

# Washington Mystics Media Conference

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**Emily Engstler**

Media Conference



**Q. How are you approaching this year, having been here for a little bit, even though it's a lot of new faces around here? For you personally, how are you approaching this year and a couple goals that you have, and do you feel a little bit more situated since you've been here a while?**

EMILY ENGSTLER: Yeah, definitely more comfortable than I was last season. I would say there is a bit more of a confidence coming to camp and like structure just from like being here with the same team, which is a first for me.

So I'm excited.

And I would say something that like is a goal for me is just to be open, to being available to whatever they need. So whether that's three, four, five, just being a sponge and soaking it in.

Another good thing is, I mean, I wouldn't say I'm a vet, but in this area, kind of a little bit. So just be open to being more of a leader. It's not a role I've played a lot in basketball. I'm a little more quiet on the court, stuff like that.

It's something I'm trying to be better at because we have a lot of young girls. That's a big one for me. And I'm trying to (indiscernible) that aspect.

**Q. We have heard a lot about the offense and how fast it is and the eight seconds to get a shot off ideally and all that. Curious, without giving away the state secrets here, can you tell us a little bit about what the philosophy is like on the defensive end and how you guys -- did you spend equal time on both sides of the ball, or has Sydney focused on one so far?**

EMILY ENGSTLER: No. I think we spent a similar time on both sides, defense being just as important as offense.

I think we're a team that defensively wants to stick to structure and principles. Again, we're extremely young, so

their experience category isn't how we're going to win games, but playing together and being prepared is -- and speed and our youth and that hungry vibe is how we're going to win games.

Offensively, yeah, we want to take things quick, but also smart. Like not just out of control, fast basketball. And I think we've been doing -- it's only been two days and I think we look pretty good at the things we been trying to accomplish. Super excited to see how it pans out.

**Q. Just to delve a little deeper into that concept, in order to play quickly and smart, you got to get the defensive stops. What have been the key components of the defensive philosophy that are going to be the foundational piece of that?**

EMILY ENGSTLER: The first thing is we're in the WNBA, one-on-one, guarding one-on-one. Stay in front of your man so that you don't need help. That's the first thing I think we're really trying to show the new players as well.

But then when that step breaks down, helping the team out. I mean, I thought we did a pretty good job at it last year. We worked really well together on defense.

And taking responsibility, accountability for when things mess up, but at the same time always guard your man, guard your man, because if I can beat them it's on me now.

If Sonia gets beat I need to step up. That's just what it is. I think we're doing a really good job taking the pride out of that and just helping each other every step of the way.

**Q. This offseason for you, what were some of the biggest things that you were most prideful about and how you were able to add to your game and set yourself up for this year?**

EMILY ENGSTLER: I would say throwing them threes up, all year. Definitely getting up more threes. Did they all go in? Maybe not. But I would say just kind of trying to keep growing my three point game, especially in this league.

Again, I'm not the biggest forward you'll ever see, so I need

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to be able to shoot the ball. Also getting a little bit more of a two-point game, that short corner two-pointer, high-post two-pointer. I had it when I was younger. Somewhere along the line kind of fell short. So getting that back into my game and finishing at the rim.

I think I got a chance to be more of a main player overseas and finishing with contact and finishing at the rim. So I think it's gotten a little better. I think even this season will help it grow even more.

**Q. Just thinking about first time since going pro being with the same team, having bounced around and having played overseas, there is a lot of players now who are rookies, who are undrafted, coming back. Just being around all those folks and your experience, like what do you think it takes to be able to carve out a role like you have to stick in this league?**

EMILY ENGSTLER: Resilience is a word I would use for this. It's been an extremely long journey. I wouldn't change it. At the end of the day I feel like the majority of the person that I've grown in this league is because the shortfalls, getting cut and getting back up.

Some people get cut and they're kind of just like, I'm good. I'm not investing in this career eight years, bounce back and forth and I think somebody I would bring up is Carley Sims. I think she's kind of dealt with that and we've had conversations about it, and she's made me feel like, all right, other people -- you're not the only person in the world that goes through these things.

