

# Indiana University Women's Basketball Media Conference

Wednesday, September 20, 2023

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

**Coach Teri Moren**

**Sydney Parrish**

**Sara Scalia**

Press Conference



TERI MOREN: Well, it's an incredible time of year right now. We are very, very excited. We're about a week and a half out from the official start, although we have had a little bit of an early start from our trip over to Greece this summer in August, which was amazing.

The only athlete that was not with us on that trip was Henna. She was at home in Finland representing her country playing basketball.

Got a really good look at our squad for this upcoming season. Got a lot of very interesting talented pieces. Got some big shoes to fill with the departure of Grace Berger, but very, very confident that we have added some really great pieces in Lenee and Jules and Sharnecce, and so we are just really excited about what's ahead of us.

Our schedule is incredibly difficult, but that's how we want it. I'm just happy to be up here with Syd and Sara today for the start of what's going to be I think an exciting season.

**Q. How long did it take you to get over the feeling of disappointment of losing to Miami in the home playoff game when you had such optimistic feelings going into the tournament?**

SYDNEY PARRISH: I don't think we're over it, and I think that's kind of going to put us on a good first step into the season because I don't think you can get over it after the great season we had during the regular season and the postseason.

I really, for me at least, I'm not over it. People still mention it a lot and it kind of hurts. I think that'll just be another thing that drives us through the season.

**Q. What are the biggest things that you were able to take away from that trip to Greece over the summer from a basketball standpoint?**

SARA SCALIA: I think, yeah, just helped bring our team together, not only on the court but off the court, too, just spending a lot of time together.

And it was just a good start to be able to play with the team that we're about to play with this year and just kind of get to know each other more and build that chemistry.

SYDNEY PARRISH: Just going off of Sara, I think it really helped our team chemistry more than anything. Obviously it's important to play together on the court, but getting really close with the freshmen and the transfers coming in, I think that's what's really going to separate us from what we started with last year compared to this year.

**Q. Sydney and Sara, women's basketball, I think it's eight consecutive 20-win seasons now, five consecutive tournaments, two Sweet 16s, an Elite 8. What's it been like to be a part of the group that took IU women's basketball to the national stage, and why do you think it has happened?**

SARA SCALIA: I mean, yeah, it's definitely something like really special to be a part of. What we do here is not like many other schools.

We put in the work to get to where we have been. It's not just lucky that we win that many games a year.

It's good to see the work that our team puts in pay off as we go into the season.

SYDNEY PARRISH: Going off of that, I just think that players like Grace Berger and Mackenzie Holmes, they set the foundation and me and Sara came in as transfers last year and I think we're lucky that our staff and those players built it for us. We just kind of joined the ride last year, so it's been fun for us to be a part of such a special group and a special program.

**Q. For either of you, following on from that, when you bring in transfers, when you bring in obviously accomplished high school recruits, basically what's the process of helping them understand where the**



**expectation level is when you talk about players that came before who set a foundation and now you're building on that? How do you pass that on?**

SYDNEY PARRISH: I think that our coaching staff does a really good job in the recruiting process, letting them know what our standards are in this program, and they come in knowing what work needs to be put in and what needs to be done on the court and off the court.

I really think it starts from our coaching staff and how they recruit and who they're recruiting. And I think like Sharnecce, Jules, and Lenee have done an amazing job coming in and already putting in so much hard work. They're special and they're a good group to have in this program.

**Q. Both of you, second seasons here. How comfortable are you going into this season as opposed to last season, especially after the way things ended last year?**

SYDNEY PARRISH: A lot more comfortable this season. We had seven new girls last year come on the team, so I think we're all just super nervous. We didn't really know what to expect. We had never played together. We had a lot of injuries last summer.

So this summer just -- like going to Greece helps a lot, playing with each other, those extra practices we got, and just getting to know each other more on a personal level. I think we're a lot more comfortable going into this season, and we're really excited.

**Q. As Sydney said, the focus is always on the end of the season. That's what lingers. But the vast majority of what this team did last year was positive. How do you build, take that and contextualize that and build on that while also feeding off the hunger a little bit of the end, too?**

SARA SCALIA: Yeah, I think just the biggest thing is to just not necessarily be satisfied with how we ended last year, but also realize how much we accomplished. We did a lot of good things last year. We can't just let one game dictate how well we did throughout the season.

I think just going into this year is just keep doing what we've been doing, taking it game by game, and obviously our end goal is to play our best basketball by the end of the year, so we're going to keep striving towards doing that.

