

Atlantic Coast Conference Basketball Tipoff Media Day

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Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Wake Forest Demon Deacons

Coach Megan Gebbia

Opal Bird

Breauna Ware

Women's Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome to the 2026 ACC Tipoff Q&A, and I am happy to welcome Wake Forest to the stage. Head coach Megan Gebbia as well as Opal Bird and Breauna Ware. Ladies, thank you for joining us today.

Ladies, you started the last season with nine straight wins, was the last undefeated team in the ACC before your first loss, made an appearance in the WNIT. How do you build on that success?

MEGAN GEBBIA: I think obviously, you know, it was a good year. We want to build off of it in a way in which we can go a little bit further in postseason play. I think that's always our goal is to get to postseason, right, and move our way up the ACC.

I think we have a talented roster this year, one that we purposely went in and recruited. I think our guard play I think is really good. I think we have attacking guards and really good bigs. Opal is an example of that, her and Mary Carter.

It's just exciting to kind of put a whole roster together that we feel is really competitive this year.

THE MODERATOR: Megan, you return six players and you've added six newcomers. What should we expect from this team? Any changes in the style of play?

MEGAN GEBBIA: Yeah, very much so actually. We are changing our style of play. Especially on the defensive end. But also offensively, I mean, we're trying to push the ball and play a little bit more in transition.

That was one of our most efficient areas offensively was transition, so getting the ball out even on other team's makes and pushing is something that we're focused on.

Then defensively we played mostly zone last year, so I think we're going to play a lot more man and press a little bit here and there and really just try to turn people over a little bit more than we did last year. We know that was an area of weakness that we want to capitalize on this season.

Q. Opal, a native of Sydney, Australia, and you have international experience. How has that experience impacted your game? The most impressive thing to me as a post, as your Coach just said, it's your passing. Second most assists on the team last year -- or second most among freshmen in the ACC last year. Just talk about the experiences that have led you to this point in your -- and how maybe you can expand on that this season.

OPAL BIRD: Yeah, I mean, if you have watched any Australian player, we're always looking for the next person, the next mate, as we say. But I think it's more about is this a good shot or can I find a better one? Obviously me being tall it means I can see more of the floor, so that's so easy to find someone that's open.

So I really like doing that. I like getting my teammates involved, and I feel like that's how our team had so much success last year, is because we were able to move the ball and find those open shots, get those layups and capitalize.

THE MODERATOR: Breauna, describe your game for fans in the ACC and what they should expect this season.

BREAUNA WARE: What they should expect is just a crafty guard from New York, gritty. Why are you laughing at me? (Laughing.)

No, crafty, gritty. We're going to do all the little things for us to win. Just bringing my experience to, you know, push them further than they were last year and just, you know, putting it all together.

Q. -- returning players have taken on bigger leadership roles and how have they influenced the



team beyond statistics? Like if there's been a practice or a session or a difficult moment so far?

MEGAN GEBBIA: I think Opal is a good example of a returning player that has taken on a leadership role. Whether it's on the court, off the court, she handles herself in a professional manner and gets the team together. She's just vocal. I think the vocal and the communication piece is kind of the glue for us moving forward. So making sure that we're all on the same page, talking on the floor, and things like that.

I think Mary Carter and Aurora Sørbye are also people that are returning that played a lot of minutes for us last year that we expect some outcome from them, right, and taking what they learned in the league last year and putting it into play and then just helping the new people along.

Especially with the offensive end. We haven't really changed a lot of what we've done on the offensive end, so they know what to do. So helping the new people kind of just direct traffic and things like that in practice.

We've had some really good practice sessions this year and have been able to move forward with a lot of the things that we've put in to play. So that's been fun, that we have a lot in.

We're in better shape I think just as a team. We've pushed them -- we've run a lot. Let's just put it that way.

Q. Opal, this is for you. Last year your freshman year, day one to the player you are today, what's the biggest difference you've seen?

OPAL BIRD: I'll just say playing in the ACC, like, you grow up in a basketball sense a bit. It's just so much faster, more competitive. Every game, two teams enter, one team wins. It's no matter who you are, what teams are going up against each other, we want to be competitive.

I think what I'm taking from last year to this year is that we're going to go in and be, like, we want to win this game, we're going to win every game.

Q. This is for all three of you. What message do you want to give to the Wake Forest fans this year about this team and how they should be excited?

BREAUNA WARE: We have a really, really competitive group. Practice is not a day off. It feels -- it gives like a feel of the ACC play, honestly.

But very competitive, very uptempo. We're going to play in transition, like Coach has said. We're going to move the

ball. It's not going to be just one person. It's going to be everybody as a whole, you know, playing. The main goal is to get to the NCAA Tournament and win a lot of games this year.

