

WNBA Media Conference

Sunday, October 10, 2021

New York, New York, USA



Lisa Leslie

Swin Cash

Cynthia Cooper

Press Conference

Q. Cynthia, Candace when she arrived in Chicago in different interviews has talked about you being an inspiration to her career. She wanted to play like you. I wonder if you can take a look at her [career] now and what she's meant to the game.

CYNTHIA COOPER: Candace is just an amazing talent because of her versatility, because of her longevity, and when you look at her game, it's complete. She can knock down the outside shot to stretch the defense. She plays with her back to the basket. She's tough. At the same time, she's smooth.

Then when she's really added to her game is the ability to make players around her better. When you see her passing ability, whether it be from the fast break or within their half-court offense, she is just an incredible talent.

But the thing that impresses me the most is her motor. She just comes back every single year, and she just brings her "A" game every single year. For that, I definitely hats off and I applaud her.

Q. Lisa, the conversation right now is really about Candace and her greatness and if she's able to bring a title to Chicago in her first year playing there, what it would mean as just something to check off on her career? Having played with her in the beginning, her debut in the league, in your opinion, what would that mean if she's able to bring a championship to Chicago?

LISA LESLIE: I think it's historic really. To most statistically, if you look at it, it's very difficult to join a new team and win a championship in that year. It almost never happens on NBA or WNBA side. So it would be amazing for her to be able to do that.

But I think it also speaks to her leadership, her understanding of what it takes to win. Candace probably

has not played the best in her career this year, but she's been the best leader I think that she's ever been. Her ability to communicate and to lead and lead by example and to be able to be open and to teach her teammates, her young teammates with Kahleah Copper, who's had an outstanding season, I think Candace has been in a role that's been awesome for her.

We laugh about it because I think I was in that role probably when she and I started playing. As a leader, not being necessarily the best player that you've ever been, but that leadership and that vet experience that she has, sometimes we talk about it from the media and just talk about how old a player is, but you don't recognize experience, you can't buy that.

What she knows and her ability to win at every level and have championships, that's what I think is most impressive. She's come in in a very unselfish way, lent out so much information, and she made everybody around her better. That's the sign of a great player.

Q. Swin, this league has made great strides, not just an on-court product, but also from a marketing standpoint. Just looking at the league as a whole, is there anything that you would like to see? Like what do you think the next step is for the league in making the next leap?

SWIN CASH: I think we were talking about this earlier amongst ourselves. I think there's a couple of things we'd like to see happen the next few years. I think the league is in a great place right now as far as visibility. A big shoutout to people who have covered the league even from the beginning and even the new social media people who have come on board and really started elevating our league.

If you look, whether it's Twitter or Instagram or YouTube or all the different outlets, we're starting to get more visible. So thank you to the people that are covering.

The second part is the sponsors that are out there, the commitment to this league and understanding the value of the women. I think those dollars need to start coming in more frequently. Tickets, people buying tickets, wanting to come to the game, wanting to stream the game, wanting to support I think is something that needs to be there.



And I think the final thing for me is to bring back a lot of the legends that this league was built on. I think my challenge to all of the teams that are out there is to get more of the legends of our league that have been around to start pouring into the younger players. That's how we grow the game. That's how we share the knowledge, the institutional knowledge, about what the WNBA, women's basketball is truly about.

So I would like to see those things happen personally.

Q. This being the 25th season, we're doing a lot of rankings. I know this is going to be asking all of you guys to pick your favorite child, but each of you, what do you think was the best of the championship teams you played on? Obviously, Coop, you played on four, back to back to back to back. What one do you think was the best of those. Lisa, same for you.

Swin, I know you had two organizations. Maybe if you pick best of Detroit and whatever you think is the best one. I'd really like to see what you guys think about that.

