

Atlantic Coast Conference Basketball Tipoff Media Day

Monday, October 6, 2025

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Syracuse Orange

Coach Felicia Legette-Jack

Sophie Burrows

Laila Phelia

Women's Press Conference



Georgetown, has won at Delaware. I'm so grateful that Arizona State let her go so that we can have her on our team.

THE MODERATOR: I think she wanted to come to you.

FELISHA LEGETTE-JACK: Absolutely. I was hoping that no one else picked her up. I am so -- I mean, sometimes you try -- you have that bat, and you keep trying to hit that home run. You keep trying to hit that home run. We hit a home run with Natasha Adair. We're like fire and ice. I don't have to apologize for my fire anymore.

THE MODERATOR: I see in the nods here.

FELISHA LEGETTE-JACK: This is what she meant. That's me. Can't forget that Khyreed Carter has done a tremendous job, and we went and got sick, and he had to hold it down with his leadership, and for those six weeks we ended up getting coach of the year and finishing tied for second.

Amber Moore has been with me for four years and love what she brings to the table. One of the best shooters I've ever seen. We have two more new coaches as well. Natasha is a slam dunk hire.

THE MODERATOR: Talk to me about the genesis behind the Orange Hustle, and how do I get on it?

FELISHA LEGETTE-JACK: The Orange Hustle? I have to figure out what the Orange Hustle is.

THE MODERATOR: I thought you had a podcast.

FELISHA LEGETTE-JACK: We got one episode (laughing).

THE MODERATOR: Does that count as a podcast, one episode? I'm not that cool. I don't know.

FELISHA LEGETTE-JACK: Dominique Darius, she carried me on that and so I forgot that we even did it. Yeah, that's something we're going to continue to do, and it's like something where I want it to be flavored with family, and

THE MODERATOR: Welcome to the 2025 ACC Tipoff Q&A. I'm happy to welcome Syracuse to the stage. Head coach Felicia Legette-Jack. Coach Jack from here on out. Proud graduate of Syracuse. We have Sophie Burrows as well as Laila Phelia. Welcome, ladies.

SOPHIE BURROWS: Thank you.

LAILA PHELIA: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Coach Jack, in this day and age you're returning seven players, obviously mixing in some new players. Can you just talk to us initially about the excitement around your team going into this season?

FELISHA LEGETTE-JACK: Well, we're really excited about the seven that stayed. In a time where everyone wants to move around and do something different, I clearly have players that have an opportunity to do that, and none of them decided to leave. All seven that could return, did return. So really grateful for that.

We're exceptionally excited about the eight that joined as well, including a few new coaches as well. It's a bunch of new people, but it's one family, and it's still our family versus their team.

THE MODERATOR: Hit on the coaching staff changes, because have you a big addition that I think is fabulous.

FELISHA LEGETTE-JACK: Fabulous.

THE MODERATOR: Please speak to that.

FELISHA LEGETTE-JACK: Natasha Adair is one of the most special coaches in the business. A very veteran coach who has won at Charleston, has won at



Dominique is going to be the person that leads me in that category.

We've been so busy that we haven't had a second venue yet, but as we grow it and it becomes special, it's going to be great. But if it's not going to be special, then Dominique Darius gets the credit for that too (laughing).

THE MODERATOR: Sophie, last year you improved field goal percentage, improved your three-point field goal percentage. You more than doubled your points per game, which is remarkable that your scoring went up, but your accuracy followed. What's the focus for this year in terms of consistent improvement?

SOPHIE BURROWS: Yeah, I mean, I just want to win, so whatever the team needs for us to win, that's what I want to do, whether that's scoring, whether that's rebounding, whether that's, like, being a leader. I just want to do anything we can do to win, so definitely want to improve on that.

THE MODERATOR: Laila, as a fan, I'm so excited to see you back on the court this year. First of all, are you healthy?

SOPHIE BURROWS: Yes, ma'am.

THE MODERATOR: Then, secondly, having to sit out last year, what did you learn from the sidelines that you think you can bring to this program now?

LAILA PHELIA: Yes, definitely. I feel like I learned a lot about being able to lead off the court, and I feel like that is something that I can help with in the team.

And then sitting on the sidelines a lot being able to realize how important keeping our composure and everything and not being -- not getting riled up by the other team.

Just seeing all that stuff, watching a lot of film and everything, I feel like I can definitely bring that composure and leadership to the team.

Q. This question is for the players and coach. For the players, who is the team or player that you are looking so forward to playing this year? For Coach, is there one coach out there that you really love to go against?

SOPHIE BURROWS: I would I'm looking forward to playing with Uche. I think she's such an amazing athlete. You can throw the ball anywhere, and she'll catch it, so that's really awesome to play with, so yeah.

LAILA PHELIA: I would say I'm looking forward to, like,

being out there with everyone, honestly. Just the chemistry that this team has on and off the court, it's a blessing just being able to come in to practice every day. Everyone is smiling regardless. We feed off of each other's energy. I'm excited to be out there with those girls.

FELISHA LEGETTE-JACK: For me every coach is amazing. I'm going to do the cliché thing. There's nobody in particular I want to play against or, you know, show my stuff against.

There's too many great colleagues out there right now to kind of give somebody that extra umph. You have to be ready for every single one. Non-conference last year you saw how we struggled, so we can't overlook non-conference coaches either.

