

WNBA Draft

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Indiana Fever

Celeste Taylor



Q. Obviously defense is such a critical part of the game that you've played, both in college and obviously as a carrying tool here. Take me through your defensive evolution and where that came from.

CELESTE TAYLOR: Yeah, I started off just being an athletic girl, wanting to play hard, run around. Had a high motor. That kind of took me pretty far. I realized that that was something that was going to get me on the court, doing those little things, taking charges.

Then once I got to high school, my coach told me if you can guard multiple positions, you know you're going to play. So I think I carried that with me all the time. As I got into college, I started to watch film. I started to watch my opponents and learn different defensive schemes and all that stuff.

It's been a journey, but it's been a great journey.

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

CELESTE TAYLOR: Yeah, I actually am from New York, so I used to go to Liberty games growing up. I was a ball girl a couple times. I've been around the W for a little bit.

So being able to purchase tickets to sit front row, seeing that, they were giving out free tickets at one point for girls to come in and just have a crowd. To now playing against Iowa and selling out our crowd at home, just to see that evolution and that aspect, and now I haven't been to that many, but I think I went to one of the playoff games with the Liberty last year.

So just to see that in itself, being a young girl, thinking that the stadium was so huge to coming in there going, you've played in stadiums like this but now it's filled up, it's filled to the top, I think it's great to show people that once you invest in women that they can give back in a lot of ways.

Q. When you were at Lutheran, was there any way that you could have envisioned that you would be here on

this night, and what does it mean to you to be here and what does it mean to you to be Clark's teammate?

CELESTE TAYLOR: Yeah, I mean, I didn't. I did not envision this, not because I didn't think I was capable but because I didn't know. I think honestly until I was in maybe about ninth grade, my freshman year of high school, I had to learn the path that it took to get to the W. I was around it, but I didn't know the path that it took to get there.

Once I learned that these colleges come and you get a free education and you get to experience so many different things -- I've had the opportunity to play on USA teams. So just for me, just understanding everything that comes with it. I didn't expect to be here, but I'm here, and I am so excited that Indiana has taken the opportunity on me.

I played with Caitlin when I was at USA for a couple years. So we played together there. But from going against her this year to being able to play with her and also Aliyah Boston, as well, it brings me some comfort, honestly.

Very excited and so proud of what they've done and how they've grown, as well.

Q. I know you said multiple times it was a tough decision to decide to come to Ohio State instead of going to the draft, but now that you're here and you took that season and you're in this spot, do you feel like it's worth it? And the second part, what's it like to play with Kelsey Mitchell, who also played at Ohio State?

CELESTE TAYLOR: Yeah, it was definitely a tough decision for me last year, but I told people that I would never trade the decision I made to go to Ohio State. I think it has brought me so much peace in who I have become as a player and the impact that I can make in any program that I choose or organization that I have the opportunity to be a part of.

So just having that mindset and going into Ohio State and coming in and realizing that I can make a little impact, I'm not here to change anything, but I'm just here to sprinkle a little of me in there and try to impact in any way that I can is



really helpful.

Then yeah, playing with Caitlin now is honestly really cool. We've had the opportunity, like I said, to have that sold-out crowd at our place and then going to her place and having that last regular-season home game for them. Just having the opportunity to play with her again, it's going to be amazing. She's done so much for the women's game, and I know she has so much more to give to everyone. Just a lot of excitement.

Q. How do you hope that your extensive experience with USA Basketball has perhaps made you even more pro ready?

CELESTE TAYLOR: Yeah, obviously adaptability is definitely a big thing, being able to go to a different country, adapt to the environment, adapt to the culture. Overseas is definitely a different way to play ball. They play ball pretty differently there. Just having that prior experience. I know there are a lot of people in the W that are from overseas.

So just having that prior experience, even playing with the caliber of players that I played with, I think all in all, everything together has helped me become the player I am today. I'm very hopeful and very confident that it will help me in the W.

Q. Talking about some of the players you played against when you were at an overseas tournaments were already professional players, so you've had a bit of a taste of pro basketball since the start of college. Do you feel that makes you more ready for the physicality or different styles of play or for even really a pro level of play?

CELESTE TAYLOR: Yeah, I think pro level of play would probably be the best one. It's just pretty different. They're used to playing against grown women. They're used to that physicality. I think all together it has helped me in many facets of the game of basketball.

Q. Last week you talked about how excited you were to go to the league and some players you mentioned you wanted to play against, Kelsey Plum, Kahleah Copper, Diana Taurasi. How excited are you to have the ability to play against them now?

CELESTE TAYLOR: It's really focused on trying to make the team. Obviously that's the first step going into it, and having confidence in myself and trying to make that. If I do, and when I do get the opportunity to play against them, I think it's just going to be such a surreal feeling. I'm there to compete. I'm there to try to make a roster spot. I'm trying to stay in the league.

I think a lot of it is just excitement, surreal, because I've seen them play. I was younger watching them play. But definitely very competitive and just excitement.

Q. We've seen you play so much this season, and we've covered you all season. What do you want other fans, and especially the Fever fans, to know? What do you want them to know about your playing style, three-level scoring, et cetera?

CELESTE TAYLOR: Yeah, obviously very, very big defensive-minded kid, but at the same time, I'm willing to do whatever it is that a team needs me to do. I'm willing to come in there and impact. I'm really big on community. So just getting my hand in the community and continuing to be who I am and continuing to make an impact in every stop that I've had.

Q. Did you get to know Kelsey Mitchell at all during your year at Ohio State, and what's it like to be joining a team where you're going to be playing with another Buckeye?

CELESTE TAYLOR: Yeah, I didn't have the opportunity to really, really get to know her. When I was recruited by Ohio State coming out of high school, she was there. So I got to see her on my visits a couple times. That was probably the biggest interaction. But very hands on, very big about coming to be a Buckeye.

I think it's kind of interesting that that was the school that I was looking at coming out of high school. I ended up finishing my college career there, and now I get to play with a Buckeye. I think that's also going to give me some comfortability. She's a great player and so much I can learn from her. I'm just ready to go in there to work and continue to learn.

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