CYNTHIA COOPER: I would say it's really difficult to choose just one because each one had their own significance, but if I just had to choose one, I would choose our second championship. We had the highest winning percentage of any professional team, 27-3, and it was also the year that the ABL players, there was an influx of ABL players, and no one believed the Houston Comets could repeat as champions.

So I thought that was a big move for us, it was a big moment for us, and it was very special.

LISA LESLIE: That's tough. I guess, when you look at championships, I think the first one is always the hardest one to get because it's your first time getting it, and for us, obviously, being in the same conference with the Comets and losing to them in every Western Conference Final, we got sent home. It was a great learning curve for our team, being one of the younger teams, and just facing them in such greatness.

I just remember feeling like we just need a few more pieces, just a little bit more experience, if you will, to be able to get over that hump, and it was a tough hump. We never got over it, obviously, as long as Coop was there. Thank God she retired.

Winning that first championship was probably my favorite. It was our hardest to get. Yeah, so I probably would say the first one was probably the sweetest.

SWIN CASH: It's tough. I think I agree with Lisa on the

first one, but I do want to speak to something to Seattle, if that's okay. The first one for me was the toughest because the year before we literally were the worst team in the WNBA, and to make the changes we made in the off-season, to come back, to get that chemistry, to be just young and fearless and not knowing what it was going to take to win was pretty special.

I would watch their championships and think about one day jumping up on top of that scorer's table and holding up the sign, and to actually be able to do that in front of 21,000 in Detroit, I just think that our team embodied, so that was probably really, really special.

Then that Seattle team, that was just a team, like a run. A lot of people on the team are still my close friends. What we were able to do there, it was just something that -- I mean, defensively, how we were, how we played, Lauren [Jackson] going from blonde to red hair, like making moments. Sue, Tanisha Wright. People don't talk about it a lot of time. We had Svetlana Abrosimova coming off the bench. That was a special team. How we dominated at home, I think we lost a game at home, that was pretty special.

Q. I wanted to come to you, Swin, quickly. There's a campaign, the WNBA is So Important that, as I understand the story and the origin comes from a conversation that Ari Chambers had with you. I just wonder if you could tell us a little bit about what you remember of those conversations, and for Lisa and Coop, if you could weigh in on what you think of that slogan, the WNBA is Important to everyone. Thank you.

SWIN CASH: Ari is amazing. I remember her being so young and coming in and wanting to cover the W. You have this beautiful, young, Black woman that is excited about the game. She came to a [social responsibility] event, and I was just talking and trying to empower the kids and really just pouring into her. Every time I would see her, just kind of love up on her and thank her for being young.

At the time, I believe she was just blogging and talking about the W, not necessarily having a job. To see what she's done now and partnering with Twitter and having this hashtag, WNBA is so important, that's why we do the things we do. That's why we pour out and do the [social responsibility] events because you never know who you're going to touch. That's how it got started. I'm such a huge fan of hers, and I'm thankful and blessed she's still covering the W.

LISA LESLIE: Yeah, I had a chance to meet Ari. She's,



one, a WNBA fan but I think a person who just shows the type of passion. The reason why we play, the reason why we stop and sign autographs, the reason why we're aware of what our platform is is for little girls who look like us also.

Ari is that little girl now, even though she's not so little anymore.

So a beautiful, Black, young woman who covers us with so much excitement and passion, and she makes it fun.

She's really tapped into a market that, as Coop and I didn't have obviously with social media when we played, and she's bringing a new light to the WNBA.

So we are thankful for so many of you young, enthusiastic bloggers and people who have participated on social media, and those of you who have Instagram accounts that are just about women's basketball and young girls playing, where you've been able to connect the community, that we've always wanted and wished that people could see because we really have done so many great things and we really appreciate you guys supporting us out there. So thank you.

CYNTHIA COOPER: I'll just quickly say, Ari, when you talk about the different events that you guys met her at, I just believe that, when you have -- you give kids fertile ground, that leads to great opportunities, and Ari is an example of that.

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