

Atlantic Coast Conference Basketball Tipoff Media Day

Monday, October 6, 2025

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Virginia Tech Hokies

Coach Megan Duffy

Carys Baker

Carleigh Wenzel

Women's Press Conference



and then you could see just the maturation happen throughout the season.

They were thrown into the fire, so even with that, they have incredible game experience now. Some of the things that maybe were a little stressful last year or maybe a little bit inconsistent, they're going to feel different this year. I told them that.

But it's just something myself and our staff put a lot of time into, whether it's film sessions, whether it's time just on the court, 10, 15 minutes before or after practice or coming back late at night, just having them find that confidence through their reps.

Q. Carleigh, you definitely benefitted by this development. You more than tripled your scoring average. You almost tripled your assist rate. What was that like for you? You're a redshirt junior now. That was year three for you last year and all of a sudden you shot out of a cannon. Can you talk about what Coach Duffy has done for your game?

CARLEIGH WENZEL: Really I'm just being coached by two point guards so I think that's the most I can get out of my experience. That's the best position I can be in, just having two people that have so much knowledge pouring into it. That obviously helped me tremendously.

And just helping me be a leader, I think they kind of just know everything in my eyes, so anything I don't know or just small things that I can tweak to make me lead better or just play better in any aspect, they've done.

Just going into this next year, they've poured in so much confidence in me. I was joking, Coach Duffy is telling me to shoot the ball more in practice, and I'm like, yeah, shoot the ball. But just the shots I should be taking, where I should be taking them, just not doing too much, taking what's given to me and what's open.

Q. Carys, this team achieved WBIT postseason play a year ago. What's the goal for this team?

CARYS BAKER: Yeah, obviously we have a chip on our

THE MODERATOR: Good morning, and welcome to the 2025 ACC tip-off Q & A. I'm happy to welcome Virginia Tech to the stand. We have head coach Megan Duffy, Carys Baker, and Carleigh Wenzel. Good morning, ladies.

Megan, you've got six returners, two of your top scorers here with you. Seven newcomers. You had success last year. You had a lot of success. What is it about this crew that makes you think you're going to be able to build on that for an even better year two?

MEGAN DUFFY: I love our group in year two, just the energy when they all came in for the summer, building a foundation again of your toughness, your skill work. They're a joy to be around, and obviously it's led by these two are Carleigh and Carys. They're just in a different place, I think, from last year to this year, just more confident. They know what to expect.

Our relationships have even gotten stronger, and I feel really good now that they're ready to even take the reins even more and lead the people below them.

Q. Megan, one of your trademarks as a head coach has been player development. Can you speak to that and why it's so important to you but why it was so integral in year one at Virginia Tech?

MEGAN DUFFY: Yeah, I've always taken a lot of pride in helping them reach their max potential and being with them in the fight. There's going to be good and bad days, there's going to be up and down moments, and helping them find that development on and off the court.

When we took over a year ago we had a lot of players who were ready for their opportunity, and to their credit, they put the work in. They listened to just our advice a little bit, too,



shoulder. I was talking about it earlier today. I know me and Carleigh feel it. We were pretty frustrated with the outcome of course, but just taking that into this season and just having the freshmen and transfers come in and we have to show them this is exactly how it's done and we want to be successful this year.

We have that chip on our shoulder still from last year, so just taking that into this season is definitely really important to me, and of course I know to Carleigh, too.

Q. Megan, one year under your belt now, but can you describe the atmosphere in Cassell Coliseum on game day?

MEGAN DUFFY: It's amazing in Cassell. I know when I got the job people would tell me just wait until it gets full, just wait until you meet all the fans. It truly is remarkable.

Our entire community just loves women's basketball in Blacksburg and the surrounding areas, and whether we're on Main Street or at a Target or anywhere else, people recognize us, from fans who have been here for decades to new families.

It's just a really motivating environment. We know we have a huge responsibility to our fan base and we want to put a good product out there.

But what's so fun in year two is you know more people, you feel like they're part of your family. I've loved that part about just working really hard to make them proud. I think we've carried that on our shoulders in a very positive way, and it's really awesome that we're this piece of women's basketball, we're the blueprint in some ways of what fan bases should be, the high expectations.

But they love our women. They want relationships with them. We try and give that to them in their experience as well.

Q. Carys, I read that you want to be a sports broadcaster.

CARYS BAKER: Yes.

Q. So I'm going to ask you to give me your best Carleigh buzzer three at the buzzer?

CARYS BAKER: Oh, gosh. I've got to think about that one.

Q. The assist is coming from you by the way.

CARYS BAKER: Okay, perfect. Carleigh Wenzel at the

buzzer, No. 1, and it goes in. Assisted by No. 10 Carys Baker, Carleigh Wenzel at the buzzer.

Q. For the players, who's that one player on your team right now that maybe fans don't know about, but come ACC play everyone is going to be talking about?

