

WNBA Draft

Monday, April 11, 2022

Dallas Wings

Veronica Burton



Q. What did the moment feel like to you, and what's it mean to be going to Dallas?

VERONICA BURTON: Yeah, it was a surreal moment, honestly. These are the moments that you dream about as a young woman, as a young girl. I think to just kind of see the hard work finally really pay off, it was just an unmatched feeling.

I'm thrilled to be going to Dallas. I can't wait to get started. I'm blessed, for sure.

Q. We talked about the color, seemed like a good choice right about now.

VERONICA BURTON: Yeah, for sure.

Q. Can you talk a little bit about maybe some of the conversations that you had with Dallas and maybe what you know about the team and how you think you can fit in there?

VERONICA BURTON: Yeah, for sure. I had a wonderful conversation with Dallas. I don't know, I think I just really connected with them. I was thrilled, Vickie Johnson and Greg Bibb, just so many of them, they really had a welcoming sense to them as soon as -- it was through Zoom, but I don't know, I'm just thrilled to be kind of a part of that family. I think I'll just bring that point guard position where I can contribute, create. But honestly, whatever they need me to do. Coach Johnson had talked about just kind of wanting another defender that can really stop ball handlers, keep people out of the paint. So if that's what she needs, that's what I'm going to give her. I'm excited to fill that role, and whatever they ask me to do, I'm going to try and do it.

Q. We saw Dallas make a playoff appearance last season. What do you hope to bring to this team? We saw them make some free agency moves, and really just an up-and-coming team. What do you think is going to be specific and unique that you can bring?

VERONICA BURTON: Yeah, a hundred percent. That's exactly what I want to be joining. I want to get back to the

playoffs. I want to be on a winning team and help them win in any way that I can. I think that defense is something that I do bring that is something that is a separator for me. So just the effort and the heart that I have on that end of the floor is definitely something I'm going to look to bring day in and day out, just being consistent on that end.

And just being a true point guard, I think that's beneficial, as well. Just kind of being able to create. I have great scorers on that team, so whatever way I can get them the ball, that's what I'm going to do.

Q. I want to ask you a personal question: Who inspired you as a young athlete, and how did that inspiration transfer to college and then how do you think it will transfer to the pros?

VERONICA BURTON: This is more than one person, but I'm going to say my family. When I grew up, pretty much everyone in my family played sports. I was blessed to go to Northwestern, where both my parents played sports at Northwestern. And all my siblings really paved the way for me. They all played collegiate athletes, as well.

More specifically, I'd say my grandfather. He passed away when I was 3 years old, so I unfortunately didn't get to really know him too well. But I've heard just so many stories and tremendous stories. He was an All-American football player at Northwestern. Just kind of seeing his growth and the work that he had to put into it, from those stories alone, I think that's the work ethic that I really resemble. I don't know, I'm just never really satisfied.

Q. Your game has been very efficient, but you had a jump your senior year specifically and your ability to deliver the ball to your teammates. You were eighth in the country in assist percentage. I wonder what in your game allowed that to happen, to jump from just under 30 percent to almost 40 percent?

VERONICA BURTON: Yeah, I would say I'm a big film girl. If you know me, I'm going to be watching a lot of film. I think in terms of assists, it comes down to just understanding what my teammates want, where they want the ball, their tendencies, what they do on the court. I think



through watching film and just obviously through chemistry and kind of getting that experience with them, as well. But really just once I know where one of my teammates is going to be successful and where they're going to thrive, that's where I'm going to get them the ball.

That's kind of what I study, and as a point guard, that's my job.

Q. You've always been known for your defense. You took your offensive game to another level as a junior and senior. When did you start thinking you could be a first-round pick?

VERONICA BURTON: Yeah, honestly that wasn't something that I really thought about too much. Coming into this, I had very minimal expectations. I don't really like to get my hopes up too much. But obviously I had heard about it. You see the mock drafts and everything like that, and you hear the conversations. And so talking to some of the coaches, I think that's when it kind of became more and more on my mind. Over the course of the season, I knew things were going pretty well.

