

WNBA Draft

Monday, April 15, 2024

Indiana Fever

Caitlin Clark



Q. Now that you're officially the No. 1 pick, what about your game do you feel like is going to translate best over to the W and specifically in Indiana?

CAITLIN CLARK: Yeah, I think the biggest thing is definitely my passing. I think that's at times what gets overlooked in my game. I think the scoring and the long shots is what everybody falls in love with. Then obviously going to an organization that has, in my eyes, one of the best post players in the entire world. My point guard eyes just light up at that. And obviously, Aliyah has been one of my teammates before. I'm excited. I can't wait.

Q. Who's your biggest rival going into the season?

CAITLIN CLARK: Honestly, I don't really feel like I have a rival. I think the biggest thing is the WNBA is so competitive right now. Every single time you step on the floor, it's going to be a rivalry. I think so many teams are loaded with so much talent. This is the most competitive league in the entire world. Less than 144 spots.

So you'd better bring it every single night, and I think that's exactly what I'm going to do. But I think that's exactly how I lived my college career, too, is every single game, no matter what the opponent was I prepped the exact same way, I prepared the same way, I brought the same fire, I brought the same energy. I think that's the biggest thing going into my WNBA career.

Q. I saw you share a moment with Lisa (Bluder) after getting the pick. Can you take us through what that conversation was, what you guys were talking about, and what it meant to share that with her after you guys are essentially the two who believed you could make it to back-to-back Final Fours?

CAITLIN CLARK: I think the biggest thing is I vividly remember Coach Bluder during my home visit in my recruiting. It was at the end of my junior year, I believe, or maybe the beginning of my junior year. Sometime during my junior year. I think the biggest thing is we talked about this moment, we dreamed of this moment, but she also believed I would be here and she coached me really hard to get to this moment.

There was a lot of ups and downs. Something I really appreciated about Coach Bluder is no matter what awards or success or wins we ever had or I had, it's like she never stopped coaching me, she never stopped holding me accountable. She always thought there was ways for me to get better. She still thinks that, and I still think that. That's one of the things I just love about her. First of all, she believed I would be here from the day I committed to her, even before that when I was in eighth grade, but also she pushed me really hard to make me as good as I am.

Q. Which player are you looking forward to playing with or against this season?

CAITLIN CLARK: Definitely Aliyah Boston. Come on now. I think also Erica Wheeler. A vet, somebody that has been in the league a long time, somebody that is in the organization, has been in the league, understands what it's about, somebody that I can lean on. I'm 22 years old, and I don't have all the answers in the world. This is something new to me. This is a new challenge. That's something I'm excited for. But having those type of people around me to lean on and ask questions, or when things get hard, to be there for me. I think those two, for sure.

Q. You've had a whirlwind and a long season. Are you glad that this part of it is over and that you can kind of focus on being a WNBA rookie? And also, too, you mentioned that you know Aliyah, what has your relationship been like and what are you most looking forward about playing with her?

CAITLIN CLARK: I think obviously the course of the last few weeks has been pretty insane in my life, the last two months playing basketball as long as I possibly could in my college career, and then went home for a couple days. I got off the plane when we landed in Iowa City, drove directly home, had my mom cook me a meal, and then I drove back to Iowa City the next day. We had our celebration, and then I flew to L.A., flew to New York and now I'm here sitting at this stage.

I think the biggest thing is I'm just very lucky to be in this moment, and all these opportunities and these things,



they're once in a lifetime. When things might get tiring or you have to do stuff, I think the biggest thing is look at it just as an opportunity. This isn't something everybody gets to do. It's once in a lifetime, and just trying to soak in every single experience because I know how quick of a turnaround it is, and I have a lot of people helping me.

Then obviously Aliyah Boston, there's so much you can say about her. Rookie of the Year. In my eyes, one of the best players in the league. Like I said, as a point guard, my biggest job is I'm just feeding Aliyah the ball every single day. That's what I'm going to do. I'm going to be in there and be like, go make a layup. She's going to make my life easy.

She's incredible. But the thing I love about her is she's a great person. She loves the game, she knows the game, she supports the game and she has a smile that affects a lot of people and brings a lot of joy to people when they watch her. I can't wait to be her teammate again.

Q. Just curious about all the sponsorships you've had and all the NIL deals. How do you plan to maximize this business opportunity now that you are a professional basketball player in the WNBA? How do you plan to carry that on? Also, what has been the biggest piece of business advice that somebody has given you going into this next phase in your basketball career?

