

NBA Draft

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Brooklyn, New York, USA

Yaxel Lendeborg



Q. Probably not the most important thing on your mind right now but you wore number 23 at Michigan. That's a problem right now.

YAXEL LENDEBORG: Very.

Q. Because Draymond Green is wearing 23 for the Warriors. Are you willing to pay him? Is there another number you have as a backup?

YAXEL LENDEBORG: My other number was No. 3 and can't do that one, either. I think now that I'm stepping into the NBA I'm going to step in with another number and start a new legacy.

Q. 30 maybe?

YAXEL LENDEBORG: There's no amount of money to pay him.

Q. Obviously it's always special to get drafted, but to go to an organization like the Warriors and to play alongside Steph Curry, what comes to mind when you put that into words?

YAXEL LENDEBORG: It's a full-circle moment for me. I've been saying this every time I get asked this question, 2016, I'm a big Kyrie guy, so I used to hate Steph Curry. So now that I'm actually going to be able to be on the same team with him, play and actually learn so much from him, it means a lot. I met him a couple times. He's a very great guy, genuine person. It's going to be an honor to be able to watch what he does in person. So I'm very excited.

Q. Go Blue.

YAXEL LENDEBORG: Go Blue.

Q. What was the group chat like between you and the other Michigan draftees that got selected, last night? What were you talking about? What part of the NBA are you excited to see?

YAXEL LENDEBORG: In the group chat, we were all super excited and nervous.

Morez was actually kind of pushing it -- his suit didn't come in until this morning. So who knew if he was going to look nice or not?

We all were just talking about who we think is going to go first, who is going to go where. Morez would always say he was going last, so it's funny that he went first. He got the first dinner no matter what. But I'm super excited for him and super happy.

I feel like what will translate quickly for me will be my defense and my versatility. That and just IQ of the game, making the right reads and making the right play at the right time.

Q. What was your reaction what you saw Dusty May was leaving Michigan to go to Dallas?

YAXEL LENDEBORG: I was shocked. I was driving at the time. I think I screamed right away, like no way, like what happened?

But you know, he's a great coach. He's going to be a Hall of Fame coach anywhere he goes. I definitely believe that. I'm excited for him. I definitely was shocked. Could have fell to my knees if I wasn't driving. But it was definitely shocking.

Q. When Dallas was on the clock, did you feel some type of way that coach didn't get you drafted at Dallas?

YAXEL LENDEBORG: I'm definitely mad at Dusty right now because we know who his favorite is right now. But I'm happy it was Morez. If it was anybody other than a Michigan guy, I might have blocked Coach, for real.

I'm super happy for Morez. He definitely deserves it, and he's going to be a great pro, for sure.

Q. Your journey wasn't a typical five-star path, so when things weren't guaranteed, what kept you believing that you belong here?

YAXEL LENDEBORG: My mom. She pretty much put me on this path. So there's many times where I wanted to give up and I wanted to quit and I would think, how would my mom feel about this?



She always kept the extra chip on my shoulder and extra motivation. I feel like just the fact that nobody believed in myself and nobody saw my talents or thought that I could amount to something, definitely made me want to out there and show everybody else that even if you were a five-star from day one, I'm going to go out there and outwork you.

Q. You're really big on TikTok Live. Will you go live to share this moment with everybody?

YAXEL LENDEBORG: I was getting told a lot to stay off of Live. Roddy [Gayle Jr.] and Trey [McKenney] are here, so I definitely will be getting on TikTok Live for just a little bit. I'm not going to go wild, but I've got to talk to some of the Michigan fans and hopefully some of the Bay Area fans. I'm very excited for that. Go Blue.

Q. Yesterday you talked to us a little bit about going back for one more year in college and how that journey really changed you. Can you talk a little bit more about that and how it feels now to be drafted tonight in the first round?

YAXEL LENDEBORG: Oh, for one, it feels amazing. When I was getting recruited by Dusty, he said he was going to make me a lottery pick. Evidently he made me a lottery pick, Aday and Morez. That decision was definitely the best decision I've ever made.

I went back because I didn't feel like I was ready yet. I didn't feel like mentally or physically I was ready for the NBA. I wanted to become a better person, better player. I wanted to develop pro habits. I feel like I accomplished all those things at Michigan and I unlocked a different version of myself that I didn't know was inside me.

Q. You mentioned you bring versatility, defensive intangibles and IQ, and you get to play with one of the most versatile guys in Draymond Green on that side of the ball, high-IQ player, Steph Curry, Steve Kerr even coaching you. What's that going to be like to learn from them and be a sponge the entire year?

YAXEL LENDEBORG: I'm super excited. Draymond was a pivotal, pivotal piece to all the championships that they have won. He's a phenomenal player and passer and all that stuff. He does all the little things well.

So I feel like learning from him and trying to get him to be my vet would be the most crucial part for me in my development. He's a good guy. I know he's a Michigan State guy; I'm really not too fond of that. But I'm definitely excited to be able to meet him and speak to him in person and learn. Just learn everything I can.

Q. This is June. It's men's mental health month. Going into this next chapter of your life, what is something that you're working on to keep your mind strong?

YAXEL LENDEBORG: I definitely work a lot on just positive self-chatter. My entire life, I was my worst critic. I still kind of am now. But I've gotten a lot better at using meditation, using prayer, music, using all of that stuff, just to slow my mind down, ease my system and find somewhere deep down to believe in myself, and know that I'm actually worth everything that I've been doing and I actually deserve this.

Q. Following up to the jersey number, what if Draymond says you can have No. 23 if you rock Michigan State gear for the entire season?

YAXEL LENDEBORG: Nah. Nah. I'm not doing that, man. I hate those guys. I only been there for one year, but I definitely hate those guys. All that they were saying, and they can't really say much because I went 2-0 against them this year. They are going to be little brother for me forever and I'm not going to represent the losers, ever.

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