MEGAN GEBBIA: I mean, I would say we've given the fans a lot of hope in the past, and it's there. Now we just have to capitalize on the hope that they have for the team. They've talked to me a lot about love watching the girls play. You know, you guys share the ball. It's a fun style.

At the end of the day, though, we need to get the wins that we should have gotten, and I think just getting over the top and over the hump that way is exciting for them to look for. It's something to look forward to.

We play a lot of games in the nonconference at home, so they'll get a lot of views of us early on and just building that relationship. We're big on getting out in the community and making sure that there's a connection there with the fans. We're constantly trying to build our home fan base.

THE MODERATOR: Megan, last year your team averaged almost 17 assists per game, good for fourth in the ACC, which was up from 14 the prior year, and you forced 16 turnovers. You talked about playing more man this year, but how have those metrics led to success on the court for you?

MEGAN GEBBIA: The assist is huge, right? If you look at any program, the percentage of assists that you are getting usually leads to winning and success, but you have to have the other things that go with that, right?

So forcing other teams to turn the ball over is something that we really just didn't do enough in my opinion, and we turned it over a little too much. We had lot of young guards out there last year, and that hurts you, right?

Bringing Breana to the table now, someone who is very calm in chaotic situations and has had the minutes and understands where the ball needs to go and how we attack other defenses, you know, I think is really important.

But the assists, you know, I hope that that continues to grow for us, because it really was a highlight. It's hard to get assists in the league, and having 17 a game says lot, right? It's now not turning it over and rebounding really.

THE MODERATOR: Breana, you're a veteran guard. You've played in different leagues. You've played in a lot of arenas. As you get ready to go through the ACC, is there one arena that you're really excited to play in?

BREAUNA WARE: Ours, honestly. I just went into The



Joel for the first time I think Saturday, so it was really exciting. We have a lot of home games this year, so I'm excited to play in front of our fans and just soak it all in.

Q. This is not your first time to be the newcomer on the team. What have you done differently this time to make the transition easier?

BREAUNA WARE: Honestly I've been the same. The girls have been amazing. They welcomed me with open arms. My coaches have been great.

They just let me be myself, and we've bonded over just anything. It wasn't forced. It was just very authentic and real. Yeah, that's really -- it's been great.

THE MODERATOR: Opal, we talked about your table setting, but you also tied for the most blocks last season as well. What else have you added to your game to go into year two?

OPAL BIRD: I mean, in the ACC you've got to be versatile. You've got to be ready to do whatever the coach says. I've just tried to add more things to my offensive bag, whether it's shooting the three, finishing through contact, getting to the free-throw line and then knocking down the free-throw.

I just think I want to take bigger role on the offensive end and really add to the team, because I just want to win, so I'm ready to do whatever it takes.

THE MODERATOR: Six returners, plus the six newcomers, including yourself, Breana, tell us the one player from a newcomer perspective, and it could be you, that is going to make an impact on the ACC this season.

BREAUNA WARE: Okay, I can give you one person, but I really feel like our whole team as a whole is going to make an impact. I think our freshmen is going to be really big for us this year as well. They're probably under the radar, but they're really good, and I'm excited for them to hit the stage.

Playing with Opal, she's going to make an impact. She's already made an impact in my heart, but...

OPAL BIRD: Thanks, Bre.

BREAUNA WARE: Playing with Opal, she's really great. She can pass the ball and just getting us the ball. Guards don't have to work so hard for our shots. We have easy layups at the basket, and her just willingly finding us is just great.

I think us as a whole will make a great impact.

THE MODERATOR: Opal, what makes playing for Megan so special, and how does she make you a better player and person?

OPAL BIRD: I think as a freshman having a coach that trusts you and is going to trust you to make the right decision is so I think rare. That was the main thing coming when picking a school.

Like, who is going to trust me that I'm going to make a mistake, like I can a freshman, and she just believed in me and didn't let my head drop even if I would turn it over. She knew next time down the floor I'm going to make the right decision, and then I would because I knew she trusted me.

THE MODERATOR: How has she made you better off the court?

OPAL BIRD: Just with encouraging me to be a leader as well. Even though I was a younger person in the team, like she said this year, as a sophomore, it doesn't matter. You have a voice. Really use that. That's given me confidence to help all the newcomers, as you say, come in and really gel together as a team because it's game time soon, and we want to show how much we've bonded over the summer.

THE MODERATOR: This question is for each of you, and Breana, we'll start with you. Give me one word to describe Wake Forest women's basketball for the season.

BREAUNA WARE: Edge. Give me some, Coach.

OPAL BIRD: I'm just going to say competitive, and then I'm going to say we just want to win. Like, we want to win bad.

MEGAN GEBBIA: I should be saying edge as well, but I do think it's passion. Passion and competitiveness.

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