a lot of different styles of play. More than anything, I'm just really happy the way people are working together and really taking on kind of the sisterhood and the Stanford way.

Q. Nunu, you missed some games last year with injury. You talked about that leadership piece. How much was you staying on the sideline and watching, how much did that help you in terms of this enhanced leadership role?

NUNU AGARA: Yeah, it gave me a different perspective for sure, just relating to my teammates in a different way. We had a couple of other people that were out, too, so being able to form that little group of like maybe a little sisterhood there.

But I think watching on the sideline is different. You see things that you normally don't see when you're playing. And yeah, I missed some time, and I think part of that leadership is being available and being healthy, and taking that into next year.

Q. Chloe, give me the one freshman right now that has really impressed you.

CHLOE CLARDY: Think it's hard to say just one. I think they've all been doing amazing in different ways. They all bring different skills to the team, and they've really taken on that. I think they all work incredibly hard.

I think I've been impressed by all of them, and I think everybody else will be, too.

Q. A big issue last year was just the health of the Lepolo. Can you give us an update on that?

KATE PAYE: Yeah, we're really excited to have Lepolo back and healthy. Obviously she has great experience at the guard position. She's a fierce competitor, great defender, a very, very smart player.

Really, again, we're going to count on Talana, Chloe, Nunu. I'm really excited about the way Courtney Ogden is playing, Mary Ashley Stevenson, as well as our two other seniors Stavi Papadaki and Lauren Green. Our returners will lead the way.

It is great to have Talana back on the floor.

Q. Kate, you've been around a lot of great coaches. Last year, first year in the ACC. What surprised you the most about the coaching in the ACC?

KATE PAYE: You know, I don't think -- ACC is fantastic women's basketball conference, and we are so excited to be a part of it. Great competition like we have on our team, great competition makes you better. I think more than anything, just being in an 18-team conference is really different. That's a lot of different games.

Other than Cal, you only see everybody once. So there's a lot of different variety and styles of play, and also in today's game, just the constant roster turnover and learning different players. It just was a big adjustment.

Again, we're grateful now that we have kind of our first year under the belt.

Q. I know this is only year two in the ACC, but there's been a lot of great players that have played in this league. Is there anything that you've patterned your game after that played in the ACC or that you've looked up to?

NUNU AGARA: I think for me -- I'll just name one of our Stanford players. Definitely was in the Pac-12 at the time, but we're just going to go with Stanford players. Definitely Nneka. Nneka Ogwumike. I've heard how good of a leader she is and how good she is in the W, and I could see that on the court.

She's an amazing leader, amazing person, so I would say her in terms of leadership and just the way she approaches the game.

CHLOE CLARDY: Yeah, I think honestly, ACC, it's very guard heavy, very fast. I've grown up just watching a lot of basketball, so I think just -- there's a lot of great guards. There's a lot of great Stanford guards, Kiana Williams. There's so many great guards.

Q. Nunu, I saw a clip that your social team put out that in picking Stanford you mentioned the greatness of Tara, greatness of the players, and the education, but the true reason you said you picked Stanford was because of what? And can you give us the visual description of that for those of us who haven't seen it?

NUNU AGARA: The reason I chose Stanford was the palm trees. Yes, I know it's really weird, but yes, the palm trees. I'm from Minnesota. It is so cold there. It's negative



30 in the winter so I couldn't do it. When I saw Stanford and meeting Kate, she was my coach at the time, and we were on Palm Drive, which is this amazing street full of palm trees.

So we're at the Stanford church and I'm looking and I turn and I'm like, there's palm trees. I am like, this is amazing. I looked at my mom and I looked at Kate. I'm like, Kate, can I come here? I said, can I commit here? Can I come here? She's like, yeah. It was like, okay, I'm coming. So yeah, that's the reason why I chose Stanford.

KATE PAYE: I couldn't tell everybody until the next morning when we had breakfast. The palm trees did it. Easiest recruiting sell ever.

Q. Chloe, Kate brought up earlier the Stanford sisterhood. What does that mean to you?

CHLOE CLARDY: It goes way back. Just all the past players, all the present players, just when you come back in the circle you're a part of the circle and we're all connected.

You can reach out to any of the sisters if you want. Just having that connection, knowing that there's someone that has your back at all times.

Q. If you had to pick one of your coaches to be on your two on two team, who would it be and why?

CHLOE CLARDY: Kate for sure. I think the other players would be scared.

NUNU AGARA: Okay. I'm going to go with Erica McCall. She's good. She's cooking with us at practice, too, so I'd go with her for my partner.

Q. Your staff, we know what they are as coaches, but as former players and representing Stanford, what's it like to walk into practice every day and learn from these very accomplished women?

NUNU AGARA: Yeah, for me, I want to be a WNBA player, Kate, WNBA player; JP, Hall of Fame, like recently Hall of Fame; Bird, like Heather. All of them have such great experience and I wouldn't want to be at another place because you have so much -- you can literally go to Kate, I want to play in the W. JP, how do I become a Hall of Famer. It's so easy to listen to them because they've experienced it themselves.

CHLOE CLARDY: Think she said it well. They've done it before. Our goals that we have, they've already done it, so I think they really set the blueprint for us, and they're

always there whatever we need, have questions, and you get the best advice no matter what coach you go to.

Q. One word answer: When I say ACC women's basketball, what's the one word that comes to mind?

CHLOE CLARDY: Competitive.

NUNU AGARA: I was going to say Stanford.

KATE PAYE: I'm with Chloe: Competitive.

THE MODERATOR: Ladies, thank you for your time today. Good luck this season.

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