But what round I went in and what pick I was wasn't really at the top of my mind and not something I thought about too much. I'm just blessed and happy to be here.

Q. Can you talk about what do you think is the biggest lesson you've learned at Northwestern and from Coach McKeown that you think will prepare you for your time in the WNBA?

VERONICA BURTON: Yeah, I've learned so much from Northwestern and the people at Northwestern and Coach McKeown. I would say the biggest thing that I've learned there and just in my life is just the humility aspect. I think at a school like Northwestern, at a program like Northwestern, it's hard to get respect there. It's hard to be seen as a top program. But I think that humility really just allowed me to kind of be more motivated and drive me more. We love that underdog mindset over there, and that's honestly what I carried through. I've learned so much, though. I can't narrow it down to one.

Q. Obviously you just mentioned the underdog mentality. You weren't a top 100 recruit out of high school. Now you're a top 10 pick in the WNBA Draft. What's your mentality going into the WNBA, and are you going to kind of keep that sort of chip on your shoulder?

VERONICA BURTON: Yeah, for sure. I think that chip on my shoulder is what got me here. Yeah, out of high school it was tough to get looks at, honestly. I didn't have many

offers. It was a struggle.

But obviously I went to the right place at Northwestern, and I hope that's the same with Dallas. I think it really comes down to the place and the fit and my mindset, and that mindset has certainly not changed. I just want to continue to get better and better. That's in my control, so that's what I'm going to do.

Q. You mentioned how you've enjoyed being a point guard in your time at Northwestern. How does it feel to go to a team with such a predominant scorer like Arike Ogunbowale? How does it feel to know you have such a dynamic scoring option to get the ball to right on day one?

VERONICA BURTON: A hundred percent. It makes my job easier. When you've got scorers like that, Marina Mabrey, Arike, all those other amazing women and players, it makes the point guard look better and better. So I'm definitely excited. I'm excited to play with them. I'm excited to play against them and compete with them in practice and everything. But yeah, that'll be helpful. I'm about to go study all their games tonight even more and just learn where they want the ball, too. Where they want it is where I'll give it to them.

Q. Within this team last year there was a lot of uncertainty with the changing of starting lineups day in and day out, game in and game out and minutes fluctuating. With that uncertainty coming in on day one for you and the competition coming in at camp, what is your mindset coming into that competition and that possible uncertainty of the minutes under the circumstances you'll play every day?

VERONICA BURTON: Yeah, I would say the amount of minutes that I play this year, whatever that may be, whatever that may look like is not really on the top of my mind, because honestly I don't care. I'll ride the bench if I have to. I'll start if I have to. Whatever they need from me is what I'll do and I'll be happy to do it and I'll be cheering my teammates along the way no matter what. I'll be trying to uplift people no matter what.

Yeah, there's a lot of uncertainty and I'm definitely going to compete at the best of my ability day in and day out and bring all that I have. The rest isn't really up to me.

Q. When you look at just the league itself and how much it's grown and how much it continues to develop, what are you looking to add to that mix as far as being able to further the league and be able to be inspiring to young girls that may be watching you?

VERONICA BURTON: Yeah, a hundred percent. I think the growth of the league is just a tribute to all the players, all the women and all the people behind the scenes that are putting in the effort to really grow the WNBA and make it what it is. I think it's come so far, and I just think it's continuing to get better and better. So I'm going to do whatever I can to continue to match that and increase that. Whether that be on the court, I'm going to compete at the highest level that I can and just kind of increase the competitiveness on the court. Off the court, I think I'm big on building relationships and engagement with the fans and the young kids. Just kind of knowing that I had older women to look up to in the game of basketball was huge, so I just kind of want to be able to lead that same path.

Q. How does it feel to finally get drafted by the WNBA, and what are your thoughts on the type of career Arike Ogunbowale has had so far?

VERONICA BURTON: Yeah, it was a surreal feeling. Just kind of knowing about Dallas and seeing Arike, I watched her in college at Notre Dame and just kind of seeing her thrive in the league, as well, she's had a tremendous career. I know she's not even close to being done yet. I am excited to see her grow and hopefully I can be a part of her journey.

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