**Q. Coming off the season and the career that Mackenzie has already had, how did you see her approach the off-season, and how much do you think**

**she's capable of this year?**

SYDNEY PARRISH: I mean, she is an All-American, so it's pretty fun to play with an All-American, and she's just one of the hardest workers I've ever played with and been around. She's always in the gym, whether that's extra conditioning, extra lifting, extra workouts, making sure her body is healthy, being in the training room.

She definitely is a very, very special player, and I'm just really excited to see how she plays this year with us. We couldn't be more grateful to have her on the court with us for another year, so thank you, Mackenzie, for coming back.

**Q. Sort of a similar question for you, just how progressively you've built this program over the last couple years. What, if anything, is different about the way you talk about culture, the way you preach it when there's no more climbing to do, you are close to the top of the mountain and it's about staying there and setting yourself there?**

TERI MOREN: Well, I think you have to continue to be able to articulate to recruits, prospects, how we got here and what we believe are the standards in our program and why we are to the place that we are.

Syd said it perfectly: You have to find the recruits that are about the things that we value, and that's the work piece. That's the character piece. That's the team piece.

As we all know, in athletics, it's one thing to build it. It's another thing to sustain it. Recruiting has changed for us in terms of the talent pool that we're now recruiting. We're up against the very best. We wouldn't have it any other way.

But we still are who we are. We're the team that has always prided itself in its work ethic. We're the team that will continue to play with a chip on its shoulder. We're the team that kind of feels like we still have so much to achieve.

That's why we are who we are, is because we walk into whether it's Cook Hall or Assembly Hall every day with this workmanlike attitude that we haven't achieved anything yet.

That's what I love about our team and their mindset. They're still -- as we always say, there's more work to be done.

**Q. This time last year you pointed to Chloe Moore-McNeil as a player who was primed to have a**

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**breakout season. Curious, at this point is there another player on the team that you think is in a similar position?**

TERI MOREN: Yeah, and I was right, right?

That's a great question. You know, I don't know. I feel like with the returners that we have, the experience that we have, the vets that we have -- here's what I do know. The three that we brought in, those new kids are going to have to help us, and they're going to have to grow up quicker than normal.

We usually say by the time that they return from Christmas break you're no longer freshmen. You've got to be wiser and you have to grow up faster.

I think we're going to need the three of them from the beginning right out of the gates to show up and give us really good minutes, and I think they're capable of that.

**Q. You being a part of that FIBA team that just took home gold, first of all, what was that experience like, and was there anything that you took away from a coaching standpoint watching the overseas games and overseas teams that you want to implement here?**

TERI MOREN: Well, being a part of USA Basketball is always a special invite. Anytime you have the opportunity to represent your country, that's a big deal.

I will say that Madrid, Spain, which was far different from Greece, but nonetheless, they were both still really, really great trips, the trip to Spain was more of a work trip, though.

Yes, in order to go over there and win a gold you're going to be up against some really great international teams. What I always love about that experience, being on -- having to prep and do scouting reports, you pick up a lot of subtle things that they do over there in terms of their spacing, how they play, and you hope that you can come back and put some of those into place with your own team.

But it was a summer of -- you always want to get better, just like as a team. As the coach here, I'm always looking for opportunities to get a little bit better. Being over there in Colorado for a week and then certainly in Spain for two weeks served the purpose of me becoming what I hope is a better basketball coach.

**Q. When you look back now that you've been a little farther removed now at the end of the season, those three close losses you guys had, what do you feel like went wrong for you guys in those late-game**

**situations?**

TERI MOREN: I don't know that I feel -- well, a couple different things happened. When we were at Iowa for the end of that, that was a little bit -- hindsight is always 20/20, and would you do something differently in terms of schematically. We might have done that.

It was unfortunate Chloe falls down, can't get to Caitlin quick enough, and she has to shoot one hell of a shot in order to beat us at their place.

Then you fast forward to -- I'm going to assume you're talking about the Big Ten Tournament where Mack gets dinged up in the first round against Michigan State and she's not the same Mackenzie against Ohio State.

Then we go into the NCAA Tournament with Mackenzie not practicing for 12 days before we play. Even though she doesn't play in the first round against Tennessee Tech, she plays, starts in the first half, a little bit rusty, had to get her feet, which we knew was going to be the case, but we didn't get off to a very good start there, either.

You've got to give credit where credit is due. Miami came out and punched us pretty good in that first half and we didn't respond. But we did play from behind. I thought we made it a game. I thought we had a chance there.

It could have easily gone into overtime, but it didn't.

I think to hear these guys talk about it, it's something that they remember. It's something that motivates them.

For me, I think as I've gotten older in this game, I think I'm more wise in that one game, those three games don't define the season that we had. It was incredible.

