

Atlantic Coast Conference Basketball Tipoff Media Day

Tuesday, October 7, 2025
Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Louisville Cardinals

Coach Jeff Walz

Tajianna Roberts

Laura Ziegler

Women's Press Conference



obviously not as good at the end -- not as good at the start as we will be at the end, but a team that's further along, I believe, at the start of this year than we were last.

THE MODERATOR: So knowing just everything that you like to run, how different will this team be because of that experience you have now?

JEFF WALZ: Well, we're hopefully not going to have to run as much because we're going to be able to understand what options are within the different things that we're trying to run.

So I think the experience and them being able to make reads is going to be a big help to our team. It should pay off well for us.

Q. To the players, is there a certain team or certain player that you look forward to playing this year? Then, Coach, when you are making your nonconference schedule, do you look for teams that you maybe have not played or a certain coach you would like to coach against?

JEFF WALZ: Ladies, would you like to?

TAJIANNA ROBERTS: We look forward to playing all the teams that we're up against. We're going one game at a time. We have a very competitive schedule, so I think every opponent we face, they have great players and great coaches, so I think we're looking forward to playing whoever is in front of us.

LAURA ZIEGLER: Yeah, just to bounce off of that, what Taj said, I think our nonconference schedule is looking really good. Obviously the ACC schedule is always going to be good, but I think it's going to prepare us for later on in March, which is exciting.

We have a lot of home games, which is going to be fun too just getting to see the whole crowd at the Yum! Center.

JEFF WALZ: Whether it comes to putting a nonconference schedule together, things have obviously changed because you really don't know who is going to be on whose team.

THE MODERATOR: Welcome to the 2025ACC tipoff Q&A. I am very honored to have Louisville on the stage with me. Head Coach Jeff Walz going into his 19th season at the helm. We have Tajianna Roberts returning for her sophomore year and Laura Ziegler.

Thank you for joining us. Cardinals return eight players from a team that finished 22-11, marking your 15th straight season of 20-plus wins, the longest streak in the ACC.

You fielded a really young team a year ago. As a former coach, I know the greatest thing about freshmen is they become sophomores.

JEFF WALZ: Some (laughing).

THE MODERATOR: At least on the roster you look a little older.

JEFF WALZ: No, I'm saying they do become sophomores. It just depends what school. I'm fortunate a lot of them decided to stay. You know, it's --

THE MODERATOR: You hit it strong early, Jeff.

JEFF WALZ: Just speaking the truth.

THE MODERATOR: Amen to that. What should we expect from this year's team?

JEFF WALZ: You know, a lot more experience, obviously, and then bringing in some transfers that performed extremely well at the schools they played at, have a lot of game experience, NCAA experience. So that's going to be a great addition to our returners.

So I think you'll see a team that's going to be, you know,



I've basically finished next year's nonconference schedule already.

You know, you try to figure out where teams are going to be within your net and all that good stuff, but at the same time, you're trying to make sure you have some games in there where you're able to get some younger kids some playing time and some experience.

Then we also try to also play three or four marquee games that are going to be great for our fans, home or away.

Then, like I said, we also try to get some regional games as well to be able to draw from the opponent's crowds.

THE MODERATOR: Jeff, you have a -- a lot of coaches will shy away from a tough nonconference schedule. You're jumping in deep. You got UConn, Colorado, Kentucky, South Carolina, and Tennessee. I guess Geno didn't want to play at the Yum! Center, so you have to go to Germany.

JEFF WALZ: I have to give him credit for that. We actually signed a four-year contract. This is the third year of it. We played year one up at their place. Then he ended up playing at the Barclay's Center last year in that great event.

Then get the phone call. Would you guys be willing to go and play in the Arms Forces Classic. Then next year we'll finish it, a four-year series, with one game at UConn and one game at our place. It worked out great.

What a wonderful experience for our players to get a chance to travel the world and just really get a chance to see there's more than just what's here in the U.S.

THE MODERATOR: Taj, we know it's great to play UConn.

JEFF WALZ: I thought you were going to say for me. My bad. I thought she was going to say it's great to play for me. Gosh darn it. (Laughing.)

THE MODERATOR: I'm sorry. I try not to waste everyone's time stating the obvious.

JEFF WALZ: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Taj, what is the excitement like to head over to Germany to play and start the season?

TAJIANNA ROBERTS: Really what an opportunity. I played my first game -- my first collegiate game in Paris last year, and I get to play in Germany, overseas again. I'm two years in a row playing out the country for my first

game, so it's a great opportunity to just have that experience.

Like Coach Walz said, to experience things outside of the United States, to get that culture with my teammates, you know, that's an experience I will forever get to say I have with my teammates.

I think that's very cool.

Q. Yesterday was National Coaches Day. Can you talk about your supporting coaching staff and what they mean to the program?

JEFF WALZ: I did not get one call, one text. I had no idea that it was actually National Coaches Day.

TAJIANNA ROBERTS: Didn't get one from me.

