

# Southeastern Conference Women's Basketball TipOff Media Days

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Birmingham, Alabama, USA

**Auburn Tigers**

**Coach Larry Vickers**

Women's Media Day Press Conference



she feels. You need people like that when talking to teammates. She doesn't mind bringing them in the huddles.

As far as our vocal leaders, she's definitely been one of our vocal leaders.

Khady Leye, who is with me today, Ja'Mia Harris, those are two of our more leaders by example. They're going to work out every single day, they want to get better. They've been kind of doing it from that aspect.

Kait has been more of our vocal leader. Khady and Ja'Mia, they've been more of our leaders by example, this is what it looks like, we want to win in this league, this is the extra work, the extra training session, extra recovery stuff that you have to do to be able to win.

**Q. Your experience that you had at Norfolk State, how do you think that's helped you to take the challenge on at Auburn?**

LARRY VICKERS: Some of my challenges at Norfolk State were more financial. When you have more financial issues, you have to be creative, right? You have to think out of the box.

I think now being at Auburn with a lot more resources, I can now add the resources to the creativity, to the innovation piece, and hopefully it can lead to success.

But we had a terrific fan base where we were before. The Auburn family has really bought into me. They want us to have that same tremendous success that we've had in the past with Final Fours.

**Q. What is your plan in terms of the culture for this team? Second most international players on this year's team. Was it an impact of yours or was that a big thing for you?**

LARRY VICKERS: I think for us, when you put a team together in a little bit over 30 days, you want some form of talent and then hard work.

THE MODERATOR: We welcome to the stage from Auburn University Larry Vickers.

LARRY VICKERS: How are y'all today?

THE MODERATOR: Ready to take questions?

LARRY VICKERS: You want an opening statement?

THE MODERATOR: Question.

LARRY VICKERS: Opening statement?

You always wonder in these opening statements what to talk about. I could talk about the housing market or my kids (smiling).

I'll just say one thing about Auburn women's basketball. It's been a good five, six months. Lost count of the days after a hundred. But it's been a good five, six months. We're continuing to grow, build relationships in the community, as well build relationships with some of the best recruits in the country.

We're excited about what we're going to do moving forward. We know it's going to be brick by brick, day by day, minute by minute, second by second. But we're excited for this opportunity.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, coach. If you have a question...

**Q. Now that you've had an opportunity to get some practices in, what players for your team are starting to emerge in a leadership capacity?**

LARRY VICKERS: Well, as far as leadership goes, Kaitlyn Duhon, she's extremely vocal. Kait is one of those players that talks a lot. She's going to let you know exactly how



We felt like with some of those international players that we brought on campus, they were workers. They were workers. They're ready for the grind and what that looks like.

To touch on your first question about the culture, our creed says something about work hard work. I'm not standing here without that. I want my players to understand the benefits of working hard consistently, daily, in the classroom, out the classroom, and what that can look like in regards to success.

**Q. Defense has been a hallmark of your teams. What is the defensive identity going to look like for this team?**

LARRY VICKERS: Well, we're going to be extremely versatile. Right now we're working on our zones. You heard zones with an S, that's plural. Obviously we got our mans, and we've got multiple mans.

In our league, I think I counted seven or eight teams in the top 25. You're not going to be able to play the same way. The coaching is too good, the players, too good. We want to get people thinking. We're not going to give you the same reads multiple times. Our game plan might be different the second game than the first game. Obviously that second game, if it's not Florida, it would be in a tournament.

We want to just show the versatility there with our defenses and our ability to be adaptable.

**Q. In this day and age of college basketball, you had a really daunting task to come in and rebuild that roster. Is it kind of like a relief now that you can just get to coaching basketball and that's behind you?**

LARRY VICKERS: Yes. It's interesting that you said that. A friend of mine received a call from one of the SEC women's basketball coaches just to give me some advice. They're like, Hey, this job has less to do about coaching than you think. That was something good to hear early on because I'm like basketball, X and O's. That's where my brain goes. Just hearing that put me on the right path.

We've tried to in this short amount of time build relationships. Where I was before, I wanted to know everybody from high major to D-III, from Charlotte to New York City, right? Now my geographical map has kind of shifted a little bit south.

Right now we're in the process of just building a ton of relationships. We know we're not going to be able to do it in this league with the amount of top 100, McDonald's

All-American kids, what some of these teams have. We're trying to build those relationships now and get people to see this is what we expect from him, this is his style of play, he's going to love 'em and push 'em just like we would.

**Q. You talked on the leadership, but could you talk about the two student-athletes you brought today, what they bring on the court.**

LARRY VICKERS: They're kind of completely different players. Both of them will be able to check a lot of boxes. There's going to be some games Ja'Mia Harris doesn't shoot the ball as well as she might like, but she's a guard that's tough enough to get seven to ten rebounds.

Khady, she's a player that some forwards in our league are going to hate to defend. She can play inside-out, stretch the floor. Not only just there, they want to really be good. They're hard on themselves. It's my job to kind of pat 'em on the back and say, We practice again tomorrow, play again in two days.

If you can get a locker room -- I tell everybody one thing about our locker room: They want to be good. They want to be successful. They want to make me look good. As we kind of go through this, just going through the roller coaster, going through the ups and downs, they're ready for it.

**Q. You talked about the recruiting map. You focused a lot on the state of Virginia when you were up at Norfolk. Are you going to be trying to conquer the state of Alabama or because you have the resources you'll branch out a little bit more?**

LARRY VICKERS: Of course. It's one of those things, you build it and they will come. You want to have players from Alabama immediately. You want to have fans from high school transfer over to your college program. Hey, we want to see X, Y and Z. We went to the pre-season game last night. I ran into Doug Bush, an important man in Alabama AAU basketball. Building those relationships.

Auburn is a tremendous place. When they say the loveliest village on the plains and the happiest student body in the country, I think those numbers are accurate. Our student body is so happy. We want to keep those Alabama kids at home to where they can be successful.

**Q. How important was it to have Syriah Daniels remain with the program and be someone that could be a part of your program in year one?**

LARRY VICKERS: Syriah Daniels has been a player, for



me, that you'll be like, That's an LV type of kid. She can play multiple positions. She understands the value and tradition at Auburn. Her father is Marquis Daniels, her mom is in the Hall of Fame. Her number's retired, right? Syriah embodies that. She understands what success looks like for Auburn women's basketball and Auburn in general.

You want to have -- when you bring other people in, you want to have people that, Hey, she loves it. She loves it, and you can feel the love. You're like, Why does she love it so much? We have somebody that can answer those questions.

**Q. You had a lot of success with bringing in some portal players such as Diamond Johnson. What about your philosophy allows you to take in players and get them to contribute in such large ways so quickly?**

LARRY VICKERS: Getting Diamond for us at my last institution was a great feat. She was like the number eight player in the transfer portal that year. They don't come to small schools in Virginia.

I think one thing about our style of play, it looks like a WNBA game. They'll be able to turn on our film and say, Look at this play, look at the Liberty run it. Look at this play, look at the Aces run it. I didn't plan it like that. It just happened to be that way.

A lot of these players have pro aspirations. I chose to come to the SEC because I know there's a bigger spotlight on it for my players, as well. They'll be able to say, Hey, this will transfer over.

THE MODERATOR: Coach Vickers, thank you for your time.

LARRY VICKERS: I appreciate it.

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