I don't want to take anything away from that. You win the first-ever Big Ten championship in 40 years, you get the No. 1 seed, never happened in this program. There's a lot of things that could have -- you might list that did go wrong, but that list of all the things that went right is far greater.

**Q. The growth in terms of interest in this program has been exponential over the last few years. I think this year you're going to more reserved seating. Do your players sense that when you're out around the community or state, and how much more can it grow?**

TERI MOREN: Yeah, it's interesting how often prior to us going to reserved seating, how often I do get stopped and asked -- well, first of all, how much they enjoy watching our program, but then there's always that follow-up question, what are you going to do with the seating problem, what

are you going to do with the parking problem.

As I always tell them, I have a bigger job, and that's to coach women's basketball, and I will take their concerns elsewhere.

We've done that, and we're excited that we've -- I wouldn't say created problems because I think Scott would tell you that it is not a problem at all to have to have reserved seating and parking for women's basketball.

But it did become a little bit of an issue because our fans, we try to get down here and warm up, and 90 minutes prior to tip-off there's a line of people that are trying to hustle down here to get great seats. That to me is a great problem to have.

Yeah, we're obviously thrilled and we're grateful that it's turned into what it's become. I think I can speak for our entire program, but especially those players that play, there's nothing like being in Simon Skjodt Assembly Hall playing in front of our fans.

**Q. Mackenzie has got a real chance to pass Tyra and become the program's all-time leading scorer. I know most of this answer could depend on team results this year, but what sort of legacy has she built here, and what sort of legacy do you think she can leave behind?**

TERI MOREN: Well, to be the first All-American, you can end there, right?

But you know, again, the best part of my job is watching our players come in as freshmen and then watching their transformation or the evolution of them as players and also as people.

So Mack's has been such a great story in terms of when she came in here and couldn't give anybody eye contact and she was very shy and timid, and I think it wasn't until halfway through Big Ten season her freshman year where she started becoming a little bit, not as confident as she is, but a little bit more confident that she could play at this level.

I don't know in her wildest dreams if she ever thought she could become the All-American that she's become here, but Syd hit it on the head: You only do that one way and that's to get in here and do your work every single day.

She and Coach Rhet have continued to -- every day, days off, there's no such thing for Mackenzie.

She should be really proud of herself. I know I'm extremely proud of her, not for the player that she's become, for the

person that she's become, and how she's gone about her work.

She's a pure example of there's no secret sauce to any of it. It's what your habits are every single day.

I think her legacy will be one that Grace Berger left us. How you build this is by coming in and wanting to do the work, wanting to be passionate about the work, wanting to be passionate about this place in helping us be successful, and whatever that looks like, whatever it takes, they'll do.

She has a chance to become the all-time leading scorer. Nobody is going to be cheering for her harder than I will be.

**Q. Sydney kind of alluded to it, but is there a sense of unfinished business when it comes to this season after the early exit to the NCAA Tournament?**

TERI MOREN: Yeah, I think she answered it for all of us, for all of those players especially. I think Lenee and Jules and Sharnecce certainly weren't a part of that, but there's no question with the chemistry and the closeness of this group that they've had conversations regarding that.

So that's okay, for them to -- it can't be all of their motivation, because like I said, I don't want it to take away from all the other great things that we accomplished a year ago, but certainly if they want to use it for fuel, I'm okay with that.

**Q. You've got the five banners behind you for men. Obviously IU men have been a leader for years. How you are setting the stage for IU women? What does that mean to you and this program to know that they reach out to you now, that Indiana is one of the leaders when it comes to women's basketball?**

TERI MOREN: Well, I'm extremely grateful. None of it's done without having a great staff. None of it can be done without having great players and then great support from whether it's Scott, Maddy, all of it. You know, Lowe, Kevin, our strength and conditioning coach, Ben, our athletic trainer. It takes a small village to do something like we've been able to do, and I'm so grateful for all those people.

You know, it's cool that I can represent us and I can talk about Indiana women's basketball.

When Coach Rhet and I arrived here nine years ago, it's hard to believe we're going into our 10th season, we always said we wanted to -- the tradition had always been on the men's side, and we wanted to build our own tradition.

When people spoke of Indiana basketball, it wasn't exclusive just to men's basketball. Anybody that knows me knows that I'm a huge Indiana men's basketball fan, but one of the goals here was for us to create this excitement in Bloomington, in Indianapolis, in the surrounding areas that people wanted to come and watch Indiana women's basketball.

So to sit here and be able to say, now that the state of Indiana has two teams that they can be really proud of, it means a lot.

