

# Atlantic Coast Conference Basketball Tipoff Media Day

Tuesday, October 8, 2024  
Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

**Syracuse Orange**

**Coach Felicia Legette-Jack**

**Georgia Woolley**

**Kyra Wood**

Women's Press Conference



the season. You lost a lot.

FELISHA LEGETTE-JACK: Yes.

THE MODERATOR: What is this team evolving into? What's the pace? What's the style of play going to look like?

FELISHA LEGETTE-JACK: It's evolving into the team, and I say that. That's a big two words. I think that we're going to push the ball. It's not going to stick as much.

We wanted it to stick with Dyaisha because not too many people were going to take it from her, but this team is going to be different. We're going to move it and have plethora of shooters that can actually make the outside shot.

We have bigs that run the floor that are really exciting to see. I think that to me, it's going to be exciting because it's a whole different style that we are going to play in the last five years that I have coached like.

So we're going to go five seconds and we want to throw that thing in the air in five seconds and have some fun. It's the game of basketball. Let's show the fans what they want to see, the ball moving fast.

THE MODERATOR: Kyra, if the ball is moving fast, that means a lot more opportunities for rebounding. Can you talk about what it is that makes you such a great rebounder?

KYRA WOOD: Well, Coach Jack will take the credit for that because she tells me all the time that 99% of the rebounds are going to the blocks. We kind of make our bigs and the other middle person come down. But the bigs hitting the block and really tracking the ball.

I think last year kind of in the middle of the season I think somebody actually specifically said that, and it kind of, like, clicked in my head. Why wouldn't I do that every time? I think it was kind of like an "Aha" moment, like Duh.

Yeah, I just track the ball and get to that block and go from there.

THE MODERATOR: Happy to have Syracuse here on stage with me. Head coach Felisha Legette-Jack, Georgia Woolley and Kyra Wood. Welcome, ladies.

Obviously got the team back to the NCAA Tournament last year, which I know is a big goal for you when you took over the program. Can you talk about how maybe last year's success has now catapulted or is preparing for you this season?

FELISHA LEGETTE-JACK: One thing that last year brought to us is we didn't take anything for granted. We had some health issues, and the team had to step up in a big-time way. My coaches had to step up.

One thing we did last year, we'll take it day by day, brick by brick. We shot some bricks up too, by the way.

THE MODERATOR: But you grabbed those rebounds.

FELISHA LEGETTE-JACK: Yeah, Kyra got the rebound for us. We were really just have fun, and that's what we're going to do this season. We're not going to, oh, my God Dyaisha Fear is not here, or panic. We're not going to go, she's not here or show you either. We're going to take it day by day, brick by brick.

THE MODERATOR: Georgia, we have the reigning ACC coach of the year right here. What is it about Coach Jack that makes her so successful?

GEORGIA WOOLLEY: I say this a million times, but it truly just is her passion and her drive and her competitiveness. I think those three things are instilled in all of us, so you can't help but be successful.

THE MODERATOR: Coach J, give us says a prelude of



**Q. As Coach was saying, there's been a lot of changes to this roster. With you two being the veterans on the squad, the leaders, in your mind how should you step up to lead this team this year?**

GEORGIA WOOLLEY: I think definitely we're in a position now where we do need to step up. The people in the past have set the standard for who we are and what we need to be. It's our job not to maintain that, but to elevate it and continue to grow.

As people that have been with Coach Jack for a long time, we're in a great position to be able to have the opportunity to do that. So that's what we're really trying to do and looking to do and continue to do as we continue forward.

KYRA WOOD: I think being a veteran, I think we've instilled in some of the underclassmen understanding the assignment, and I think they completely do. They know everybody has to step up, whether you are new, whether you are a veteran, whether you've been with her for three years or two months.

Everybody has to rise to the occasion for this year, and I think we will do that.

THE MODERATOR: Many will say this is the best women's basketball conference in the country. Eight teams in the tournament a year ago. One thing that's really unique to me is that we have four teams in this league who are being led by -- who are leading their alma maters, you being one of those. Can you talk about, like, is it the ACC? I don't think there's another conference in the country that has that many.

