

# Washington Mystics Media Conference

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Washington, DC, USA

**Brittney Sykes**

Media Conference



THE MODERATOR: We'll get started.

**Q. An overall look. So many new faces in every spot around this building. Organization is in a different place than when you first got here.**

BRITTNEY SYKES: For sure.

**Q. What is it all like for you with all of the newness and adapting to all of it?**

BRITTNEY SYKES: I mean, it's like you said, it's new. Change is inevitable. So I just happen to be in a position where I've seen a lot of it happen in three years here in Washington.

I will say that this has been a dope experience to be a part of, just to start to see it all come together. Obviously in the beginning, everybody was trying to figure out what we were doing. Pretty quiet during free agency. Draft rolls around, we get our picks, now we're here.

We get our coaching staff, (indiscernible). We have practice for a week before. We get to see how things will be.

I got the privilege of being with Syd in Phoenix, working with him with USA. We had that chemistry together. Just all that tying in, just being able to say I think it's been pretty peaceful (smiling). It's been pretty peaceful just to have everything set in, everything finally starting to get going.

**Q. Sydney has talked so much about how he's leaning on you and Stef as leaders to steer everything, how important it is to have you for 44 games. You've been a leader before. How is it different this time with so much youth on the team, but also what he's asking from you?**

BRITTNEY SYKES: I think I kind of already knew how Syd was going to be, when he was potentially going to be our coach. I started to already prepare my mind for being a

leader for our team.

Then people leave, people depart, people get traded. I'm looking around going, Oh, man, I am the only one left (laughter).

I wanted this responsibility. This is something that has been on my - what do you call it - bingo card or something. This is something that's been on my list for my career to be a leader of a team, to be a go-to player, be somebody that the rookies can look up to, be a mentor. Never thought I'd say that word, but...

That's what's. Having these rookies, they're teaching me a lot. They keep me on my toes, whether it's fighting about what name they want to call me, whether it's Grandma or Auntie.

Even yesterday in practice I kind of choked up because one of the rookies said that even when we're competing, even when things are kind of hectic in practice, they still feel like they can come and talk to me, come and talk to Stef. That was something that I struggled with the last two years here, being able to communicate when things are hitting the fan.

For her to say that, I was like, All right, did some work (smiling).

But it's a credit to just Washington believing, (indiscernible) and J.T. III having those talks with me about who we potentially want to bring in, what do we want this organization to look like as this is about to change. Just to have those conversations and being of age to have those conversations now, it's pretty cool.

**Q. The scheme is changing. He wants to play fast, the eight seconds thing. Last year you were shifted into the point position. Might look different now. What is the conversation like? What do you envision your role having the ball out of your hands?**

BRITTNEY SYKES: I mean, make me run (laughter). Watching practice back every day is funny. I haven't ran to the corner like that since college (laughter).



I think it's really cool that Syd has went out and got some point guards. Just being able to open my gate again, be off the ball, see the game from a different perspective. Have not a little less responsibility, but it is a different game when you're the primary ball handler, have to guard the ball 94 feet, then you have to bring the ball up 94, now you got to run the offense, now you have to make sure everybody gets open.

Now I'm off the ball and I trust my teammates. When the ball comes to me, I either score or create for somebody else.

A little less responsibility, and that's okay for me. I do know I'm not going to be off the ball all the time. But way less than when I was in the last previous years.

It was fun, but it is good. It feels good to be back off the ball a little bit more.

**Q. Grandma or Auntie, which one did you pick?**

BRITTNEY SYKES: Auntie. I'm not no Grandma, man (laughter).

**Q. I wanted to ask about what your favorite parts have been, toughest parts, of taking on this sort of role as the leader, the mentor?**

BRITTNEY SYKES: I think the hard parts are what you don't see, like the therapy sessions, the talks, the hard talks with my people, having to hear like, Hey, you're not easy to talk to, you don't listen. That's been for years to come.

