

# Atlantic Coast Conference Basketball Tipoff Media Day

Tuesday, October 8, 2024

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

## Wake Forest Demon Deacons

### Coach Megan Gebbia

### Demeara Hinds

### Elise Williams

#### Women's Press Conference



I think Demeara and Elise are two people that we expect to be at the line a lot this season.

THE MODERATOR: Your coach just mentioned a trip to Europe. What did you each learn about this team while you were doing your exhibition?

DEMEARA HINDS: I learned a lot about, like, kind of like my teammates and how they play as well. I think it was like a very good eye-opener to, like, be able to communicate with them where they feel more successful on the floor and making sure that I can put them in the position to do that.

ELISE WILLIAMS: I agree. The trip definitely, it was hot. We were, you know, doing a lot of exercises. You can learn a lot about someone when they are going through something. We were all over there kind of struggling a little bit at times. It was eye-opening to see how different people would react to things like that, but overall it was a good trip.

THE MODERATOR: Obviously three new teams here in the league. If you could, right now how would you describe the league to everyone on the outside with the addition of the three new schools?

MEGAN GEBBIA: I mean, best conference in the country. I really believe that from top to bottom. The talent is really good. Each team has a marquee player or two or three or four for some teams.

Adding the West Coast teams, maybe a different brand of basketball, which will challenge everybody in the conference and maybe get you better prepared for the NCAA Tournament because you see all types of teams and styles.

I think that's a big part of it. I think it's an exciting conference to watch because there's a lot of close games I feel like each and every year and everybody is battling to get in the top nine spots. It's pretty cutthroat when you get down to it, and you only have one chance at everybody this year, so you have to make the most of it.

THE MODERATOR: I am happy to have Wake Forest in the house with us. Happy birthday to head coach Megan Gebbia, happy belated birthday to Demeara Hinds. Am I allowed to ask how old?

DEMEARA HINDS: 23.

THE MODERATOR: Then also with us, Elise Williams, who doesn't have a birth day.

ELISE WILLIAMS: Yeah, no birthday. No birthday.

THE MODERATOR: We'll hang together. Megan, just to start, can you give us a brief overview of where this seem is at right now and what we should expect in the coming months?

MEGAN GEBBIA: I think we've spent a lot of time working on the defensive end, but really it started when we went to Europe this summer. We got a chance to practice ten days, kind of get a feel for the new people, get a feel for where we were at that point in time, played three games, figure it out as we're over there and then come back and get started right away again.

There really wasn't a lot of time. So I think we kind of evaluated last year and saw that a lot of our losses -- I mean, it could be a lot of different things, but a lot of it was just what we did on the defensive end and how it changed from the first year to the second year and the areas in which we need to improve on.

That part, and then just making sure our shot selection is good. We with get to the free-throw line a little bit more than we got there last year. We actually shot the ball well there, but we didn't get there enough.

THE MODERATOR: Megan, you've had success as an assistant coach, head coach at American, and now you're entering your third season at Wake. Is the program going in the right direction, and is this where you thought be would you going into year three?

MEGAN GEBBIA: I'm hoping we are where we need to be in year three. This team is really solid from every position. We have depth this year which we haven't had since I've been here. We have depth, experience, and grit to us that we want to get out there. We want to win. We want to figure out ways to win games that we haven't been able to in the past.

I think we're showing that in practice every day. We have a group of practice guys that are outstanding. They really are. They're making it hard on us.

I feel like they're raising our level in the month of October, and I think that's the best thing that could happen to us this year.

THE MODERATOR: Elise, you led the team, points, rebounds, assists, and steals last year. I say this humbly, have you added anything to your game right now going into the season?

ELISE WILLIAMS: I definitely have. Something towards the end of the season that me and Coach Meg talked about, hey, what do you want to work on? Different things like that. Floaters, around the rim to be more efficient for sure I've worked on. Other than that, I'm just kind of just fine-tuning everything at the moment.

THE MODERATOR: What about yourself? Have you added anything to your game?

DEMEARA HINDS: I'm working that jumper. I'm going to try to make sure I take a lot more perimeter shots and even like twos and stuff like that just to expand the floor.

