

Atlantic Coast Conference Basketball Tipoff Media Day

Monday, October 5, 2026

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Miami Hurricanes

Coach Tricia Cullop

Amarachi Kimpson

Gal Raviv

Women's Press Conference



really been working hard on that, working on being more uptempo. But also I didn't think our transition defense -- I thought we got better in that because we have quicker, taller; our perimeter has gotten bigger, and we needed to. That helps us defend.

That helps us get our shots off. That helps us see into the post, and you know I love my post. So I love the fact that that added height is just going to make us better rebounding so that we can get out and run.

THE MODERATOR: Gal, she mentioned you've got taller, but I noticed strength gains as well. You led the Israel team at the U20 Women's EuroBasket while averaging 28 points per game and seven assists. How has the offseason gone for you as a whole, and what lessons are you taking from your international play this past summer?

GAL RAVIV: First of all, thank you. I think the biggest thing is just, like, bringing the experience that I was able to gain internationally, playing a different role with different players, and a different style too. Bringing that experience and the confidence that I was able to build into the season.

THE MODERATOR: Amarachi, you started every game a year ago. How have you elevated your game this offseason, and how has this team elevated their overall level of play?

AMARACHI KIMPSON: Yeah, I think for me shooting was a big thing for me to elevate in my offseason. I know for the team-wise I wanted to up my leadership a lot more, especially coming into my senior year.

I think that was a big thing for me so we could be more successful.

Q. This is for the players. How do you balance basketball with your academics and other responsibilities?

AMARACHI KIMPSON: I would say time management. For me time management helps me with everything. It's a lot easier, especially, you know, our coaching staff, they help us, like, plan out our schedules, you know, having

THE MODERATOR: I am happy to welcome Miami Hurricanes to the stage. Head coach Tricia Cullop, senior Amarachi Kimpson, and Gal Raviv. The Hurricanes return five players from last season, including four starters while welcoming six newcomers. You doubled your ACC win total last season while also advancing to the second round of the WBIT. What's the next step for this program, and give us your initial impressions of this team?

TRICIA CULLOP: I think the next step for us is NCAA Tournament. We were two games shy of that last year. The magic number for the ACC is 11. We got to 9. We know what it feels like to be close and not make it, and so we really would like to see this team not only get there, but not be happy to get there. I'm very, very excited, because I think this team gets along really well. The chemistry, the culture.

What's great about having five returners is they know what it takes, and so their investment in the new players is phenomenal. They are working so hard and leading the way. That just makes my job that much easier.

THE MODERATOR: With six new players, should we expect a similar style of play from a year ago? If no, what should we expect?

TRICIA CULLOP: Last year I wanted to be a running team, but we weren't all the time. This year we can be. So I think what's exciting is that we've got three centers that we can rotate in that really rim run. We've got better three-point shooting, which if you would have asked me what do we have to get better at, I think there were things we wanted to do, but we just didn't shoot it well enough so we didn't get to spread the floor as much as we wanted.

This year I have a multitude of three-point shooters. We've



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practice in the mornings and school afterwards. I think just pretty much building your time around that helps.

GAL RAVIV: Yeah, I could add to that that I think how much the coaches are helping us and how we have check-in on academics every about two weeks, making sure we're good with all our classes, and if we need any help, they'll provide it.

THE MODERATOR: Tricia, we know there's so much change going on in college athletics right now, but one constant that I feel like is ACC women's basketball has remained one of the premiere leagues as long as I can remember. Why is that?

TRICIA CULLOP: I think the ACC is a tremendous league because we have great coaches; we have tremendous players. I looked it up the other day. We had the second most players on the rosters in the WNBA, and so it's a great training ground for players that aspire to play at the highest level.

It also means for our players you're going to get great, competitive games every night out. We're going to see teams deep in the tournament as well, which we saw this past season.

We love playing in this league. I love being in this league. I love representing in this league because I think it is amazing, I think it is competitive, and I think that it makes all of us better.

Q. What message would you like to share with the fans heading into the season?

GAL RAVIV: I just think for our fans is how much we're going to play team basketball, that we'll be fun to watch, and you're going to see how much we want it for each other and also for the fans. So just be great energy and great effort every single game.

