

WNBA Draft

Monday, April 11, 2022

Connecticut Sun

Nia Clouden



Q. What does it mean to be drafted tonight and to go to a team like Connecticut, one of the best in the league?

NIA CLOUDEN: Yeah, to be drafted is definitely a dream come true. It's something I've wanted to achieve since I was a kid playing basketball, and then to go somewhere like Connecticut with a great team and great players, I couldn't ask for anything better to be able to come in there and learn from them.

Q. Where was Connecticut kind of on your radar heading into tonight? How were you feeling? Surprised at all?

NIA CLOUDEN: Connecticut was high on my radar. I had great conversations with Coach Curt Miller, so when I knew that I was still around at 12, I wasn't surprised when they picked me. I was just really glad and appreciative, especially after the talks I had with him, and we really got to have some good talks and conversations together.

Q. Connecticut is a very deep team and it's going to be a competitive training camp. What do you plan to bring to the table to try to make the team and make an impact?

NIA CLOUDEN: I just plan to work hard, be vocal, and just learn, learn as much as I can. Like we said, Connecticut has some really great players, Jonquel Jones, Alyssa Thomas and more, so just being able to learn from them and then just work and keep working and working and working, and that's what I plan to do.

Q. Just what was going through your head? What was the reaction with your family, with Suzy when your name got called?

NIA CLOUDEN: What was going through my head was just excitement, excitement to get drafted, have this dream come true and walk up on the stage and know that all the work I've put in has paid off. Just really excited to go to Connecticut and a place where they have great players and I can learn so much.

Q. Describe being the fourth first-round draft pick in MSU women's basketball history.

NIA CLOUDEN: I kind of didn't hear the first part of that question, but I think you said describe what it's like to be the fourth Spartan that's a WNBA draft pick, and it's really incredible to be in such a small group of people, people who I really look up to and people who I've been trying to be like since I came to Michigan State and landed in East Lansing. They've been really big role models of mine. To be in the same conversation as them is great, honestly.

Q. Growing up in the DMV, how familiar are you with a lot of players on this roster, whether they played at Maryland or you knew them from high school or growing up, and how does that add comfort coming into this situation?

NIA CLOUDEN: Yeah, it's a really comforting situation to be coming to, being familiar with a lot of players, like I played against Kayla Charles and watched a lot of the players play. I was in high school when Jonquel Jones was at George Washington, so a lot of players I'm familiar with, and it's been really great. When I was talking to Curt Miller in the interview process, I had mentioned, I just feel like it's a really good situation there.

Q. How do you envision yourself in training camp, and how would you like to raise the level of your game in this team?

NIA CLOUDEN: Yeah, so to raise the level of my game I plan on trying to improve my defense and my physicality and my strength overall, just obviously because the WNBA is a league full of grown women who are bigger, stronger and faster. So, to be able to improve those things are really my main goals and improve my whole overall game, as well, and to just learn more as I experience more things in the league.

Q. You saw the way that the Connecticut Sun grew last year, establishing themselves and making themselves one of the greatest title contenders in the WNBA. What will you bring to the team even if you have to come off the bench and play five minutes?



NIA CLOUDEN: What I just want to bring to the team is a spark. I don't really care how much I play for, five minutes, I'm going to give my all and give Connecticut a spark for when I am in the game. Just being a competitor and a hard worker, and someone who challenges my teammates and gets challenged by them is something I want to bring to the team.

Q. Earlier this year Michigan State came and beat my Fordham Rams. You led them in scoring. I'm wondering is there any team you're looking forward to playing the most this year with the Sun?

NIA CLOUDEN: I'm looking at playing D.C. because I'm from Maryland, so it'll be kind of like a homecoming. So, I'll be able to have a lot of family there and they're a great team with great players, so it'll be a competitive game.

Q. You're an electrifying scorer. When you were growing up, who did you model your game after?

NIA CLOUDEN: I don't think I really modeled my game after anyone, but I really was influenced by Kobe Bryant. He was my favorite player of all time, and just seeing his mentality and how he tries to get a bucket every time is something, I kind of have that mentality, as well. So just his mentality of get things done.

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