**Q. I want to take that one step further. When Mike was talking about his expectations for his team, he was talking about adding a banner and Big Ten championships and all that. It struck me that nothing would be more meaningful than the first banner for women's basketball. Are you ready to embrace that expectation? Do you feel like the team is ready to embrace that expectation for this season?**

TERI MOREN: There's no question. I said it a year ago I think at Hoosier Hysteria that we wanted one of those back there, and I'll continue to say it. We've been so close.

Anytime that you have the opportunity to get to a Sweet 16, get to an Elite 8, the way we have and you realize it's just that one game and you're playing for a Final Four, you're playing for a National Championship, we've tasted it, if you will. We know what it takes to get there.

There's no question that we have everything we need in order to be able to do that, to win a National Championship.

I think everybody is excited. I think maybe pundits on the outside -- Grace Berger, those are some huge shoes to fill, but I still really, really like our pieces. I'll bet on these guys, knowing what I've -- by seeing what I've been able to see with them inside of practice, I do think we have a chance.

**Q. Going through the transfer portal process, what really stood out to you about Sharnecce, her game, who she is as a person?**

TERI MOREN: Yeah, I think one of the concerns for us was how do we protect Mack a little bit in terms of her reps.

So I think going out and finding a post player that can come in like Sharnecce -- obviously she was a terrific player at UT Martin and has the statistics to back some of that up.

But I really feel like we needed to have another post player that can come in and not just help us but take some of those reps away from Mackenzie. I think Mack is back

there, she's not going to like to hear that, but the reason is because we know that the last two years, Mack has battled some injuries down the stretch, and so I'm not going to call it load management, but I will say that we're going to have to try to protect Mack as well as we can in practices, long practices.

This is a long season, and a lot of those reps are going to be going to Sharnecce.

I think you're going to see a young lady in Sharnecce that's going to continue to improve inside of our program and really, really help us.

But great kid. She and Chloe played summer ball together, so good friends there. Another kid from the Tennessee area.

So we're excited. She has a tremendous upside to her.

**Q. Asking about another player specifically, Yarden, obviously a really good freshman season. Maybe sometimes it felt like with all the experienced talent around her, maybe people didn't give her enough attention. How have you challenged her to push herself on this season where when you've got someone that has scored, rebounded, shot the ball like she did as a freshman, where do you tell her, let's grow this area of your game next?**

TERI MOREN: Well, I think one of the particular areas, and she's been working with AP a lot in her player development is she obviously shot the ball, as you mentioned, at a really high clip. But I want to be able to utilize her like we utilized Grace Berger, as a post.

There was often times that we felt good about the matchup that Grace had on her, and we had play calls that would send Grace to the low block, play with her back to the basket.

We feel like we can do some unique things because she's a big guard and put her in positions with her back to the basket and not always revert back to her little fadeaway, that international fadeaway that she brought with her from Israel.

We want her to play with more moxie, play with more tenacity, and as we call it in our practices, put people in the basket, which means you play through contact, you score, you get yourself to the free-throw line.

That's really been -- this summer, that, her conditioning, her strength. When she showed up in Greece, I felt like she had gotten taller, but it wasn't that her height changed.

Her shoulders had changed. She filled out in her shoulders.

So Kevin and her trainer over in Israel stayed in contact those couple months that she was back there, so she's really filled out shoulder-wise. She's still shooting the ball really well.

I like to be able to be creative with her, like I said, with her back to the basket a little bit more where she can take advantage of her size.

**Q. We talked last year about how there was excitement about the group that was coming in but just some questions just because there were so many new pieces. Now it's not that way. There are fewer new pieces. How much more comfortable are you guys going into the season and knowing that you can continue building upon what you did last season?**

TERI MOREN: Yeah, I think Syd hit it on the head again. Anytime you can take international trips the way we did, it just helps with those new kids. When Lenee and Jules and Sharnecce, they already understood the work piece, but just the time that you can spend together and getting to another one another. There's not just a real not just camaraderie, but just a chemistry. This is a group that really enjoys being around each other.

We just had a recruit in over the weekend, and it's not often that -- they left my house to go and I think get ice cream or do something. It's not often that you have your entire team do that. It's usually the host and maybe two or three other teammates. But the entire team went.

That's unusual, especially when you have some older kids like we have with Mack. Mack is a fifth year. She's been here forever, but Mack has always wanted to be a part of the process, recruiting process for us.

I think that's where it starts. There's a specialness that this group has that they really, really enjoy one another. Doing this as long as I have, that will translate on to the floor. Teams that like each other seem to be teams that play well with one another.

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