I think everything happens for a reason. The things I experienced only made me stronger, made me a little bit wiser, slows me down in a good way to where I have to start realizing that it can't be an excuse anymore, I'm just passionate. It's not coming across that way anymore.

I just think doing the hard work behind closed doors, in front of my teammates, being vulnerable, being transparent with any and everybody has given me like a superpower to be able to power through and be prepared for a position like this.

Once I saw it unfolding, I was okay. I was gearing up even more that my time is coming, it's time to go.

**Q. Stef mentioned in terms of being a leader, she referenced being a mom, but not taking any days off. It's literally going to be a longer season than last year. Might be a long season for other reasons, too. What**

**do you think is sort of the main key or challenge for you in terms of being able to do that sort of thing, be a leader every day through a long season?**

BRITTNEY SYKES: Yeah, 'every day' is the key word, just being consistent. That's my biggest thing. When those hard days come, say I can't do something physically, I know that I can probably execute it mentally.

Just being here for my teammates. Even if we aren't on the court, just my presence means something to the team. Just being a consistent leader, being a consistent presence, just being a consistent good person. You know what I mean? Every day being consistent. Have to be the same.

**Q. In your exit interview last year you talked about wanting to get your body right, literally be able to walk on two feet properly.**

BRITTNEY SYKES: Yes (laughter).

**Q. What was that like for you in the off-season? Are you feeling with the run-and-gun style we were talking about?**

BRITTNEY SYKES: It feels great. Hasn't been a year yet, but I'm tracking the progress when it comes to my foot.

I'm in a really great space, not just physically, but mentally, emotionally, spiritually. Everything is just clicking for me. I think it was literally after that interview, I think I left and went straight to L.A. and worked out with my P.T., Ruben Gonzalez. Every day just hit the ground running.

Then I just went back and forth between D.C. and L.A. I had the USA trial, made the team. Body was still trying to get back to it. Then we have Unrivaled. In Unrivaled the care was supreme, just as it is here. Just to have that in the off-season, be able to get my body right. Went back to L.A. for a month before I came back here for training camp.

All that to say, I did not stop. I did everything I possibly could physically to get my body back. I knew coming into this season it would mean a lot, not just to me but everybody to be back on that court for all 44.

**Q. Speaking of L.A., Kiki said in her press conference she worked out with you back when she was in high school.**

BRITTNEY SYKES: Yeah.

**Q. What do you remember about high school Kiki and how is it now having her as a teammate?**



BRITTNEY SYKES: It's crazy. It's really crazy. I really do remember her working out. His name is Dash. He's a trainer that we worked out with in L.A.

I can just remember doing the simplest of things. Catching the ball with the elbow, rip drive. There's videos of her dunking in that same gym we worked out in. It's just crazy to see how time flies. Now she's standing next to me as a teammate.

I don't take that for granted at all. I kind of just view it as an alignment thing. We were meant to be something working out in the gym together.

**Q. Stylistically what has stood out from the rookies so far? What has stood out to you in terms of what they bring to this team?**

BRITTNEY SYKES: They have good poise. I mean, obviously we haven't played any games yet. Even in practice when so much is being thrown at them, they show great poise. They have great ability to retain information. They're not afraid to ask. They're not afraid to mess up. That's big as rookies.

You don't smell fear on them. They look eager, wide-eyed, ready to go. I think they know they have an opportunity to come in and make a difference. To have that type of energy is changing the culture. It will be big for us.

**Q. Can you speak to how you and the other vets on the team have advised the rookies on that crucial transition from the college game to the W?**

BRITTNEY SYKES: Yeah, I mean, all of us have had our own tidbits to give them. My biggest one was if you're going to do something, even if it's wrong, do it with confidence. Don't doubt yourself, don't doubt your ability. Obviously just don't be afraid to make mistakes. I think those two go hand-in-hand. They've shown that. They're not afraid to make mistakes. They go out there and want to play ball just as bad as us.

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