THE MODERATOR: Megan, it's October, but right now in terms of this team what are the similarities from a year ago in terms of style of play, and what may be some differences that we can really hone in on?

MEGAN GEBBIA: I think we're a similar team in the sense of the players that are on the team. You have that, but you just have that growth of another year. I think last year we went through role changes, which was really difficult because it was like almost everybody that was starting at a different role except I think Kaia. She played the same role, but everyone else was different.

That was a tough thing to go through, but I think what we

see this year is we're making better decision. I think at the end of the day when you have experience it comes down to the decisions that you make at both ends of the floor. You see them making better decisions in practice, especially when you put a group together that you think may start, you start to see those things. It's kind of fun.

I think they're enjoying the challenge every day of the adversity that us as coaches are trying to present to them and that the practice guys present to them.

THE MODERATOR: What did you learn about yourself and your team by watching last year?

DEMEARA HINDS: I think I got a better perspective of everything. Like an overall perspective. I feel like I was talking to the coaches a lot more as well just saying, okay, now I'm starting to see what you guys are saying, like, sitting there and watching it. It's a lot easier to kind of see it as it's slowed down because I feel like sometimes when you're on the court everything is moving so fast, so you're not paying as much attention.

I feel like I've gotten a greater overall perspective of, like, what's really expected and what we need to do to be successful.

THE MODERATOR: Has it given you -- taking what you learned, have you been able to apply that? Do you feel like you're a better ballplayer now because of that?

DEMEARA HINDS: Yes, 100%. I think me sitting out that year, although it was very, like, frustrating, it was helpful at the same time at giving me an extra opportunity to really hone in on what I need to work on and what the team needs to work on as a whole and putting it out on the floor.

THE MODERATOR: To each player, give me a teammate that right now maybe people don't know, maybe it's a freshman, whoever it is, but people don't know about that you have seen and they're making the strides that you know they're going to be an impact player for you guys this season.

ELISE WILLIAMS: Aurora Sørbye, Sørbye. She's from Norway. I don't know how to say her last name. She's a freshman, and her work ethic is unlike anybody I think I've seen in my life. She's someone who is definitely, definitely going to have a big impact.

DEMEARA HINDS: I would say Tamia Jones. She's my grad buddy. She's really pesky on defense, like, getting after the ball and everything like that and trying to slow them down. It's really helpful whenever she's on the ball coming down the floor.

THE MODERATOR: Megan, you mentioned just different styles of play now with the additions. Did you and your staff do anything differently, and especially knowing that you had the overseas tour coming up -- did you do anything differently coming into those ten practices to prepare knowing three new teams, three new styles and what not?

MEGAN GEBBIA: We didn't know what type of style we were going to see over there. We recruited over there, so we kind of had an idea. We knew they play a lot of T-basketball, so we were shellshocked because their passing was super good.

We were, like, whoa, we have to get back into the flow. We ended up doing it the second half, which was nice to see.

Which there wasn't anything different. I think it was more of, right, let's put in our base offense and base defense and play to the best of our ability and see where we can make changes and then add to when we get back in the fall.

That's kind of what we've done. I do think we're further ahead than we've ever been at this point just because we had those ten practices and we can move things along quicker because we have upper classmen.

So I don't have to wait for five freshmen to catch up, right? I have two right now. They've learned pretty fast. I think they have pretty good IQ. It's actually helped us move things quicker.

THE MODERATOR: Elise, give us the scouting report on Demeara.

ELISE WILLIAMS: Heavy post presence.

THE MODERATOR: You sound like a professional now.

ELISE WILLIAMS: Heavy post presence, can finish with either hand, outside jumper, play accordingly. Before it was just, you know, she's on the block and then people weren't really guarding her on the perimeter, but now people, you know, you have to play honest basketball.

DEMEARA HINDS: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Elise did such a good job. I'm going to ask you the same thing of her.

DEMEARA HINDS: Level scorer, you know. She's very aggressive on the attack. Don't let her see the rim whatsoever or else you're done for.

THE MODERATOR: Ladies, what do you want the rest of the ACC to know about this team? Forget last year. This team right now.

