

Atlantic Coast Conference Basketball Tipoff Media Day

Wednesday, October 9, 2024

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Boston College Eagles

Coach Joanna

Bernabei-McNamee

Dontavia Waggoner

T'yana Todd

Women's Press Conference



over to the rest of the team.

THE MODERATOR: T'yana, speaking of the confidence, is there anything that you have added to your game going into the season?

T'YANA TODD: I think especially towards the end of the last season I was forced to bring up the ball a lot more, so I think that is something I really continued to add is my ball handling and confidence with the ball.

THE MODERATOR: Joanna, give me a name -- again, you've got a lot of returners coming -- but maybe somebody's whose role has evolved going into the season that maybe we wouldn't have expected her, but she's going to be a stat stuffer for you this season?

JOANNA BERNABEI-McNAMEE: I would say Andrea Daley is really going to be somebody that can kind of stuff stats, along with Teya Sidberry. That's the thing, I think we're a pretty dynamic team because I look at these two players next to me. They have the ability to stuff stats.

We added Kennedi Jackson to our roster, a fifth-year post player that has the ability to stuff stats. Then we have Kayla Ivey, who honestly is one of the best passers and best court vision players in the country.

So that's why we are so excited. We have this core group of a lot of players that can do a lot of things, and I think it could be anybody's night on any given game, so...

THE MODERATOR: Joanna, I think in this day and age everybody is so wrapped up in the portal.

JOANNA BERNABEI-McNAMEE: Yes.

THE MODERATOR: I think fans are so excited about who did you get out of the portal and this and that. Can you speak about how important it is to have a core group returning and how much it makes it easier in this your role?

JOANNA BERNABEI-McNAMEE: As a coach it's hard to build trust if you have only had people for one year, two years, or everybody is leaving, coming and going. That's

THE MODERATOR: You've got a lot coming back. Can you give us a preview of what you are expecting from this team, maybe a little bit of style of play as well?

JOANNA BERNABEI-McNAMEE: I think having the returners and the nice core group that we have returning. I think that gives us a lot of chemistry on the court because everybody knows the offense and the defense and kind of our expectations.

More importantly it gives them a lot of confidence with the way we ended last year and a little bit of chip on their shoulder going in.

I would say we're really confident, excited, and looking forward to this year.

THE MODERATOR: Dontavia, speaking how we ended the season, your last five games you averaged 18 points, shot almost 50% from the field, and eight rebounds. Did it just kind of click for you those last five games?

was there something that shifted for you, or is it just, hey, I was balling?

DONTAVIA WAGGONER: Maybe. I think I was just balling. I noticed that too at the end of the season I was averaging more than what I was used to. I think it was me just hooping, honestly. I don't think anything special other than just hooping.

JOANNA BERNABEI-McNAMEE: I would say confidence. Yeah, I think her confidence really took a spike, and that's carried on both for Toddy and Dontavia. They're coming into the season with a lot of confidence, and that's spilling



why I think this team gets along so well.

I also think it gives them a sense of they're going to bleed maroon and gold for Boston College because that's where they're from, that's where they're going to be, and they're getting their degrees from.

I just think this is a team that feels it in their heart that they want to go out and do something special.

THE MODERATOR: T'yana, three new teams coming into the league. What would you say to them in terms of describing the ACC?

T'YANA TODD: I would say to them, be prepared. It's a gritty league, and every night somebody is coming for your head, yeah.

THE MODERATOR: Dontavia, do you have anything to add to that?

DONTAVIA WAGGONER: I would agree with that. I would say a lot of teams can't be slept on in the ACC. I don't think any team can be slept on. It doesn't matter the record. Every game is a dogfight. I would say just be prepared for that.

THE MODERATOR: Joanna, so much has changed in the ACC during your tenure. What has been the one consistent in your mind that makes this league so good?

JOANNA BERNABEI-McNAMEE: The talent. Year in and year out I think the coaches are amazing, the talent is amazing. Like they said, it's a dogfight every night, and you can't sleep on anybody in this conference.

