

Atlantic Coast Conference Basketball Tipoff Media Day

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Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Stanford Cardinal Coach Kate Paye

Talana Lepolo

Brooke Demetre

Women's Press Conference



been helpful. There's not just one thing that's different. There's a lot of things that are kind of new and different. I think it creates a sense of energy for our staff, for our players.

Amongst all this change we are really leaning into continuity. The values of hard work, unselfishness, toughness, togetherness. Our goals remain the same: winning a conference championship, winning a national championship.

I'm just really grateful for the people I stand in the circle with every day, our incredible staff and the terrific student-athletes on our team.

THE MODERATOR: Talana, obviously Kate was a great point guard. Talk about how she has impacted your game, and is there anything new we're going to see in this next season that you have added?

TALANA LEPOLO: Sure. Before Kate was my head coach, she was my guard coach. I think everything that I've learned as a guard came from her. Whether it be pace or directing my team or being a louder point guard. I think all of those things is what she's helped me with.

As far as something new to my game, I think it's something that I've always worked on. Just aggression on offense. I think especially in our system that we have now I think it allows for a lot of guard attacks. So I'm excited for it.

THE MODERATOR: Brooke, new team, new season. For you, we've known your role in the past and what you have done. Is there anything more we should expect to see on the floor this season?

BROOKE DEMETRE: I think my role this season -- every year my role has looked different, but I definitely think this year I'll have to look to be more aggressive, look to find my shots a little bit more within our offense, but also be a great leader on the floor for our underclassmen and kind of being somebody that we can always rely on.

Those are some things you're going to see from me.

THE MODERATOR: Is we welcome the Stanford Cardinals to the ACC. With me on stage head Coach, Kate Paye, point guard Talana Lepolo, and Brooke Demetre. Kate, I think, first of all, tell us about your team, what we should expect this upcoming season?

KATE PAYE: Our team is really excited to be joining the ACC. This is a great opportunity. This is a great women's basketball conference.

We know that competition makes our team better, helps prepare us for the NCAA Tournament. We're coming from a great women's basketball conference. We feel honored to be joining another great one with great teams, great coaches, great players.

We're looking forward to playing in new venues. Our team has been working extremely hard this offseason. We took our team to Italy in August. We had a great trip, and that afforded our team more opportunity to be in the gym together, building an identity, chemistry, a connection.

We've been working hard this fall. I think what people are going to see is an extremely hard-working, unselfish, up-tempo, intelligent, tough team.

Our team is hungry, and we're really excited to be joining the ACC.

THE MODERATOR: Kate, obviously this will be your first year as a head coach, so a lot of transition moving from associate head coach into the head coaching role and transitioning into a new conference. Does it almost make it easier because everything is new at once, or have you even had a chance to really think about it?

KATE PAYE: I think kind of having so much change has



THE MODERATOR: You mentioned the foreign tour. What did you learn about your team that maybe you didn't know before you guys made the trip?

KATE PAYE: You know, it really is a new roster. I think our team is extremely excited about the opportunity. We have kind of a metaphor. It's like, pop the cork off the champagne bottle, and the champagne bubbles over. People are stepping up. We're seeing kind of new skill sets, new leaders emerging.

I think the thing that we're most excited about and I think is really going to be really special about the team is the incredible unselfishness. The ball is moving, and it's not sticking in anybody's hands.

I think this could be a team where we have a different leading scorer every night, and what's really exciting is all the women on our team are all about Stanford.

THE MODERATOR: Ladies, obviously I feel like a lot of people think they know Stanford. You're a national name. You've always been one of the top teams in the country. What is it you want the ACC to know about your team? We're starting a new era. What are some of the things that people don't know that you want them to know before the season starts off?

TALANA LEPOLO: That we're tough. I think Brooke said it before, but we have this underlying intensity maybe that people don't expect. We're not the nice girls from Stanford, however the saying goes.

In practice we are competitive, and that's just when we're playing against ourselves. So when it comes to really representing our school and our name and playing for each other, I think that we are an extremely competitive team more than I think people might expect from us.