ELISE WILLIAMS: I mean, you know, this is something that I think I got asked earlier. I got two words, and it's we're coming.

DEMEARA HINDS: I would say expect the unexpected. We have a lot of depth, as Coach was saying, and a lot of people have really been putting in the work to make sure that we're getting those higher percentage shots and everything like that. Expect us to come out swinging from the jump.

THE MODERATOR: I guess I'll ask you to, Megan.

MEGAN GEBBIA: Do I even need to answer after that?

THE MODERATOR: Elise is, like, baller relaxed. We're coming.

MEGAN GEBBIA: We have a chip on our shoulder. We should. We've been in a lot of games, a lot of close ones. Haven't come out on top. That's what we're trying to do now is figure out what we need to do to come out on top in those situations.

THE MODERATOR: I don't want to give any trade secrets away, but from what I'm hearing from you today, a lot of experience. So it's better decision-making. Does that allow you to put more in and do more, or are you trying -- okay. Never mind.

MEGAN GEBBIA: Yes, we can do more. Not necessarily put a ton of plays and stuff, but you can adjust depending how people are guarding you, and I'm trying to get them to understand if they guard this way, we do this. There are options within what we're doing and with the experience they know how to use those options.

That's kind of fun as a coach. It's a fun year for me because you have that experience, and you can call something in a timeout and they're, like, I got you. I know what you are saying.

THE MODERATOR: I'm going to flip it. I think when you become leaders, when you become the elder statesmen on the team, I think your relationship changes with your head coach. How has that evolved, especially coming back from the trip this summer?

DEMEARA HINDS: I feel like Coach knows that we're seeing, what she's seeing a lot of the times, so sometimes

she doesn't have to say anything. It's kind of like expected. Like, we have been with her for this long at this point, so we know what her expectations are on the floor, off the floor. Just kind of, like, making sure that we're instilling that in the younger players so they know what to do moving forward.

ELISE WILLIAMS: Yep. I'll say the same thing. We kind of just have just like an understanding. It doesn't have to be spoken, or it can be. We have each other's back.

THE MODERATOR: So basically Coach doesn't need to call as many timeouts because you got this now?

MEGAN GEBBIA: Although Elise has been wanting to call a timeout.

ELISE WILLIAMS: I know how much she cherishes her timeouts, so I can recognize when we need a timeout and when I'm, like, no, let's just wait until the media and, you know...

THE MODERATOR: Since you know your Coach so well, end of the game situation, you've got the ball, who is getting the shot here two between the two of you?

ELISE WILLIAMS: What's the score? Yeah, what's the score?

THE MODERATOR: I'm putting you on the spot. You're down two. Are you going for the win or are you going --

DEMEARA HINDS: The win.

ELISE WILLIAMS: Yeah, we want to win.

THE MODERATOR: All right, ladies. New year. From what I'm hearing, much higher expectations. The past is the past. Give me one word that you think will summarize this season for you.

ELISE WILLIAMS: One word?

THE MODERATOR: Elise.

MEGAN GEBBIA: Tears. Tears of joy.

ELISE WILLIAMS: That's a good one. I would say -- dang, you just set the bar. I don't know. You go. One word to describe this season, God.

DEMEARA HINDS: Extraordinary.

ELISE WILLIAMS: God, why is it so hard?

THE MODERATOR: Because your coach set the bar.

ELISE WILLIAMS: She did. I'm, like... magic.

DEMEARA HINDS: That's a good one. I like it.

ELISE WILLIAMS: Magic.

THE MODERATOR: I will you give you your infomercial moment. Why Wake?

DEMEARA HINDS: Because we are always the underdog. Why not go for the underdog? We're going to come out on top at some point.

ELISE WILLIAMS: I agree. Why not Wake?

MEGAN GEBBIA: To me it's more like you can make history here. It's rare in a power five school that you can do that. You can make history, right? I think we've learned how to become a family in these three years and that's really special, and I think not everybody gets that experience.

THE MODERATOR: Well, I'm excited to follow you guys this season. Wake Forest women's basketball, look out ACC.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports