

Golden State Valkyries

Media Conference

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Kate Martin

Media Conference



Q. Last time we talked to you we were talking about your time with the Aces and your relationship with A'ja Wilson. What's it going to be like not being on the same team? Are you going to have to develop a new handshake? Did she reach out to you after you were drafted?

KATE MARTIN: Yeah, she reached out to me. A'ja was obviously a tremendous teammate, leader, great person to be around. But yeah, it's not going to be fun not being on the same team as her, obviously. She's amazing, so that's going to pose its own challenges.

But yeah, I feel really grateful a lot of my Aces teammates reached out to me, and obviously they will be missed. That is what is so special about basketball is building those bonds with your teammates, and now I'm excited to meet new teammates and build more bonds there with the Valkyries.

Q. What does it mean for you to be a part of the first Golden State WNBA team and to be moving to the Bay? Also just being a part of one of the foundational players, knowing that there's so much cap space, they're going to be aggressive in free agency, kind of in this new opportunity?

KATE MARTIN: Yeah, like you said, it's a pretty cool opportunity. I feel really grateful to be a part of it. It's a part of history, a new WNBA team. They haven't had an expansion draft in a really long time. It's something super cool to be a part of, and I feel really grateful that they chose me.

It's just going to be a lot of fun. Obviously they're going to be aggressive, and we're going to have more people added. That makes it really fun, seeing the roster come together and what it's going to be, how training camp is going to look. Obviously I fully trust the front office and Coach Natalie to put together a roster in a training camp that's going to compete. We're here to win games. That's what Coach Nat is going to want to do. It's just really cool to be a part of history.

Q. Coach Nakase has said she wants players that are ultra competitive, want to win and are going to play with a chip on their shoulder. How do you feel like your mindset fits into that architect?

KATE MARTIN: Well, I think Coach Nat and I kind of bonded over that in Vegas, of just having that ready-to-work, nothing-is-given-to-you, you-earn-everything kind of mindset. She's just the type of coach that I want to play for and the type of coach, as I said earlier, that makes you want to run through a brick wall for them. She's going to be really hard on you and give you tough love, but she's also going to build you up and tell you "good job" when you're doing a good job. It's really fun to play for somebody like that, but yeah, I've just always kind of been that type of player.

I was a mid-second-rounder, didn't really know, never expected anything, never given anything. I've had to work really hard to be where I'm at. So I think Coach Nat sees that, as well.

Q. Can you speak to seeing who your teammates are now? Some of them you have played against. Talk about the energy that you're feeling, the excitement that you're feeling being alongside some great names.

KATE MARTIN: Yeah, super excited. I obviously didn't know who my teammates were going to be until today, so I found out when everybody else did. But that was really fun.

Played against a couple in college and played against all of them in the league. There's established vets, there's really good versatile posts, there's really good guards.

Coach Nat and the front office are putting together a competitive roster like they want, and that's what you want to be a part of. They all seem like they are really hard workers and really great people and going to be really good teammates. I'm excited to see everybody in April and get to work during training camp then.

Q. You mentioned being a mid second-round pick.



You're going to be teammates now with someone whom you have faced off against in the past two post-seasons in Kayla Thornton who was an undrafted player who has developed a really strong career for herself. What can you learn about a two-way player like Kayla Thornton, and how can you best press forward, and how do you want to foster that relationship?

KATE MARTIN: Well, yeah, I'm definitely more excited about being teammates with her now than being opponents. She's a force to be reckoned with.

Yeah, she can play really good defense. Also killer shooter from the corners especially. But she can also get downhill in a hurry. She's obviously a really good player, and definitely looking forward to being on the same side as her.

But obviously I don't know most of these players as people yet, but I'm looking forward to getting to know them and getting to learn from them and learn with them. We're all going to be learning a new system together and learning new challenges of being in a different area and being with a different coaching staff. So it'll be really cool to be able to lean on each other.

Q. You've played alongside some of the best players in the league. What lessons have you learned from them that will carry over into Golden State?

KATE MARTIN: Yeah, I think being a part of the Aces, which is already an established program who knows how to win and has won a lot of games has definitely served me right. I feel really grateful that I was drafted there and had an opportunity there and have learned from great coaching and also from great teammates.

I had some -- I was surrounded by some really good leaders there, so I'm just going to take that winning mindset and that winning culture and bring it on over to San Francisco, as will a lot of my other teammates that were selected.

I'm just looking forward to that as new beginnings and building something brand new from the start, from scratch. It's going to be really exciting, and it's going to pose its own challenges but also a lot of potential and a lot of room to grow, and that's something super exciting.

Q. Can you take us through what this process was, learning that you were joining Golden State, and how do you think this franchise will give you more opportunities to grow as a pro?

KATE MARTIN: Yeah, I mean, the process was -- could

be a little anxiety provoking. We have been left in the dark for a really long time. I didn't know if I was going to be in Vegas. I didn't know if I was getting protected or not. I didn't know if I was going out to San Francisco, in the midst of just trying to stay in the moment and focus on my craft and still training and getting better now. But also there's a lot of excitement with that. I felt really grateful that I could stay in Vegas, I could go out to San Francisco, and no matter what, I was just going to make the most of whatever opportunity that I had.

I feel really grateful, though, that I am going out to San Francisco to have a new beginning, a fresh start, and there's going to be a lot of room to grow there. Everybody is going to be learning a new system, like I said, but I'm really excited to play for Coach Nat. I think she instills a lot of confidence in her players, and that's something she hangs her hat on. I'm just going to continue to be me and continue to work on my craft and grow as a player, and once we get there, I'll figure out my role and what my job is and do that to the best of my ability.

Obviously I don't know yet, but I'm just looking forward to the future.

Q. I'm curious, what have your discussions been like with Ohemaa, and how does she stand out as a basketball executive in this league?

KATE MARTIN: Yeah, I've only had one brief interaction with her so far, but everything else I've seen on social media, she conducts herself in a very high-class manner. She seems amazing. That is the type of person that I would want to run a team that I'm playing for.

Also, I have to commend her and the rest of the front office for such a great head coaching hire in Coach Nat. Obviously if they're making really good decisions that way and with the roster, then obviously those are some people that I really want to play for and work hard for.

Q. When did you find out today you were going to Golden State? Was it on the show? Did they call you before? How did you find out that you were going there?

KATE MARTIN: Actually I found out yesterday but wasn't even allowed to tell my family or anything. Had to keep it under wraps there.

But I was informed beforehand so I knew that I had all these media obligations. But obviously that doesn't really mean a whole lot. But it was really nice to know before watching it on TV and then just being like, oh, let me just join these Zoom calls and just think of everything off the



top of my head, so I actually got to do some research and talk through some talking points before just chatting to you guys with not knowing anything.

Q. What does it mean to be part of something brand new? This is the first franchise in Golden State. You're part of something that's brand new. How does that make you feel?

KATE MARTIN: Yeah, being a part of history is something really cool and something I'm going to be able to talk about for the rest of my life and tell my kids one day, that I was a part of an expansion draft and the first WNBA team in San Francisco. That is something super cool, and I feel really honored that they chose me and I get to be a part of this franchise.

Q. What kind of challenge is it to be one of the faces of this new franchise? What kind of challenge is it for you to raise the level of your game and be one of the leaders on and off the floor?

KATE MARTIN: I guess I don't really think of it in that way. I just think about perfecting my craft and working really hard and giving it all I've got every second. Every second I'm working out now training and then every second I'll be with San Francisco, with the Valkyries, I'll be working as hard as I possibly can. That's all I really focus on is everything I can control. I don't really care who thinks that I'm going to be a role player or maybe my role will grow with them. That doesn't matter to me. The only thing that matters to me is getting out there and building relationships with my team, my teammates, and always giving my all.

Q. I wanted to know as someone from Illinois having spent so much time in Iowa and then obviously last season in Las Vegas, have you been to San Francisco before, and what are your expectations and what excites you the most about coming out to the west coast full time?

KATE MARTIN: I've never been to San Francisco before. Actually the first time I went to California ever was this year when we played in LA.

I am not super familiar with the Bay Area, but I know that the fandom there is amazing with the 49ers. George Kittle, he's an Iowa alum, and I know his wife and him are big supporters of the Valkyries, which is pretty cool, and then also the Warriors out there, the fan base is amazing. I know that sport is going to carry over with the Valkyries, and we've already sold over 20,000 season tickets, so that's really cool and super awesome to see that support, so that's probably what I'm most excited about to get out there.

Q. Unreal the amazing run you had at Iowa and then obviously being with the Aces and then obviously to this point where you are. How have you been able to embrace where you are at this point, especially in your young career?

KATE MARTIN: Yeah, it is a little bit surreal whenever I think about it in a bigger lens. But when I just focus on being where my feet are and focusing on the moment, then I can enjoy every little moment. I don't try to think about the future too much. I don't want to look too far ahead. I'm obviously focused on Unrivaled right now, too, and just focused on getting better at basketball and working on my weaknesses right now, then Unrivaled, and my season with the Valkyries.

Yeah, it has been a whirlwind. It is a little bit surreal at times, but I just try to always embrace the moment and enjoy the little things and never take anything for granted.

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