

WNBA Draft

Monday, April 11, 2022

Seattle Storm

Elissa Cunane



Q. What has this whole weekend and today been like for you and what does it mean to be drafted by Seattle?

ELISSA CUNANE: Thank you. It's been a great weekend. To hang around the people that were drafted tonight and spend some time in this city. I'm excited to be drafted to Seattle. I'm excited to get to work and learn from some of the veterans over there.

Q. Wondering just what your expectations were coming into tonight and how you feel about going to Seattle? Were they on your radar at all?

ELISSA CUNANE: I didn't really have any expectations for tonight. I know the WNBA is a very tough league to get into with the roster spots, so I was just looking forward to hearing my name called, which I did, and I'm excited to go to Seattle. I didn't have a specific team in mind that I wanted to go to. So being picked up by Seattle is amazing.

Q. In terms of the WNBA roster spots, when did you become aware of that? I've talked to some athletes where they kind of arrived at training camp and were like, whoa, I didn't realize how many spots there were compared to how many people are drafted?

ELISSA CUNANE: I mean, growing up having a dream of being in the league, I think you kind of notice that -- you know there's only 144. I think knowing that going into tonight, I was just prepared for that.

Q. What experiences from NC State will you take with you to the next level the most? What will translate the best for you on the next level in the WNBA?

ELISSA CUNANE: I think the versatility that I played with at NC State, being able to shoot the three, playing inside, but also my levelheadedness in big moments and in big games, being able to perform at high levels against great people, and I think just being a team player. NC State didn't always need me to be the leading scorer every night. So just doing what the team needs me to do night in, night out.

Q. And if I can get a thought on Kayla Jones being selected a few picks after you. How exciting is that for you and the NC State program to have two players go back to back in the second round like that and your excitement for your former teammate?

ELISSA CUNANE: Yeah, that's huge. I didn't get to see any picks after mine. I'm very excited KJ got chosen. She puts in so much work. I'm so proud of her. I really think she can make an impact at the WNBA level.

Q. I wanted to talk about the quote on the inside of your jacket, the be still and know, and you referenced God's plan. I know you dropped a little bit there to the second round, but do you feel like that is almost kind of fitting in God's plan that you get to go to a team like Seattle and play alongside some of the greats that you do?

ELISSA CUNANE: Yeah, of course. His plan is greater than anything I could think of myself. So being able to go to Seattle and learn from the pros over there, I'm just very excited, and I wouldn't have it any other way.

Q. What are you looking forward to about playing with those veterans and legends they have up there in Seattle?

ELISSA CUNANE: Just being able to learn from them, on the court, off the court, their work ethic and their experience in big games and in championships. I'm really just looking forward to soaking up as much as I can from them.

Q. I wanted to get your thought on what Coach Wes Moore is building obviously with you being drafted and KJ right after you. You guys have to be really proud of what the program is becoming.

ELISSA CUNANE: Yeah, I think Coach Moore has a great team over there and obviously being part of that for four years. He's a great coach, an even better person, and if he continues to bring good people to this program, he's going to continue to see the success that he has.



Q. I have to ask you a little bit about the hometown here; what is it about Summerfield, your high school, the area you grew up, that has contributed to your game and helped you get to this point?

ELISSA CUNANE: You know, I think being from a smaller town, I wasn't as looked at coming into college out of high school, so I think just kind of being an underdog in that situation and making it to the collegiate level. I have a lot of Summerfield in me and I'm just proud of that, and I think I can definitely take that to the next level.

Q. I know your dad Dan was back home along with your dog Bailey tonight, you shouted out to them. What does this mean to you and your family, being drafted in the WNBA after all the hard work you've put in, some injuries that you've overcome and enjoying this night?

ELISSA CUNANE: Yeah, it's huge. You know, my dad couldn't be here tonight, but I'm super thankful for his support and I know he's proud at home, and just my mom and brother to be able to be here. The reason why I love basketball so much is because it brings my family together, and so I'm just really excited to continue playing at the next level for them.

Q. How important for you is it to be in training camp and pick the brains of Sue [Bird], Breanna [Stewart] and Jewell [Loyd] and what you would like to learn from them?

ELISSA CUNANE: You know, just their games. I grew up watching Breanna Stewart as I was younger and just her versatility, her ability to shoot the ball outside and also mid-range/inside postgame. To soak up as much as I can from her. She's gone so far and she's such a big player in the league, just being able to be like that and learn from her and incorporate into my own game.

Q. Could you go through what it was like watching these picks come and being there and having to wait that long? What's going through your mind and what was that experience like?

ELISSA CUNANE: You know, every time a pick was chosen, I was just happy for the individual that was chosen. There's definitely some shifts that went on, but I was just very excited for every person that got chosen, and then when it finally came down to my name, I was excited just to walk up to the stage.

Q. How surprised were you that you lasted as long as you did?

ELISSA CUNANE: Like I said earlier, I didn't really have any expectations coming into tonight. I was just hoping to hear my name called, which I did. Whenever I heard the commissioner say my name, that was exciting for me.

Q. You are a Carolina girl; you went to high school here, you went to college here, you're now about to go experience a different coast, different part of the country. How excited are you to get to a different area, experience something different than what you grew up around?

ELISSA CUNANE: Very exciting. I was at college an hour and a half from my house, and so I'm very excited to travel across the country, just different culture, different people, and just kind of be independent.

Q. Is there anything maybe in North Carolina or East Coast that you plan to bring over there that you think might be a little different to people in Seattle or some of your teammates?

ELISSA CUNANE: I think myself. I have East Coast in me. I have a little bit of Carolina in me. I'm excited to bring my game over there. It's something that they probably haven't experienced or even watched as much since we were on the East Coast in college.

I'm just excited to go over there, bring myself over there, and honestly looking forward to the opportunities they have.

Q. We talked about you waiting in the green room, I'm sure it was a tense moment, but Coach Moore likes to keep it light and crack jokes. Was he keeping you relaxed and at ease and what were some of the things he was saying to you waiting in the green room there?

ELISSA CUNANE: Yeah, Coach Moore told me that when I was going to college like some coaches that wanted me didn't get me, some coaches that didn't offer me regretted that later. So, he said I'm going to go wherever I go and make whoever didn't pick me jealous.

Q. You got drafted to a team that's been loaded with history and championships. What are you hoping to bring into a team that's led by Breanna Stewart and Jewell Loyd?

ELISSA CUNANE: You know, I'm used to championships, as well, from the ACC, so I think just going up there and being able to learn from people that have gone all the way in the WNBA, and what it takes and the grit it takes to make it throughout the whole entire Playoffs, and just the skill they have, the knowledge they have, and I think I can

bring some more skill to that team and just be able to expand it.

Q. To go back to what you said about being used to becoming a champion during your days in college, you went as far as the Final Four, and that's the farthest NC State has ever made it in the NCAA Tournament. What can you tell me about the type of championship player you've become?

ELISSA CUNANE: I think you just realize that a championship is just one game. It's one loss and you're out. Just being able to perform every night, and if it's not your shooting night, then what are you going to do on the defensive end to make sure your team wins, and also staying levelheaded in the moment and not letting the moment be too big.

Q. We're coming off an unprecedented year last year with the WNBA viewership and this year with March Madness viewership. How does it feel to be a woman in sport and be pioneering a professional career?

ELISSA CUNANE: I love it. I think we're in such a time of change right now, and I'm excited that I get to bring my value to the league, not necessarily on the court but off the court, as well, and just being able to be a part of the organization that so many women have put their lives into developing over the years and being able to be a part of that.

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