AMARACHI KIMPSON: Yeah, I would say just to add on that, you know, their support means a lot. When they see, like, how well we work together as a team and winning games, I think them coming out will be such an important thing to us, and I want them to know that, so yeah.

Q. Coach, what the biggest area where you believe this team can take a step forward this season, and what has given you confidence in the offseason to show that?

TRICIA CULLOP: I think if you look at where we needed to improve last year, our three-point percentage, our free-throw percentage, our assist turnover ratio. Those

were three that just really jumped out at me. The one thing I will say is with who we returned, I have so much confidence in these two. Our three captains -- and I'll add Nay Adams to this -- they are great leaders and they set the tone every day in practice. They're just great kids to coach.

I think who we recruited to bring in blends so well with them. They help provide extra three-point shooting. They provided extra height so we could defend better, so we could pass into the post, so we could get our shot off quicker with taller defenders running at us. I hope that all adds and aids to those three points that I talked about.

I'll be honest, I thought we were a better three-point shooting team than we showed. I think that's maybe some composure when we step to the line, but those are things we work on every single day.

THE MODERATOR: Amarachi, cooking lessons, deep sea fishing, beach days, football games. This team has spent a ton of time together outside of workouts. What was your favorite activity, first of all, and what have you learned most about your teammates?

AMARACHI KIMPSON: I think my favorite activity was the fishing. I caught a lot of fish, so that was fun.

But, yeah, I mean, that I think building chemistry with the team was really special to me. I think that just helps us on the court, especially, you know, when talking to others, constructive criticism, all the above. I think, yeah, that was really special to me.

THE MODERATOR: Gal, it's my experience every head coach has their mantra or their saying that you're going to hear it constantly throughout a practice. What is Tricia's?

GAL RAVIV: I think just for this year I think, like, the big -- a big thing that she's, like, on us about is just running the floor and taking the ball out quick. I think, like she said, we want to be a running team better than we were last year. So just being able to do that and hearing her say that every practice making us do that.

THE MODERATOR: Amarachi, who or what is the X factor for Miami to get to the NCAA Tournament?

AMARACHI KIMPSON: I mean, I feel like the X factor is really all of us staying together. You know, you can't just hound on one person to build the load for everybody, so I think it's really helping each other out every single day, every single game.

THE MODERATOR: Gal, this will be year two for you



under Tricia. Can you describe what it's like to play for her and how she's made you a better player?

GAL RAVIV: Yeah, I think I've said it before. I think the biggest thing for me is that she cares about us as people more than a basketball player. Then obviously as a basketball player, she's passionate about our game and us getting better just as like as us being for ourselves.

I think that's the biggest thing you would want from a head coach is she wants us to succeed just as much as we do.

THE MODERATOR: Tricia, now that you're going into year three in the ACC, what are those elements or aspects of the game that you have to have if you are going to have success beyond your beloved post play?

TRICIA CULLOP: Well, I think you got to have veterans. I have that. You know, to have five players coming back that know what it takes to win. I think number two, you have to have great chemistry. I've said this a lot today, but I think having great chemistry is worth 10 to 12 points. You'll run through the wall for people you care about.

We're all going to face tough moments this season because there's so many good coaches, so many great players and teams. So when those moments happen, do you stick together or do you fall apart?

I think we did a better job last year. I think this group, just watching them, I have a good feel about it could be even better. I think that could be the difference between 9 wins in the ACC last year and maybe we'll be past that magic number this year, which is our goal of getting past that 11 mark, because that seems to be the mark to get into the NCAA Tournament.

I want that so badly for this group. I'm going to do ng in our power. I know our staff is too. We really want to see them succeed and have an opportunity. There's nothing like playing in the NCAA Tournament.

THE MODERATOR: Six newcomers to this program. Who has stood out the most to you and you think will make an impact in the ACC this season?

AMARACHI KIMPSON: Yeah, I think Anna. She's been, like, very outstanding, especially for just being a freshman, she doesn't play like that. I feel like she gets so much better every day. Her communication is great, so yeah, for sure I'm excited to see her play.

THE MODERATOR: This is for all three of you. Gal, we'll start with you. Give me one word to describe Miami women's basketball this season.

GAL RAVIV: I think she said it, but I think hunger.

AMARACHI KIMPSON: My one word, I would just say competitive.

TRICIA CULLOP: Relentless.

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