

WNBA Draft

Monday, April 11, 2022

New York Liberty

Nyara Sabally



Q. How excited were you to hear your name called and to be picked by the Liberty?

NYARA SABALLY: I mean, super excited. It's a surreal moment. It's just something you look forward to your whole life and something I've been looking forward to all day. I've been nervous about it, but I'm just so glad that I could be here. It's amazing to get drafted by New York. This city is amazing, the organization is amazing. It's just very surreal, and I'm super excited.

Q. I want to know what you think about the roster that you're coming into and who you're going to be playing with after the success they had last year, too.

NYARA SABALLY: I'm super excited. It's a bunch of young kids -- not young kids, young women, that I'm super, super excited to play with. Obviously, Sab [Sabrina Ionescu], never got to play with her at Oregon, so I'm thrilled that I get to share the court with her. I'm just excited to also learn from them because they're such amazing players, players that have been in the league for few years. I got to talk to [Betnijah] Laney today, and she's amazing. She's such a sweetheart, so I'm just excited to learn from them.

Q. New York is infamous for its fans; how do you feel about playing here, and what are you looking forward to most?

NYARA SABALLY: I mean, we love a good fan base, right? Especially coming from Oregon. I'm super excited to have an amazing fan base here. They really show their support, and I just love that women's basketball is growing and people recognize it, especially in such a big city, in New York, that there's still people that really support the game and support their team.

I'm just super happy that I get to play on a team like that.

Q. Your sister had a lot of success playing with Sab. I know you just got drafted but have you had a chance to talk to her yet? Pretty good point guard you get to work with now.

NYARA SABALLY: Talked to Satou [Sabally]? I mean, she was on a Zoom call with me when I got drafted. I saw her face. She was very excited. But I didn't talk to her yet.

But I mean, obviously Sab is such an amazing point guard, such an amazing person. I saw her in practice every day, I saw her working every day on the court. So, I'm just very excited to finally share the court with her and not just in practice.

Q. You mentioned everything with Sab. Coach [Kelly] Graves had mentioned that right before the 2020 Tournament got canceled that there was a consideration of playing you in that tournament, and obviously that was with your sister and Sab and Ruthy [Hebard]. How much in practice, particularly leading up to that postseason that got canceled, did you actually have a chance to practice with her? I know you were hurt, but how much did you get to practice with her during your time there?

NYARA SABALLY: Yeah, like you said a couple weeks before the Tournament I started kind of practicing, and it was just so fun. I don't really remember anything of it because I was just so excited to be on the court and so excited to finally practice with my teammates. That was the most amazing part.

I don't remember a lot from it there, but I'm just excited to make new memories and new relationships on the court, obviously.

Q. I'm curious about what your discussions with New York's staff were like, what it was like to talk to Jonathan Kolb and Sandy Brondello, and what's the type of role you think you might have on this team that's still quite young?

NYARA SABALLY: It's amazing. I got to talk to them. I got to talk to Sandy. She's so cool. We found out we have a little connection, a little German connection. We spoke a little German. Her German is great. It was definitely amazing. I'm just looking to do whatever the team needs me to do. Obviously coming in, learning from the older players as a young player. I haven't played that much



basketball yet in my career, so I can really learn from them and take everything in, and that's what I'm trying to do.

Q. Last season rookies Michaela Onyenwere and DiDi Richards both played major roles in getting the Liberty to the Playoffs. What can you immediately bring to the table as this team prepares to make a major leap onto the WNBA stage?

NYARA SABALLY: I would just say my versatility. I think that's one of my biggest strengths, just offensively and defensively, just bringing the energy on defense and bringing the energy on offense and just scoring in the paint, defending the bigs and just bringing a little height.

Q. What advice has your sister given you about playing at this level? And how satisfying is this moment considering what you went through with injuries?

NYARA SABALLY: Yeah, definitely. Satou has given me a lot of advice, especially just saying that I've got to be ready for the physicality and how fast-paced the game is. It's a completely different level than in college. But at the same time just doing what I did to get here. That's the most important part, not like trying to change my game too much because what I was doing was the right thing and that got me here, so carry on to the league.

I mean, this moment, it was just amazing. It really -- I can barely put it into words, just that feeling of getting my name called, all the hard work in the training room was worth it, all the endless tears after injuries. But I'm just happy that the work that I put in finally got rewarded.

Q. I wanted to follow up on an earlier question about you said you would come here and defend the bigs. Last year New York struggled in the post. From day one looking at this roster, how do you think you best fit and how can you fill that role?

NYARA SABALLY: I mean, just using my strength inside and the power I bring inside, and just helping wherever I can, getting those boards, defending. But obviously New York just picked up a great post player that I'm excited to learn from. She seems like a sweetheart. I haven't had the chance to talk to her. I've only heard good things about her, and I'm super excited to have such a great role model at that position in front of me.

Q. I know it's very early in your career, of course, but in recent years we've seen some players making their national team a priority, especially here in France, and sometimes get in trouble with their franchise. Do you already have a plan or a vision for the combination of

your WNBA career and your international career with Germany?

NYARA SABALLY: I mean, obviously representing my country is a high priority. It's a big dream. I will always want to do that. But right now I'm just looking forward to establishing myself in the league and focusing on that right now, especially because Germany is not really playing this summer.

I'm just -- I've just got to focus on one thing right now, and maybe once this all blows over then I'll think about it.

Q. How do you see yourself next season on and off the floor in high-demanding offenses like the Liberty? How do you see yourself next season overall?

NYARA SABALLY: I mean, just bringing in whatever I need to bring in, doing whatever they need me to do. That's what I want to do. I want to learn. I want to grow, and I want to enjoy every moment and take everything in because you're only a rookie once, so just enjoying everything and having fun mostly.

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