

Southeastern Conference Women's Basketball TipOff Media Days

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Birmingham, Alabama, USA

Florida Gators

Coach Kelly Rae Finley

Women's Media Day Press Conference



stretch the floor, play inside and outside.

She's a player we're most definitely really excited about.

Q. What is the landscape of the NIL in women's basketball?

KELLY RAE FINLEY: Ever changing (smiling). I think it's ever changing. It's extremely competitive. For us here at the University of Florida, we're as competitive as anybody in the SEC.

But I think though it's not new, it is ever changing.

Q. What has been the key to bringing in these McDonald's All-Americans, and how has Liv blended in with the group so far?

KELLY RAE FINLEY: Great question.

I think building deep, meaningful relationships. Some old-school recruiting, to be honest with you. I think here at the University of Florida, we have a really unique opportunity and experience in terms of building and the growth that we've had, how we're choosing to do that, combined with the educational opportunity that we have at Florida, our location, and all of those things as a total package.

But I would say also, just centered with the relationships. It's tremendous for us and it's a key part of how we do what we do.

Liv McGill is an incoming freshman from Minnesota. She has excelled for us. She's an old-school point guard, a floor general. She's got a steadiness to her game, a good pace. But I would say where she stands out the most right now is just in her demeanor on the court and her IQ and understanding the feel for the game as a whole.

Q. You return Rhyn Howard to your staff this year. Can you speak to what you saw in her development from a coaching standpoint this past year and what have you seen so far?

THE MODERATOR: Kelly Ray Finley is our first coach this morning.

KELLY RAE FINLEY: Good morning, everybody. Thank you. I'm glad to be kicking off SEC Media Day for 2024. Welcome everybody.

We are prepared for a great season ahead. Looking forward to all the college basketball season has to bring. At the University of Florida, we're really excited about the versatility of our team, the defensive improvements that we feel like we've made, as well as the physicality and our rebounding.

We return a strong group of veterans. We feel like we're just at the beginning with the addition to some really talented and exceptional incoming first-year student-athletes as well.

Looking forward to all of you covering us this season and any questions you might have.

THE MODERATOR: We'll go to questions.

Q. I know she hasn't played a game for you yet, but what you've seen in Kylee Kitts in practice, through the summer since you got her on campus?

KELLY RAE FINLEY: I was hoping somebody would ask about her (smiling).

She's a tremendous student-athlete. Obviously you're very familiar with her sister. But Kylee is very versatile. She was 17 when she came to us. So she was able to graduate a season early, a school year early, excuse me, I should say.

But she's just growing in leaps and bounds. She's getting stronger, more physical, the speed of the game. She can



KELLY RAE FINLEY: She's a tremendous young coach. She's going to be elite in our game for a very long time, if that's what she chooses to do.

Having somebody like her around our student-athletes that is currently living their dreams is just such a valuable asset to our coaching staff.

In terms of her development, she's always been a little on the quieter side. She's really growing into her voice, her leadership, finding solutions. She's obviously a brilliant basketball player.

Her ability to both jump in and do scouts and things of that nature, do a little bit of recruiting here and there, it's been very, very fun to watch her development as a coach.

Q. The SEC in general, the women's game, the strength of the league, where you see yourselves this year, just talk about that.

KELLY RAE FINLEY: Yeah, with the addition of Texas and Oklahoma, we feel like we have the strongest league in the country, no doubt.

Top to bottom, every night is going to be a competitive, hard-nosed, hard-fought game. I think for us, our versatility is key for us this season. We can play to a lot of different advantages. Like I said, defensively I think we've improved quite a bit.

Every night, the margin for error is so small in our league. It's going to come down to one or two possessions every night. The mentality, grit, toughness, consistency and resolve is going to be key for us.

Q. Give us a scouting report on the two young ladies you brought with you today.

KELLY RAE FINLEY: Laila Reynolds is a rising sophomore for us. Excelled in her freshman year. She was All-SEC Freshman Team last season. She's just scratching the surface of her potential. She has a strong voice, is comfortable in the system, just simply going from a freshman to a sophomore.

But we look for our role to significantly expand both offensively and defensively. She would tell you she's a play-maker. We want her to be a scorer and play-maker. She's been working really hard on identifying and looking for her own opportunities where she can create an advantage.

We'll be able to move her around quite a bit. Jeriah Warren, similarly, they can play off of each other. You can

see them at the primary ball handling position, anywhere from the 2-3, 3-4.

Jeriah has also worked tremendously hard in the off-season. She's a four-year player for us, which is something that is rare and unique these days.

But her game has expanded. Just being comfortable on the floor, understanding our language, how we do what we do. The two of them really embody everything that it is to be a Gator for us. They're trustworthy, honest, respectful. They excel on and off the court in everything that they do. They try to be their very best. That's why they're with us here today.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very much, Coach.

KELLY RAE FINLEY: Thank you. Have a great day.

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