BROOKE DEMETRE: Yeah, I would echo everything T said. And also that we're ready to bring it. We're super excited. We're not worried about travel or anything like that. We're really looking forward to it.

So, yeah, we're just going to bring what we got, and we're super excited to be part of the conference.

THE MODERATOR: Brooke brought up the travel. Kate, I think media is making a lot more out of this transition than really it's going to apply as far as the young women. Can you speak to that?

KATE PAYE: I think it is more of an external narrative than something we're obsessing over internally. This is the same travel schedule or cadence that we're used to

coming from the Pac-12 in terms of having travel partners, being home for two games, then the next week you're on the road for two games.

We charter everywhere we go. We have tremendous support from our administration. We have a terrific sports performance, sports science department that will help us adjust and recover and be ready to really perform at a really high level.

Our team is excited. As Brooke and Talana referred to, we play great competition, be in new venues. Obviously we recruit nationally, internationally. We have players who are from the Atlanta area. They're excited. Moms are already inviting us over to their house.

THE MODERATOR: Kate, obviously you were very involved as an associate head coach, but what's the biggest thing you have realized or didn't realize when you were the associate head coach that now you're the head coach?

KATE PAYE: How much people want to talk to you during the day. You know, I am just really blessed. This is a really special opportunity. I love Stanford. I love Stanford women's basketball. I feel extremely well-prepared for this role thanks to Tara VanDerveer, legendary, iconic, now retired head coach.

I'm blessed that our entire staff stayed on board. Associate head coach Tempie Brown; former Olympian, Stanford all American Katy Steding; Heather Oesterle who started her career at Stanford and is now back on The Farm.

And then two great former Stanford players in Erica McCall and Jeanette Pohlen. We have the best staff in the country.

I just have to pinch myself every single day, stepping into this role to be able to work with such great people.

THE MODERATOR: Brooke, tell us something that we don't know about your head coach.

BROOKE DEMETRE: Oh, goodness. That she loves to play pranks on people, even though she's not very good at it. For a little story. On the way here Kate loves to arrive last-minute to airports, and that stresses me out so I didn't go with her. I went earlier.

She texted me saying that she's not going to make it, blah, blah, blah, trying to freak me out, but she loves doing little things like that, playing pranks on us.

THE MODERATOR: Kate, it's not as long of a runway with

a transition in the ACC, but you've had the runway. I've been told you guys started breaking down film on everybody in the ACC this offseason. Is there anything that surprised you in a good way about the ACC, or is there anything -- basically I guess what are those trends that you have discovered, and you your staff discovered as you started doing some studying up for this upcoming season?

KATE PAYE: Well, it's kind of interesting. Last season we played Duke. We played Florida State, NC State, so that was almost like a little preview.

We played Louisville and Notre Dame many times in the tournament in the past. But with an 18-team conference we did feel like we wanted to get ahead of the game a little bit and not wait until January to kind of try to figure out all these different styles of play.

We know that it is, again, a very competitive conference. A very guard-oriented league. I think with our current roster we're well-suited to be very competitive and that really plays to our strengths.

Just looking at film I see a lot more zone than maybe we saw in the Pac-12. Pac-12 had a lot of big, big, big bigs. I don't see as many, but our team is really excited.

We know that the competition is going to make us better.

THE MODERATOR: Ladies, if I could ask you to give one another -- we're educating this side of the country now on you guys. Give me the scouting report on Brooke. You've seen her this offseason. You've seen her in Italy. Give us this new Brooke. What should we be expecting?

TALANA LEPOLO: Well, on the team we call Brooke Steady Eddie. She's our rock on the team. You can always count on her to be a level-headed player, someone that really knows the offense, can really step up when she needs to lead the team.

But definitely shooter from the outside. She likes her fade-away. I won't give away too much, but yeah, a scorer for sure.

BROOKE DEMETRE: For T I would say floor general. You're going to hear her. She's going to be leading us on the floor. She can hit her shot when she's open. She can drive it when we need her to. But above all, she's going to get people the ball who are scoring.