She's the kind of person that makes you want to do more. Looking at myself now, being on the team for two years, I think it was worth it. I think I really like being a role player. I have no problem doing it. I think more people should be okay with being a role player. It's super fun.

At the end of the day -- and even sometimes your role can be five minutes, and because you played really good can be 25 minutes. Do what you're good at. Your role will grow over time, so just be resilient.

**Q. You talked about the confidence coming into your second year with the same team. It also feels like you're showing us a little bit more of your personality as you speak with us as well, too. Where do you feel like you found the majority of your confidence to come in with this -- I don't know in you want to call it bravado, but the confidence you do have? Seems like you're feeling a little bit lighter this year coming into training camp than last year and the year before.**

EMILY ENGSTLER: Yeah, I would say (indiscernible)

been helpful. As a person, like somewhere along the lines in the middle of last season you hit a point with a new team where you create these friendships, whether that's with staff or your teammates or just anyone in that building.

Relationships can make you comfortable, especially when they're positive relationships, and I've had a really great experience with this organization.

So middle and then towards the end it was like, wow, I really hope I'm back here. I can make a little home here. Obviously that's my goal. I would say somewhere along the lines of after a couple months you start to build relationships, and sometimes -- this is where maybe they're negative, but I've had a really positive experience.

I hope they continue to grow.

**Q. Obviously this is a new team this year. What have you all done for the camaraderie? Four of your first five games are on the road.**

EMILY ENGSTLER: For this season?

**Q. Yes.**

EMILY ENGSTLER: It's only been about a week. Hopefully in the next month we can do a little bit more stuff. We've had team dinner and just like we spend hours, five to seven depending on what you're doing, your treatment and all that stuff.

I just think it's a really positive environment. It also was a positive environment last season, so maybe it comes from that.

Everyone is so joyful, like that hunger I said about the young girls coming in. But it's made for such a fun start of this camp.

Even the staff. Like coach said, he's such a positive, passionate coach, so it's really been fun to learn and play with him. I hope we can do some more team activities. I think just that joyful atmosphere has allowed us to get to know each other in a positive way.

**Q. Last year there were big games that you shined and you speak about how that gave you confidence. Can you speak to how your fellow teammates who had you have played with have continued to sort of support you and what that support means to you and how that will motivate you?**

EMILY ENGSTLER: Yeah, I mean, I think those games, my biggest fans were the girls who were on my team. Like



it wasn't about the fans or my family back home. Like I would say supporting, but right there in that moment I wanted to play even better. You turn to the bench and you see everybody standing up going crazy. It's my first time going in and I'm hitting the three. They're just going nuts.

I think that was a huge part of my successes that I had last season to help out the roster. Again, it's followed through to this year. We don't have all the same players, but I can see that same atmosphere from this new roster.

So I'm super excited. I think we all just want to win, and however we get there, I think we want to see everyone succeed. So I'm excited.

**Q. What do you think your role will be on the team and how do you plan to contribute? How do you think you'll build relationships with your new teammates?**

EMILY ENGSTLER: For the first one, I'll be honest, I don't officially know what my role be exactly be on this team, and I'm okay with that. I want to work hard and earn a role that I get, however that looks.

I will say I do think I'll have one in some aspect, whether that's playing 20 minutes or playing five. I think I'm always going to be someone who contributes in one way or another. So I don't exactly know it, but what was that second one again?

**Q. How you think you'll build relationships with your new teammates?**

EMILY ENGSTLER: Easy. I think we've already kind of started building them and it's only been a week. They're so easy to get along with. I think that's really cool.

Obviously things are a little different when you get into a season, start losing, like that's kind of where I think relationships are tested. But I'm pretty confident that we're not going to have that issue, so that's a relief.

But, no, again, same as last season. We talked about the ten-streak loss and how we handled it. Big kudos to this organization.

Hopefully be can similar.

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