

WNBA Draft

Monday, April 11, 2022

Los Angeles Sparks

Rae Burrell



Q. What does it mean to be going to Los Angeles and joining that franchise?

RAE BURRELL: I'm honored and blessed. There's a lot of great players that are recently there. There's legendary players there right now. I'm just excited and blessed to be able to play with them.

Q. Who was with you during draft night? Secondly, I did see that Kellie Harper made the trip. What does it mean to you that your coach was here as you transition to the next level?

RAE BURRELL: Yeah, my mom, my dad and my brother were here, and Kellie was able to make the trip and come. I just really appreciate her support. She's been there for me through a lot of adversity, and I appreciate that. Her support tonight means a lot.

Q. You're the first Las Vegas to be drafted in 11 years and the highest ever. How important is it for you to represent your hometown?

RAE BURRELL: It's so important. Vegas for the longest time got overlooked, so I'm just happy to pave the way for future ballers that want to take the same journey that I did. I just hope I'll be a great role model for young kids back at home.

Q. Just wanted to ask if you had any conversations with LA leading up to the draft, and what that looked like about what they want your role to be and how you can impact the team right away?

RAE BURRELL: Yeah, I had a conversation with Coach Fisher a few days ago. He said that he's excited for me, and he likes to play his rookies and give them a chance, and I can come in as a wing player that is versatile and give them a lot of upside.

Q. Where would you say this ranks among the best things to ever happen to you?

RAE BURRELL: Oh, definitely at the top, number one. It's probably one of the best days of my life.

Q. What does it mean to you to be able to join a team that has as much talent as the Los Angeles Sparks do?

RAE BURRELL: It means a lot to me. I'm just honored to be able to play with such great players. I've played against a few of them in college, so I'm happy to play with them as teammates now. There's also some legendary players on there that I'm excited to learn from, as well.

Q. Speaking about some of those legendary players, Nneka Ogwumike was in the room for your draft. Were you able to talk to her, and what inspires you about Nneka's career so far in the WNBA?

RAE BURRELL: Yeah, she's had an amazing career. She's done great things with the team. I got to speak with her when we were on our tour at WNBA PB. I don't know if I got that right. I was asking her a lot of questions and she was already being so helpful with me. So I'm excited to follow her lead as I go into this next phase of my life.

Q. I just wanted to circle back to what you said earlier about being a role model to kids back home. What are you hoping that they learned or have taken away from your journey thus far?

RAE BURRELL: I hope they learn that if you stay the course and really focus and work hard that you can come with the outcome that you want it to be. Even through adversity you can stay through and even embrace it and get through it and still come out with results. I hope they see that working hard can turn your dreams into reality.

Q. What was the experience like in New York this weekend?

RAE BURRELL: The experience for me has been amazing. I've loved every single part of it. I love being around the other draftees and getting to see the Empire State Building and getting Lisa Leslie on the bus and we get to sing with her. There's not that many people that say they can do that. I've just been having a lot of fun.

Q. When you heard your name called by Los Angeles,



do you get nervous sitting there waiting? How relieved and happy were you to hear your name?

RAE BURRELL: Oh, yeah, my heart was beating almost out of my chest. I was trying to focus on my breathing because I didn't want to freak out. I was just overwhelmed with joy and happiness that my name was called. I just feel so blessed to be in this position.

Q. I wanted to ask you, you talk about playing alongside Nneka but also Liz Cambage is there, being coached by an NBA champion in Derek Fisher. What are some things you're looking to adding to this roster to be a strong contributor throughout the season?

RAE BURRELL: I'm looking forward to adding some versatility to the roster. I'm a big guard. I'm lengthy. I like to play defense and I also like to play offense, so hopefully I can help on both sides of the court. Just with the help of the vets and learning and absorbing all the information that I get, I think I can really help this team.

Q. What would you say your mental makeup is like?

RAE BURRELL: My mental makeup? What do you mean by that?

Q. Just when you go into what you do, how you prepare for things, how you go about yourself during the games, under pressure situations and thing like that.

RAE BURRELL: Okay, yeah, I feel like my mental makeup is I'm a competitor and I'm driven. One thing you can control all the time is your work ethic and I feel like I'm always going to bring 100 percent to the table. I'm going to work hard and do the little things. Just keeping that competitive mindset.

Q. How do you envision yourself on and off the floor and what would you like to learn from a coach like Derek Fisher?

RAE BURRELL: I envision myself on and off the court as an energy booster. I want to bring a lot of energy and youth to the team. There's already a lot of good youth, but I want to add to that and bring some grit to the team, as well.

Derek Fisher, he was in the NBA. He knows a lot. He's very experienced, so I think I can learn a lot from him. I can build a relationship with him and do great things for him.

Q. You are from Las Vegas and now you're playing out

West. How excited are you to be in L.A.?

RAE BURRELL: Yeah, I'm super excited. Ever since I was a kid, I've always driven over to L.A.. It's right next to Las Vegas. We're neighbors. I'm excited to be that close to home.

Q. Do you remember when Candace Parker came straight out of Tennessee and got drafted to the Los Angeles Sparks? How has her game between Tennessee and Los Angeles inspired you to put together a good career in Los Angeles compared to a good basketball career in Tennessee?

RAE BURRELL: Candace, she came in and had an immediate impact and changed the game for them. I hope to do the same thing, just come in and come with that same grit and grind that she did, and to be half the player that she is.

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