CARYS BAKER: I think Kilah Freelon is going to be somebody that's huge for us. Obviously she was at Texas Tech before so obviously she knows the atmosphere a little bit. But, yeah, I think she's going to be huge for us. I love playing with her, alongside her. She's super versatile, super athletic.

So just having her on the boards, on the glass being able to score, I think she's going to be huge and I think Hokie fans are going to love her.

CARLEIGH WENZEL: Yes, Kilah, but I would throw another person in since I can. I think Mel Daley, I think just a vet. She knows how things should go, and I think her pull-up game is absolutely ridiculous. Very hard to guard.

But just her length also on the defensive end. I think she can be really disruptive and just her athleticism, getting out and running, things like that, things that we need and that she's really good at.

Q. Megan, you've been around this game for so long, but after going through the ACC this past season, what is it about the coaches that make this league so special?

MEGAN DUFFY: I've really enjoyed, one, getting to know them, but two, just the preparation you have to have night in and night out. It'll be interesting this year, a lot of rosters have changed and there's some who bring back some great vets. When you only play one team twice, you're constantly kind of changing your hat a little bit with your preparation of adjusting to different styles.

The talent across the board this year is really good. We're going to be able to get more teams in the tournament this year. It's been proven with the ACC, once we're in that dance, history has been made with Final Fours and Elite Eights and Sweet 16s.

The marathon of the ACC is the biggest challenge, I think, that I'm picking up from of how do you keep your team fresh and healthy and motivated because you do have to play your best from top to bottom.

Q. For each of you, what have you learned about your team at this point in the preseason with summer and part of the fall under your belt? Do you have a sense



of what you'll be able to hang your hat on most nights?

CARLEIGH WENZEL: I think just our ability to be coachable. I think that everybody is so open minded from just a player standpoint and I think we can all go to each other and criticize or just say you're doing really well in a certain thing, and whoever, just to be able to take in -- I think just picking up one slack.

I think if one is having a rough night and just not there 100 percent, you have people on the team that will be able to bring a spark or do more than they usually would, and I think that goes from 1 through 13.

Q. Carys, you mentioned you guys are playing in a chip on your shoulder. How has that manifested itself through the first couple weeks of preseason practice? What have you seen from this group that makes you feel like that's paying off?

CARYS BAKER: Yeah, I just think the passion that we have is one of our core values. I think we're all really passionate and you see it during practice. If somebody gets and-one, if somebody has a big rebound over one of our practice guys, we see that passionate side that we all have, and I think that plays into the chip on our shoulder that I talked about.

I think it's important to play with passion but then we're also connected and close with each other that we all want to see each other succeed. Like if Carleigh scores I'm going to be just as hyped if she scores as if anybody else scores. I think that's just something we play with and I'm just really excited to have that chemistry, and like Carleigh said, all 13 of us have it.

Q. Is there a certain player in the league that you look forward to playing this year?

CARLEIGH WENZEL: I think I'm really close with someone on Duke, Ashlon Jackson. That's somebody that we kind of grew up together in terms of playing together, AAU before college and seeing her succeed at the highest level, we always text, I love this for you, things like that. But somebody who I go pretty hard against, so I'm excited for her.

CARYS BAKER: I don't know if I have a certain player that I'm excited to play against. There's a lot of competition in the ACC. I would say Duke, like Carleigh said. I think Duke is one team that I'm excited to play against.

I know a lot of the girls on that team because a lot of them are in my grade, so I just think I'm excited to have that competition against them.

Q. Megan, how is the gelling process going between the returning players and the newcomers, and in an era where a lot of teams have to start from scratch in terms of roster rebuild, how much of it is a plus that you have basically half the team back from last year?

MEGAN DUFFY: Yeah, it's a great question. I think every year we're all meshing new faces and new members of your team. I feel really good about our returning group led by these two and they've been through the grind and the gauntlet of a college basketball season.

The key, as you said, is once you hit that summer and the whole roster is together, how do you mesh a few transfers, how do you measure freshmen. This group has been a joy to coach. They're fun to be around. They enjoy each other's company. They want to be pushed.

I think the two things that stick out to me is our versatility and our depth is better, so finding those pieces to the puzzle is what's going to be key for us in the beginning of the season and beyond.

But there's a few different ways we can play with different lineups, and that was a little bit last year. These guys played heavy minutes and sometimes we couldn't take them out; now we can give them a blow. That can help for duration of the season a little bit better.

I am enjoying putting that puzzle together and learning about them. I think the big thing with our women is you've got to know them off the court, you've got to know what makes them tick, they all have big goals for themselves, but everybody has got to be working together. And so we're working really hard to establish those new and old faces together for a great product.

Q. Carleigh, just a one-word answer. When I say the term ACC women's basketball, what comes to mind?

CARLEIGH WENZEL: Competition.

CARYS BAKER: Electric.

MEGAN DUFFY: Elite.

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