LAURA ZIEGLER: I think it got lost in the mail.

JEFF WALZ: Ladies, would you (laughing) -- no, I've been absolutely blessed. I've been very, very fortunate to have some wonderful people, colleagues to work with. Steph Norman just left to go to Arizona State this year. She played there in college. We were together for 18 years.

It's just when you go to work and you are working with people you enjoy being around, it doesn't feel like a job. So it makes all the difference in the world when you have great people that you work with.

You might want to put that in your calendar next year.

TAJIANNA ROBERTS: Is that right?

JEFF WALZ: I'm just saying.

TAJIANNA ROBERTS: I think I'm going to make sure I'm skipping that day.

JEFF WALZ: October 6th.

THE MODERATOR: Laura, I'm going to get this back on the tracks.

LAURA ZIEGLER: Yes, ma'am.

THE MODERATOR: You tallied 33 double-doubles over the last two seasons, and you ranked 15th nationally in reboundings last season. What will your role look like with this team, and what might be added to your repertoire?

LAURA ZIEGLER: I think when you talk about double-doubles, you talk about rebounds. To me it really

comes back to control what you can control, and that's effort. My rebounds, like, I'm not going to be the biggest most athletically on the floor, but you are going to get rebounds if you box out and you go for it and you put in the effort in for it.

I think what I did last year, adding to that and then just we're playing fast with Coach Walz and playing fast with this team. I love that. I feel like we keep learning and talking about the different options we have within our offense.

Just keep adding to that, being more efficient, and just improving and finding the ways where I can help this team win.

THE MODERATOR: Last year from the get-go, you jumped into the deep end. You led the team in minutes played, second in scoring, and led the team in steals. What's in store for us in year two? What was your biggest takeaway from your freshman year?

TAJIANNA ROBERTS: For year two I think one of the main things I'm focusing on is my leadership aspect. You know, just with that experience that I did have from my freshman year, just being more vocal and leading my team in different areas on the defense and offensive end.

I think something that I've learned from my freshman year is just the mental aspect. You know, the basketball, it's going to come and go, so just knowing the bounceback. I think my bounceback time this year is going to be a lot better.

THE MODERATOR: Jeff, so much is changing in our game, and yet, your program remains one of the most successful year in, year out. What's been some non-negotiables? What do you attribute the sustained success?

JEFF WALZ: Staff. I think a culture that we've built on expectations of going hard each day. We've really worked hard on trying to find players that understand you have to earn things. Nothing is given to you. Good-character players; except Taj (laughing).

TAJIANNA ROBERTS: Who do you think I get it from?

JEFF WALZ: I love her. She knows it.

No, you have to have players that want to compete. These two want to compete. Laura loves competing. You know, I made a comment the other day in practice. We probably went 30 minutes of working on some offense, and Laura didn't shoot the ball one time. I commented on that,

because her effort was the same the entire time. It was not based on did I get a shot off, did I score, were they looking for me. She was just playing hard.

I mention that, because I want players like Taj, I want Imari, I want our younger ones to see that you don't always just have to score. You can do so much to impact your team.

I think those are the type of players that we're trying to find. You got to find the ones that are going to work hard. We might not be ranked No. 1 or 2 in our class, but we're going to have the competitiveness and fire to compete with anybody, and they're willing to work to get better.

So we have been able to find those type of players that believe in that, and we've had some great success here, so I don't think anyone could argue with what we've been able to do.

So players that come know they're going to get a chance to compete against great teams and win at a very high level.

THE MODERATOR: Taj, can you describe for the fans out there who have never had the opportunity to experience a home game at the Yum! Center, what that environment is like?

TAJIANNA ROBERTS: I would say if you haven't come to a home game, you're missing out, that's for sure. For me it's so unreal just seeing how much the fans are willing to support us and how loud and how they're willing to come out each and every game no matter how we're doing, if we're winning or losing. They're going to support us and have the utmost passion, so it's a beautiful thing.

THE MODERATOR: Laura, obviously one of six newcomers. Who else new to the scene maybe people don't know about right now that a couple of weeks into the season everyone is going to be talking about? Beside yourself, obviously.

LAURA ZIEGLER: I think there's a lot of people. I think, you know, my fellow transfers. I think Reyna is a smart player, and I love playing with her. She's the one who is going to find the pass and make the smart play. Skylar is crazy athletic. When she's really on, like nobody can stop her. She's always going to go and get a bucket.

And I think all the new ones. You know, our freshmen, you know, they're working hard. College is hard. Freshman year is hard. You are learning a lot, but I think they are doing a great job of just being really focused and working hard every day, yeah.

THE MODERATOR: Last question for all of you. Laura, we'll start with you. When I say "ACC women's basketball," what's the one word that comes to mind?

LAURA ZIEGLER: Elite.

TAJIANNA ROBERTS: Competitive.

JEFF WALZ: Deep.

THE MODERATOR: There we have it. Louisville, thank you so much. Good luck this season.

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