THE MODERATOR: I want to hit on your non-conference. All but one game at home. Was that an intentional or is it luck of the Irish, no pun intended, with the scheduling this year?

FELISHA LEGETTE-JACK: It's a return game. We had the return back home, some of them, but we were trying to schedule some away games that didn't work out.

But we did get a great schedule in Connecticut where we're going to play Utah and University of Michigan in a tournament. So we're excited about every game we play, particularly those two as well.

Q. Since you're touching on the schedule, the team begins ACC play with the road game at SMU, and you've added nonconference challenges like Auburn and SEC and ACC challenge. I want to know how important is the strength of schedule for preparing this team for post-season aspirations?

FELISHA LEGETTE-JACK: We talk about the strength of practice right now, and I think that's the most important thing is how you practice and how you bring your why to the table every day and how you get after it in front of your teammates in the darkness of the room and of the family.

If we can impress and work hard and leave it out there for our family on a daily basis and really grow through that process, you know, whoever we play is going to get the residuals of that. We don't understand all of you play away, you get more points than stay home.

We just want to go out there and compete in practice, and from practice we're going to show our story there. We're going to win and we're going to learn, and let the chips fall where they may from there.



Q. Last season the team had stretches of inconsistency in second half drops. What lessons have you drawn from those moments that you are trying to instill for better in-game adjustments and mental toughness going into this season?

FELISHA LEGETTE-JACK: Not being an inconsistent head coach. The inconsistency starts from the top, and we certainly didn't have the best coaching season last year. I take full responsibility of all the bad. All the good goes to the players.

We are working hard every day to not just get our mental focus right, but get our body right and get that in shape and really, you know, lean on the great staff that I have and have them bring something to the table. I don't want to call it the war room, but our table talk with coaches has been fiery at best and wondering what we need to do, how are you going to put these players out on the floor?

We have 15 great players that's ready and willing and competitively working hard to earn minutes. Through that process, we've got to figure out how to make it make sense, because right now it's all fine, right, until you put five to seven kids out and five don't play, and how do you manage that dynamic as well?

Inconsistency was when a kid got sad, we would put her out there and let her play. We're not making that mistake anymore. So we learned some mistakes, and I'm going to be a better head coach and, prayerfully, a better team.

Q. This is for all three of you. What is the next step for this team and this program?

SOPHIE BURROWS: I think the next step is an ACC championship. You know, we were talking the other day how Syracuse has never won an ACC championship, so we definitely want to make history this season and get there.

LAILA PHELIA: Yeah, I would definitely, just going off of her, the ACC championship, definitely need to win one of those. I would say that's our next goal.

FELISHA LEGETTE-JACK: Our next step is really understanding the culture that we've created. We win, and we learn, and we won championships before, all of us. So we know what that looks like, feels like, smells like. What we have to really honor is our why.

So the next step for us is really understand why we play this game, understand what our family is made of, understand the sistahood. Not the sisterhood, the sistahood that we're going to create. That's something

we're going to connect with the rest of our lives.

We've given that example with my teammates of the past and how we still get together after 40 years of graduation from college. Still get together with my college coach and really honor the foundation of what we're trying to become.

What we're trying to become is young women that become phenomenal women through the game of basketball. Yeah, you put the ball on the floor, and you're going to keep the score. Our goal is to have more points than you, but after we talk to you about having more points than you, we're going to tell you about our sistahood and our love for each other and our family dynamic.

Q. Sophie, this is for you since you were here last year. Could you talk a little bit about the differences from last year's team to this year's team in terms of personnel?

SOPHIE BURROWS: I think obviously we have eight new players, so that obviously changes the dynamic a little bit, but I think most of all it's the buy-in. We have amazing energy in the gym at the moment, and everyone has bought into the process, and I think that's just so obvious with what we're producing on the court so far. So I think that's definitely the main difference for me.

THE MODERATOR: Ladies, this is for you. Which teammate that maybe no one in the media is talking about right now that you feel like after a couple of games everyone is going to be, like, Oh, wow?

LAILA PHELIA: It's hard to really point out just one teammate, because ever since I got to Syracuse and just after -- I would say just after our practices started to ramp up and everything, even I'm looking at it like, Wow, this team is something special.

I've been able to have the opportunity to play with the Big Ten, with the SEC. These girls, what Sophie was saying about how they're all bought in, and there's no ego, nothing. Everyone is truly invested in their role, and it's going to be a great season.

I strongly believe that everyone out there is going to be, like, wow.

THE MODERATOR: You heard your head coach take accountability for last year, because right now what makes Coach Jack so special and the right person to be leading this program?

SOPHIE BURROWS: I think it's quite rare to find a coach who genuinely cares about her players on and off the



court. Coach Jack always wants the best for us. She would run through a brick wall for us. To be able to play under that, it's super inspiring.

I think her energy just filters down through the team, and it's very obvious that we have one of the best coaches out there.

LAILA PHELIA: I would say it's rare, definitely rare.

THE MODERATOR: This last question is for all three of you, and it's going to be a one-word answer. When I say "ACC women's basketball," what's the one word that comes to mind? Laila, let's start with you.

LAILA PHELIA: I would say resilience.

SOPHIE BURROWS: Competition.

FELISHA LEGETTE-JACK: Competitive.

THE MODERATOR: Syracuse, ladies and gentlemen. Good luck this season. Thank you for your time.

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