Can you talk about -- obviously we know your passion for leading Syracuse, but what is it about the ACC that helps make that possible as well?

FELISHA LEGETTE-JACK: Well, I joined the ACC coming from the MAC. It was already known to have 23 championships. This woman's basketball league has been No. 1 for the last three-plus years.

I just knew that I was joining something really special. I didn't want to be one of the coaches that come in and muck it up even though we --

THE MODERATOR: There's no mucking in your game.

FELISHA LEGETTE-JACK: Take that word out of there. Even though we inherited a program that was in disarray, it's still Syracuse University. It's still my alma mater.

When you have coaches leading their alma mater, it's not just a game. It's personal. I definitely want to -- when Chancellor Syverud comes to our game, even though he is not really understanding what's going on, I want him and his wife, Dr. Chen, to be proud that they were witnessing people respecting our university.

When the director of athletics is talking to donors and alumni, I want to be one of the teams that he has to talk about because we're having success as well.

It's a personal moment for me. It's a personal thing to represent the ACC because it's one of the best. We got here; it was the best. We want to continue to maintain that.

THE MODERATOR: Georgia, healthy now going into this last year. What did you add to your game?

GEORGIA WOOLLEY: Going into this year? I think that there were a lot of things that I wanted to work on not necessarily on the court, but off the court. I wanted to obviously grow as a leader, but understanding what that means for me. I feel like being a leader is different for everyone, and what things I can bring that are authentic to myself. I feel like that was important to me.

But then obviously on the court stuff, just getting better, getting that shooting percentage up, being more relentless on defense, ball handling, things like that.

THE MODERATOR: Kyra, three new teams coming into the league. When they step on the court against your team, what do they need to most be worried about?

KYRA WOOD: I think we just have a relentlessness about ourselves. I think we're not going to give up. I think we proved that last year, that we can be down 10, 12 going into the fourth quarter and we come back and win the game.

It might not be in a fashion that the fans might like or coach might like, but we get the job done. I think they have to bring it all four quarters to be able to compete with us and compete in the ACC completely.

**Q. Coach Felisha, you have been a student-athlete. You have been a student-athlete for Syracuse; a great student-athlete at that. Can you talk about the knowledge you pass down as a student-athlete and a coach for the Syracuse Orange program to your ladies?**

FELISHA LEGETTE-JACK: Pride. Pride. I could be anywhere in the country. This wasn't the only job that I could have attained, but I am so proud that I get to be the

coach at the best school on the globe in my opinion.

It's a school that hires their own. The men's basketball coach, the Lacrosse coaches, myself, our AD, who was the vice president of ESPN, is now our Director of Athletics.

You have Mike Tirico, who is announcing for the Olympics, and the pride he has when he mentions something that says Syracuse or the color orange. It's not a fluke that the couches they had on there were orange were because of Syracuse. That's my story, and I'm sticking to it.

We just love that place. It's a place every single day I go home and look in the mirror and say, did you leave it out there for your alma mater? If the answer is no, I pray I wake up in the morning to give it a little bit more.

I'm excited to be home, seeing my mom and the family. Most importantly, I'm glad to be representing Syracuse University.

THE MODERATOR: Felisha, what are the strengths of this team right now? I know it's October, but right now.

Then what are those couple of areas that are keeping you up at night?

FELISHA LEGETTE-JACK: The strength of our team is our team. In October I can sense that everybody wants it for each other. I've been with some teams where the players were a little bit selfish and won it for themselves. I see on the sidelines after a drill them talking to each other saying, this is how we will do it here, this is what we try, and let's get out of this drill or whatever. I'm like really proud of what we are looking like right now.

What's the second part of your question?

THE MODERATOR: Oh, the areas that are keeping you up at night.

FELISHA LEGETTE-JACK: Our defense is keeping me up at night. I just think that we're letting people turn the corner way too fast. We have a scouting group that's special, really quick. I think they're turning the corner on us way too fast, and we're not taking pride defensively.

THE MODERATOR: Ladies, who is that teammate right now that maybe people -- your fans don't know about or we don't know about that you think give it a little bit of time and they're going to be that household name?

