

# Washington Mystics Media Conference

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**Stefanie Dolson**

Media Conference



THE MODERATOR: We'll get started.

**Q. Stef, yesterday we touched on it a little bit about this is the youngest team you've been on. Sounds like this is the fastest scheme you've been in. What is all of this like for you, so much newness in the fact that the team is in a different position than when you first got here? How is all of this coming together?**

STEFANIE DOLSON: I mean, it's been a whirlwind. For me it's just about taking it day by day, kind of figuring it out as I go. I think everyone's kind of doing that.

A lot of the rookies come to us to ask questions. I'm like, Honestly, we're also learning coach. We're all just kind of learning together. I'm just trying to do what I can do, what I can control, all that stuff.

**Q. For you, kind of going into the season, what are some of your goals that you'd like to accomplish? I don't know what year it is for you.**

STEFANIE DOLSON: I don't know either. I also don't know how old I am. My mom pressured me the other day, she's like, You're not that age anymore (laughter).

My goal this year is, one, to stay healthy, be healthy. I had some shots in my knee this off-season because of my age. I'd like to just make it through the whole season. Last year I did that without any injuries. It felt really good. I'd like to do that again.

Then obviously I think just growing my leadership skills. I'm not sure there's much more growing for my game. I'm not going to be going one on one from the top of the key anytime soon. Just staying confident in my shot, doing what I can do at the best of my ability, bringing that to the team.

**Q. Only one official practice. Since you've been here, seen the new folks, anybody stand out to you or catch your eye, early impressions?**

STEFANIE DOLSON: I mean, Kira looks great. Kira looks really confident, which I'm excited for her. I said about me being healthy. I'm excited for her to have a healthy season, to see how she goes.

Kiki looks really good. Very confident also. Just kind of not acting like a rookie.

Same with Georgia. Georgia does not look like a rookie at all. She came in the first day, was answering questions quick, talking quick. She looks really good.

Sonia looks great. Her shot is amazing.

Yeah, I think everyone. Like I told you yesterday, everyone is eager and happy to be here, so it makes it fun to play.

**Q. Being a young team, what kind of tone are you trying to set in camp? What mentality do you want the team to take on?**

STEFANIE DOLSON: That's a hard one.

I think just learning. Like me and Sykes, we play hard every day. I think we bring that consistency that these young guys need in their vets. For us, coach has been emphasizing getting better, playing hard and just communicating.

I think for us, that's the most important part, is getting better every day, playing hard every day, then just constantly communicating with each other because we're also new. The extra communication is going to be really important for everyone.

**Q. What did you learn or add to your game in Unrivaled? How you think that's going to help you coming back here?**

STEFANIE DOLSON: I don't think I added much to my game in Unrivaled, to be honest there (laughter).

**Q. What did you improve at?**



STEFANIE DOLSON: Playing 3 on 3 full court (smiling).

Yeah, I think for me, Unrivaled was more of an opportunity to play with different players, play a different style of basketball, even though I played 3 on 3 the Olympic way. Just a chance to play basketball, like in general. I don't think it was really for me to go and change how I play or improve certain things.

I continue to work on my shot every day. Just, yeah, I'm a pretty simple player. I don't, like, do much outside of that.

**Q. Did you see anything different or improved from your Mystics teammates who were down there in Unrivaled?**

STEFANIE DOLSON: Yeah, I mean, all of them. Sykes is getting better every day. From Unrivaled to now, she attacks the basket really hard. Her confidence also. After her year last year, she wants to have a great season and healthy season also.

Like I said before, Kira, her confidence and her ability to attack the basket, finishing plays, finishing through contact is going to be really important for me.

Aaliyah also. Everyone saw her in the one on one. That's something that she can do every day. I'm excited to play with them all.

**Q. Obviously you played in a lot of different offensive systems throughout your career. Some on the ball, some off the ball. Last year I think you took a big facilitating lead. Have you talked with this new staff about your role as a facilitator? Is that going to continue to evolve or take more of a backseat this year?**

STEFANIE DOLSON: We haven't spoken about it specifically, but I do know that they know that part of my game. Coach Johnson has emphasized the parts of my game that he already likes and appreciates. Part of that is my passing ability.