Yeah, she's really the glue to our team, and she makes things go.

Q. Coach, my question is, you're replacing a Hall of

Famer, legendary coach, and I'm sure you have recruiting that you have to do going forward. What has been that recruiting pitch to get players to buy into the culture and identity that your previous coach had that you're trying to instill going forward?

KATE PAYE: Thank you for the question. I think from a recruiting standpoint we're still looking for exactly the same student-athlete as we were before. Stanford attracts a certain kind of student-athlete. We are out there every day around the country, around the world looking for the very best elite students who have great transcripts, who value education, academics, who are also fantastic basketball players and want to compete for a national championship.

So really that really hasn't changed at all. In a lot of ways Stanford kind of self-selects and sells itself. We have a beautiful campus, great weather. We hope kind of the ACC fans take a trip out to Palo Alto and visit The Farm. Stanford is a really special place.

From a recruiting standpoint I don't think much has changed.

THE MODERATOR: Brooke and T, give me the player on your team right now that maybe people don't know about that right now basically give the ACC a forewarning of, hey, she's going to have a big year for us.

BROOKE DEMETRE: I feel liking there could be so many answers on our team because what's really special about this team is anybody can step up at any given moment, but I would say Nunu. I have a feeling she's going to have a great year, and I would say watch out for her.

TALANA LEPOLO: Yeah, I would have to agree 100%. She's a versatile player, but she is fiery, that one. She is really competitive. She will do a little trash talking and -- just a little bit.

Yeah, I think she's going to have a breakout year, for sure.

THE MODERATOR: Kate, right now it's obviously October, but what do you feel like right now are the strengths of this team and what are the couple of areas that, hey, for us to make that run in March we have to get better at?

KATE PAYE: Certainly we talk about the unselfishness, the competitiveness. We have great leadership with Brooke Demetre and Talana Lepolo, two experienced returning leaders. I think they know they don't have to do it by themselves.

Two other fantastic seniors with a lot of experience in our

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

program Jzaniya Harriel and Elena Bosgana. We have great upperclass experience and leadership from Tess Heal, Stavi Papadaki, Lauren Green. Brooke and Talana talked about Nunu. She's a member of the sophomore class. They call themselves "The Forest" if you get the reference. That's Nunu Agara, Chloe Clardy, Courtney Ogden, and Mary Ashley Stevenson.

Then we're also really excited about our freshmen class. Harper Peterson, Kennedy Umeh, Shay Ijiwoye.

What I really love is the connection on this team. We have great chemistry, great culture. In terms of what we're working on is just building our identity.

In the past maybe people knew where that ball was going to go. Right now the ball is moving all around the floor. Just different people learning to step up and take on more responsibility.

THE MODERATOR: I know we're moving forward, but I think as a basketball fan myself, I would be remiss if I didn't ask each of you, what does November 10th mean to you when that court is going to get named after Tara? I'll start with you, Brooke.

BROOKE DEMETRE: It's going to be super special. I loved playing under Tara my last three years. Love that woman. She provides so much wisdom of the game and she's just such a great person and she's had a great and amazing career.

I'm really happy for her. It's a great honor. Yeah, I'm just super excited.

TALANA LEPOLO: Yeah, just to echo that. We got to celebrate her last year after her most winningest game. Getting to celebrate her again on the 10th, it will feel great. She's had such an impact on our team and Stanford as a school but also as in women's basketball as a whole.

It will be a special night.

KATE PAYE: Obviously I'm really excited. I mean, this is kind of a no-brainer. Tara VanDerveer, her name has to be on the court at Maples Pavilion. If I know Tara really well, which I do, she will want us to be very focused on the game and playing Gonzaga because that's an excellent team, and our team is going to have to come ready to play.

THE MODERATOR: Obviously a program rich in tradition is Stanford, but a really exciting time. Excited to see this team under your leadership, Kate. Really excited to watch you play this season. Welcome Stanford to the ACC.