THE MODERATOR: I want you to kind of educate fans right now. What's the one thing you wish fans were more educated on or just knew and understand?

JOANNA BERNABEI-McNAMEE: Probably the rules of the game (laughing).

THE MODERATOR: I think officials would agree with that too.

JOANNA BERNABEI-McNAMEE: Just understanding the rules. I think sometimes people are, like, why aren't they calling a timeout? Well, you know, we can actually advance the ball at the end of the game, so we're going to try to hoard our timeouts if possible.

Sometimes I think even understanding how much these young ladies have to put in, right? It's not just -- they're not just basketball players. They're getting an Ivy League type

education at Boston College. They're expected -- candles are burning at both ends for them.

I think that sometimes they just are looked at as being basketball players, and there's so much more.

THE MODERATOR: All right, ladies. I need you to put your Coach Joanna hat on right now, and I need you to give me a scouting report on each other.

DONTAVIA WAGGONER: Well, for Toddy, I would say high hands, long close-out. Guard up, but don't guard too close because she may blow by you, but pressure her a little bit.

JOANNA BERNABEI-McNAMEE: Don't give away all the secrets. Come on. I'm just kidding.

DONTAVIA WAGGONER: Then I would say maybe because she's a little bit smaller, you could probably, like, use your muscle against her.

THE MODERATOR: You got some coaching in you there.

T'YANA TODD: For Tay, I would say give her a step. Very quick. Make sure you protect the ball. All defensive team, so yeah.

Q. T'yana, can you tell me what does it mean to be named a captain for this year?

T'YANA TODD: It means a lot. I mean, we have a lot of seniority on this team, a lot of vets coming back. I think I really just take this as an opportunity to continue to help my team grow and to capitalize on everything that we have.

THE MODERATOR: Right now obviously early. It's October. Joanna, what are the strengths of this team, and then what are the couple of areas where you feel like we've got to get better at this if we're going to make that run in March?

JOANNA BERNABEI-McNAMEE: I think our athleticism is a strength this year and our speed. I like the way their intensity on the defensive end. I think the things we have to continue to get better at from a technical standpoint basketball-wise is understanding the passing up maybe a good shot for a great shot and then also rebounding. We have to continue to hone our defensive rebounding.

THE MODERATOR: Dontavia, obviously tremendous defensive player. End of the game you want the ball in your hands, or do you want to be the opponent's best player?

DONTAVIA WAGGONER: Be the opponent's best player, of course. I love defense. I think that my defense stems from my offense, so if I can get a stop on defense, it's going to help me on offense a lot.

THE MODERATOR: T'yana, ball in your hands or setting somebody up for the game-winning shot?

T'YANA TODD: I want that shot, not going to lie.

THE MODERATOR: She's going to get the stop for you to get that shot, so there's your end-of-game situations.

With the three new teams coming into the league, did you and your staff do anything differently this offseason in preparing for three new opponents?

JOANNA BERNABEI-McNAMEE: No. I mean, we're definitely the type of staff and team that takes one game at a time. Literally I take one game at a time. We're not looking too far ahead, but we are excited to go to California. I think the whole team is excited to get out and see that side of the country, so that's exciting.

THE MODERATOR: How different is it -- I know we're talking about late December, but how different is it now to think about only playing everybody once except for that one team?

JOANNA BERNABEI-McNAMEE: I think it's kind of nice. I think that makes it more of a true -- when you have the winner of the regular season, it's a true winner now, which is kind of exciting.

THE MODERATOR: When I used to coach I used to hold something back for that second round. Will that change how you implement and put things in this season?

JOANNA BERNABEI-McNAMEE: Yeah, it probably has already changed as far as I'm not going to save as many things. I'm just going to have what we do and add things here or there for specific teams.

But for the most part I think that's also because we have a veteran group too. It allows you to kind of get really good at things as opposed to always feeling like things are new.