GEORGIA WOOLLEY: Personally, I mean, she was here last year, but I think that Sophie Burrows. I think she's made a lot of strides and she's going to step into that

position and own it and own who she is, and I'm excited to see that.

KYRA WOOD: I agree. I was going to say Sophie too. I think she's kind of understanding her role slowly but surely. I think she got -- she's being seen by her other teammates because she also got voted captain this year.

I think she is kind of stepping into that role, whether she knew it or not, whether she knew the impact she was having on the team, the impact she had on the team last year even though she might not have played as much and everybody might not have seen her as much, but the impact she had on our seem team was impactful.

I think it's starting to come to fruition from last year going into this year.

THE MODERATOR: As seniors, when I use the term "accomplish greatness," what does it mean to each of you?

KYRA WOOD: I think just being 1% better every day. Our goal and our motto is elevating, and it doesn't just mean the end goal of getting to the Sweet 16. That means every day in practice giving your best practice. That means every day in practice controlling what you can control and the energy that you give and the energy that you receive.

I think just focusing on those little things and just being better every single day and trying to be better for yourself and for your team and for the longevity of your season.

For seniors, this is it. You don't have -- you might have more years of eligibility, whether you have that or not, but for us we don't. This is it for us.

We kind of have to give what we got, or else it will be over sooner than we want.

GEORGIA WOOLLEY: Yeah, I think Kyra nailed it right on the head. Just remembering to stay where our feet are. Obviously our motto for this year is "elevate," and I see the big picture. I see where we want to be in this post-season, but I have to remember where my feet are, and it's every single day.

Like Coach Jack always says, you look in your mirror. Did you accomplish it today? You don't know what tomorrow brings. Just remembering where your feet are and bringing that every single day so that we can be where we want to be.

THE MODERATOR: Coach Jack, a 15 gauntlet ACC team league was a lot. Now you throw in the three new teams. Has that changed how you and your staff have approached

the off-season as you prepared, or is it still we'll deal with the ACC when it comes?

FELISHA LEGETTE-JACK: You can't just deal with the ACC. It's such a special conference. But we always talk about we can't worry about what we can't control. What we can control is our moment and our now and what we are going to continue to do is remember our why. Why do we play this game? What are we trying to accomplish through this game?

Anybody, we play from Niagara, our first game, to whoever we play next, we have to bring that to the table and let people see you as showing your why.

If you can do that, you can play 15, 19, whatever the conference is going to be in the following year because I just think that it is so organic that it's going to continue to evolve.

One reason that Syracuse is going to be a school and a woman's basketball program that's going to be able to stand the test of time is that we're going to lock into our moment right now, understand that mirror is important to us, more important than anything else. We're going to go out there and show the world exactly what our why looks like.

THE MODERATOR: Your head coach is obviously an alum of your program and of your institution. As you guys approach this senior year, what do you want your legacy to be?

KYRA WOOD: We talk about our legacy before we even get here. When we commit, we have to write up a little paragraph or so writing and explaining to her what we want our legacy to be, legacy from freshman year into senior year.

Whether I came here, I know I wanted to impact and grow the game and reach young women, young kids, young girls who see us as their inspiration. You don't know who you touch.

I think I realized that. I think one of our photographers caught the kids game somebody had these sheets, and each one said the goals. One of the goals they said, "I want to be like No. 22." I think that was just very, like, touching for me because I'm, like -- I still don't know who wrote it, and I still don't know who that is, but obviously they see me as something bigger and something greater than I see myself.

So I think just striving to be better for them and knowing that it's not just about me and about selfishness. It's about

more than myself. It's about the people that I inspire and look up to me.

GEORGIA WOOLLEY: Yeah, that's a big question. That really is a big question. For me I'm pretty simple in my terms, but I wanted to leave the place -- I wanted to leave Syracuse in a better place than I found it, and I wanted to leave as a person better than I was when I arrived.

For me that looked like bringing what I bring, and for me that's like my competitive spirit and bring what I can every single day. My quote that I have underneath my legacy is nothing is given, everything is earned. I think a lot of times everyone is trying to give us things and help us, but you have to earn it.

That's a big thing for me, and legacy is a big thing, but just leaving the game in a better place than I found it.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for spending some time with us today. Good luck this season.

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