

WNBA Draft

Monday, April 15, 2024

Las Vegas Aces

Elizabeth Kitley



Q. Can you take me through how you are processing these emotions? Obviously to realize this dream but know that it's deferred and trying to figure out how to navigate that emotional space?

ELIZABETH KITLEY: Yeah, I think my emotions have been so up and down over the last six weeks. I had different expectations in February than I did at the end of March. I think I've been dealt with what I've been dealt with, and the only way to really move on is to have a positive outlook.

Honestly, I'm so excited for the fit. I'm really excited for Vegas. I think that's really promising. To be able to learn from the people at Vegas for the next year, what more could you ask for? If I'm not able to play on the court, I know that I'll be able to benefit mentally and emotionally just by observing what they have there.

I'm really excited, and that's my No. 1 emotion right now.

Q. In a moment like this, there's a lot of big transition, especially as you're recovering from the injury. How has your support system kept you uplifted and kept your head high throughout this entire process?

ELIZABETH KITLEY: Well, they're always there for me, first of all, no matter if I go out and have 25 in a game or if I can't play. I know they're going to be at the game. They're going to be the first ones hugging me afterward. That support has meant the world to me over the last 15 years that I've been playing basketball or sports at all.

For them to be able to be here with me on draft night, my family, my sister, my parents, it means everything to me. It's not just a testament to what I've been able to do but how they've been able to help me get here.

Q. I'm curious if you can take us through what you remember about the WNBA growing up and how you think its perception in the popular culture has changed since you were young.

ELIZABETH KITLEY: Yeah, I didn't start playing basketball super seriously until probably middle of high school, so I

wasn't exposed to it super early. But I also think the media didn't push it as much. Even though I played basketball in high school, it wasn't necessarily something that was super popular in the media.

But I'm super excited for it to be taking that trajectory. The class that I'm in right now has done an incredible job to bringing attention to women's sports, women's basketball, and now taking it into this league I think is super exciting.

I think we're already seeing the impact of that on little girls. I think they're way more aware of it than I was at that age, and that's super exciting. I think with expansion coming up and all that stuff, it's headed toward a really good place. I'm really excited to be a part of it.

Q. How excited are you to be selected by the Aces, and although you're not going to be able to play this year, how does it feel to know that you're going to be learning under A'ja Wilson, Coach Becky Hammon and those amazing players over there?

ELIZABETH KITLEY: Yeah, honestly I'm thrilled. I can't think of a better situation to be in with the situation that my leg is in, because it's just an incredible fit. I think their resources are amazing, their facilities are awesome. To be able to look up to the players there, to be able to watch A'ja Wilson, even though I can't play, I know I'll be able to learn so much and get better just by watching and being around the culture that's there.

Q. It's been said that Virginia Tech is set to retire your jersey. What does it mean knowing that you had the amount of impact at Virginia Tech?

ELIZABETH KITLEY: That means everything. Those five years at Virginia Tech were so, so special. I wouldn't change a thing about it. The people I had around there, the teammates, the coaches, they were just incredible. They made me who I was. For me to bring that attention to Virginia Tech, to take it to a Final Four, win ACC championships, was just so fun. For them to recognize me I think is really, really cool, but it's also just making me really proud of the program that we were able to create there.



Q. You spoke about the facilities and the players and of course the upper management. Did you have any specific conversations with them as far as what they might expect from you during your recovery and what your expectations and back and forth? What was the conversation like with the Aces?

ELIZABETH KITLEY: Yeah, I was just able to talk to Coach Becky Hammon a little bit. Obviously there's a little bit more to be figured out, but she spoke about the medical staff there and just working on getting me out there, so we can see where I am and start taking those steps to get me back on the court again because obviously that's the ultimate goal.

But I'm super excited. I think seriously it's a great fit for all of those things. I know that they'll support me, and we'll all have the same goal of getting me healthy and helping to contribute. We'll take it day by day but with that in mind for next year.

Q. Can you speak a little bit to what you learned from coach Kenny Brooks and particularly what about his direction has prepared you for this pro game now?

ELIZABETH KITLEY: Yeah. I mean, he's taught me everything I know. I didn't come into college expected to be anything really. I really didn't take basketball super, super seriously. I thought I wanted to play softball when I was little in college. He completely changed my perspective on that. He made me fall in love with the game to the point where you couldn't get the two of us out of the gym together. We just love spending time with each other in there.

I definitely wouldn't be here without him. He completely transformed my game into something that I think is pretty unique and special, and I'm so appreciative for him because of those things. I love him like he's family.

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