THE MODERATOR: Ladies, I feel like there's a buzz around BC right now. Do you feel it? If so, what do you think the catalyst is?

T'YANA TODD: I think BC has a lot of hype going around right now, especially with football. They're winning. I wouldn't say streak, but they're winning a lot of games right now, and it's definitely bringing a lot of hype around the

school and the community as well.

DONTAVIA WAGGONER: I would also say that because last year we had two teams go to the national championship and one team win the national championship that also was adding a little bit of hype to Boston College.

THE MODERATOR: You feel a little juice or pressure now to say, hey, we want to get in on this parade.

DONTAVIA WAGGONER: Definitely pressure. We want to get in on the parade for sure.

THE MODERATOR: All right, ladies. Talk to me about Coach Mac. What makes her such a good coach? Dontavia.

DONTAVIA WAGGONER: I would say she doesn't hold anything back. She knows -- she wants our team to be more of like a team-guided -- like how do I want to say it?

T'YANA TODD: Player-led.

DONTAVIA WAGGONER: Player-led team. She allows us to, like, do stuff not only with her but with each other. We do activities with each other and other coaches. I think she's very big on community and becoming one.

Our motto is trust, love, and grit, and I would say she does stand by that.

T'YANA TODD: I would say that Coach Mac is somebody who really believes in you and believes in the team. She's going to push you every day to be who you know who you can be and who she knows you can be, so yeah.

THE MODERATOR: Obviously the ACC motto, accomplish greatness. What does that mean to each of you?

T'YANA TODD: To me that means just doing everything that I can and in my power to be the best version of myself for myself and for my team as well.

DONTAVIA WAGGONER: Yeah, I agree with that. I would say that it shows not to hold back. We as a fifth-year, it kind of means a lot more to me seeing as I'm almost out the door. So I would say that I'm taking this year more personal than I have in previous years, and I want that to be an end goal. I want us to be different than how we've been in the past years.

THE MODERATOR: T'yana, outside of your own arena, is there a place in the ACC that you just love playing in? Like you walk in the door and you know, this is my night? If so,

why?

T'YANA TODD: Can I say the ACC tournament?

THE MODERATOR: That's great. That's a great one.

T'YANA TODD: Yeah, Greensboro.

THE MODERATOR: Okay.

DONTAVIA WAGGONER: I would say that I like to play in the Louisville stadium. I think it's very, very cool. It's loud, but it's cool. Then we always have a dogfight. I would say I like to play in their stadium.

THE MODERATOR: You like playing in front of that packed house.

DONTAVIA WAGGONER: They always have a great crowd.

THE MODERATOR: All right, ladies. Give me one word that you think right now as you look forward to this season that will be whether it's your mantra or it's going to encapsulate the season for you and your team? Coach, I'll let you start.

JOANNA BERNABEI-McNAMEE: One word? Geez, that's tough. I would say grit.

T'YANA TODD: One word. Perseverance.

DONTAVIA WAGGONER: Discipline.

THE MODERATOR: Then my final question to each of you. Boston College, why?

DONTAVIA WAGGONER: When I came to Boston College, I would say that the coaching staff that I came here harped on getting in the gym, working me out. Just everything that they told me that they were going to do, they have done it to this day, so that's why Boston College for me.

T'YANA TODD: For me BC felt like a community. Like, everybody seemed very close together... players, coaches. I think that was important for me, the family feeling.

JOANNA BERNABEI-McNAMEE: For me?

THE MODERATOR: Yeah. Why should someone choose BC?

JOANNA BERNABEI-McNAMEE: I think it's the best of both worlds. It's a place where you can have your cake

and eat it too. We have a great campus, high-level education, get to play in the ACC. You have Boston, the best city in the country right in your backyard.

BC is a great place, and you get to be around the best people. Accomplish greatness is the ACC motto. Well, ever to excel is the Boston College motto, and you hear from their answers, it's a great place to go to school and to become a young adult.

THE MODERATOR: Well, ladies, Coach, thank you for your time today. Boston College, look out.

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