I think with the team that we have in terms of cutting, Kira posting up, shooters, that's something that I can always bring to the table.

So yeah, I definitely plan on continuing that as much as I can.

**Q. With Georgia, you said she doesn't look like a rookie at all. Can you expound on that statement, what you've seen from her in this short time?**

STEFANIE DOLSON: Yeah, I mean, she impressed me from day one in terms of her confidence. I wasn't joking when coach asked questions during practice, she was the first one to answer every time. Answering things I didn't even know were a thing (smiling).

Just really impressed me with how much confidence she came in with. It takes a lot to, like, speak up on things that you don't know are true or right or wrong.

Just how fast she plays, how confident she plays on the court, as well. In general, she doesn't play like a rookie already. I'm excited to see how much better she gets.

**Q. With Sydney Johnson saying he wants you to shoot within eight seconds of the shot clock, as an interior player who can stretch the floor, what does that feel like for you, the pace that decisions need to be made effectively and efficiently?**

STEFANIE DOLSON: I mean, for me, I think it's just like allowing it to happen, then reading off of it. Obviously I'm not the fastest player here or in the league. I think for me it's just going to be letting it happen and then maybe being the trailer or next decision maker.

Okay, eight seconds. We don't get anything. Now what do we do? I think that's where I can come in, help the team a lot.

It's also pushing me to run the floor more, which I appreciate in my old age. I just try to get down as fast as I can. Usually Kira is beating me. I'll hopefully come in and get some trailer threes.

**Q. You have to be a quick thinker.**

STEFANIE DOLSON: Yes.

**Q. You mentioned Shakira being healthy this season. Do you feel like her ability to come back and being healthy (indiscernible) to make the offense more dynamic?**

STEFANIE DOLSON: Yes, one thousand percent. I think there were spurts of it last year when Kira was healthy. I specifically remember the one Minnesota game where she had a few times where she came down the court in transition and she was the one kicking it out.

She's not only a scorer, but she can facilitate the ball really well, get other people open, because we know people are going to collapse on her. They can't guard her one on one.

My ability to knock down shots can just help her, and she



can help me, and we can all help each other.

**Q. What have you told the rookies about preparing for their first season in the W?**

STEFANIE DOLSON: Nothing in a general sense. It's more like specific little things. I think Sykes and I have been trying to, me specifically with the post, her with the guards, giving little tips and tricks. When players are playing this defense, don't do this, try to do a little more of this. We know in the league people play it like this.

Just trying to teach them little by little because it's a lot if you throw all the information at them at once. We have so many rookies that it's hard to, like, give them everything.

We're trying to give them little by little. Once we have our first game, I think we'll have more of a kind of team meeting, talk, really prepare them for the first game.

**Q. You mentioned about it was fairly limited what you could grow on the court. In practices, with all of these rookies, what does that look like for you? What does improving and growing your ability as a team leader look like?**

STEFANIE DOLSON: For me, it's kind of not having an off day. Not that I'm a mom, but I feel like it's moms, you can't have an off day when you have kids. For me, I have a lot of rookies. I feel like every day I have to come in and give my best. Even if I'm tired or feeling down, when I see them all, see how eager and excited they are to play, they keep me young. It makes me more excited to be there and continues to push me as much as I can push them.

I think for me, that term of being a leader is just going to be consistently bringing my best every day and showing them what a professional player looks like.

**Q. Seeing so many of these rookies, having the experience of being in the league for a while, what do you think it looks like for players like them to be able to carve out a role, to stay in this league long-term the way you have?**

STEFANIE DOLSON: I mean, that's a hard question to answer 'cause everyone's different. But I think just, like, I don't know. Hmmm... It's opportunity. It's a talent. It's how they are as a teammate, I think.

I think for most players, at least for me, I can only speak to myself, and for me it's, like, doing the little things and staying really good at one or two things. But then there's other players who have expanded their game to every facet of the game, and that's helped them.

I think for me, it would just be coming in and working hard every day and being consistent in what you bring. I think that for me is why I've been in this league this long - maybe...

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