CAITLIN CLARK: Honestly, if I'm being completely honest, I feel like it doesn't change a ton from how I lived my life over the course of the last year. Sponsorships stay the same. The people around me, agents and whatnot, have been able to help me and guide me through the course of the last year. I don't know if I would be in this moment if it wasn't for a lot of them. My mom has done a lot, my dad has done a lot.

I think that's just the biggest thing. The advice I would say is just lean on the people around you. I don't have to do every single thing. I think at the same time, in college I always said my main focus is on basketball. That's why I've had every other opportunity in my life is because of the way I carry myself, the way I play the game. Going into my professional career, I plan to do the exact same thing. My focus is solely on basketball, being the best I can.

I don't have to do school anymore. That's pretty exciting. I do have to get my degree. I graduate on May 14th. Other than that, my 110 percent focus is on basketball, and when I do that really well and carry myself really well, everything just kind of takes care of itself.

Q. How has the filming been for the ESPN

documentary with Omaha? And do you think that will help people to watch the WNBA more?

CAITLIN CLARK: Absolutely. I'm actually an executive producer on the show, which has been kind of fun for myself. When Peyton Manning reached out, obviously it's his production company, I was a little skeptical at first, but I was like, I don't know if I really want to let people into my life like that. I've never really done it.

But the way this year has unfolded, the way obviously Kamilla and Kiki, the seasons that they had, you can't script it any better. It's been absolutely incredible for women's basketball. If you're a women's basketball fan or you're not a women's basketball fan, I encourage you to watch the show when it comes out. I've seen bits and pieces. It's absolutely amazing. It really allows you to understand the student-athlete for way more than just a basketball player, and I think that's really important. I think that's going to allow fans of the W, fans of college to really understand what they go through, but love them even more for who they are and what they do and what they're about.

I'm excited for everybody to see it, and it's been a special project.

Q. The Fever haven't been to the postseason since Tamika Catchings was on the team. You've had some time to think about what your role could be in Indiana. How important or how excited are you about the prospect of hopefully getting the Fever back into the Playoffs with this young core that you're building around?

CAITLIN CLARK: Absolutely, and that's definitely our goal is to get back to championship habits. I think it's so cool for me. I vividly remember my freshman year during the bubble, we played Kentucky in the round of 32 and Tamika was calling the game and I was like tweaking out. I couldn't believe she was calling one of my games. Somebody I idolized, somebody that I loved and somebody that is not only a great basketball player and everything that she did but she's a tremendous person.

I think that speaks to the organization as a whole, and everything that they do is so first class. I'm very lucky to be going there to an organization that really loves women's basketball. You see it today, I think they had 17,000 tickets claimed to just watch the draft. I think that shows the excitement in Indianapolis. It's a great basketball city. Obviously, what the Pacers have been able to do this year is special, in the Playoffs. I think I'm just excited.

Like you said, there's a lot of young talent on the team, and just getting back to the Playoffs and doing everything we



can to win a lot of basketball games is certainly the goal.

Q. Can you take us through the emotions of being the No. 1 all-time scorer in the NCAA to the emotions you felt when you heard your name called today?

CAITLIN CLARK: Yeah, honestly, I feel like this was definitely a little bit more emotional for me. I think that's because when you're in the heat of competition, you don't have time to really feel your emotions. You're so competitive and you're so fiery, you're not really worried about all that. I think that was the biggest thing through my career is, first of all, I was able to have a lot of closure in the way my career ended and everything I was able to do. Obviously, I played the maximum number of games I could play my senior year. Obviously, we didn't win, but you feel like you did everything you can to be in that moment and compete as hard as you can.

But when you're kind of just sitting at a table waiting for your name to be called, I think that really allows the emotions to feed you and you're with your family. Obviously, playing a basketball game, I'm not out there with my family. So sharing that moment with them and enjoying it, and people that have really had my back and believed in me more than anyone, is super special.

Q. You're going to a basketball-crazy state in Indiana. Indiana is basketball. Basketball is Indiana. Just your thoughts of being part of that.

CAITLIN CLARK: Well, I know the Indiana Hoosiers didn't love me too much during my career, but hopefully we can turn a lot of them into Fever fans, if they're not already.

I think going to a state that supports not only basketball but women's basketball, going and playing in front of -- at Indiana, the place is sold out. Doing the same for the Fever is certainly our goal, and having a lot of fans there every single night.

For myself, I can't imagine a more perfect fit, a better place for me to start my professional career, an organization that really just believes in women's basketball and wants to do everything the right way. So I couldn't be more excited to get there.

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