

WNBA Draft

Thursday, April 15, 2021

Shyla Heal



Q. What's it like to be drafted, and what do you know about Chicago? How excited are you to join them and play for them next season?

SHYLA HEAL: Look, it just feels so surreal right now. I actually have been picturing this moment, visualizing it since I was a little kid. Just so happy all my training has paid off.

Yeah, I can't wait to get to Chicago. I've been talking to them for a little bit now. It seems like such a good culture, and I know it's going to be a great fit for me. I can't wait to get over, learn from all the veterans and keep getting better but also contribute, as well.

Q. Just wanted to ask about your thoughts on getting to play next to Courtney Vandersloot and learning from her.

SHYLA HEAL: So I actually went back when I started talking to Chicago, watched some tape on the team and Courtney. She's just such a smart player, and I just can't wait to learn from her, pick her brain about being a point guard and obviously just getting better each day, adding some of her things that she does to my game, and yeah, it's just going to be so awesome. I can't wait to get over there.

Q. I would like to ask you, what are your first feelings when you learned that you were the eighth pick of the WNBA Draft? And also, how big is the contribution of your father [Shane Heal] to you on and off the court?

SHYLA HEAL: Yeah, so my emotions when I got picked, all the weight was taken off my shoulders. It's been my biggest dream since I was a little girl. I was just so excited. I had no words. I was crying. It was just really a dream come true.

And my dad, I wouldn't be here without him. He's trained me since I was a little girl, and we've done I don't even know how many trainings, so many thousands, and yeah, he's such a big influence in my life on and off the court, and I'm so grateful for him.

Q. I wanted to ask you with Natasha Mack being headed to Chicago with you, what's it like to know that

you'll be going to a team that has that defensive experience and skill, too?

SHYLA HEAL: Oh, that's awesome. I mean, obviously having defensive weapons on your team is great, obviously getting stops. I just really can't wait to get over there, meet everyone. I've never really been to America, so everything is going to be brand new for me, and yeah, I'm just so excited. I can't wait.

Q. Just wanted to ask, you've been playing in the Australian Pro League since you were 14 and you had a really successful season, winning Youth Player of the Year, finishing All-League Second Team. How do you think your game is going to translate not just to the Sky and what they already have in place with their backcourt but also to the WNBA as a whole, and what do you look to add to your repertoire in your first season?

SHYLA HEAL: Yeah, so I think my game translates to the WNBA so well. I really focus on my ball-handling skills, creating space, step-backs, getting my shot off quick, and I love like -- the WNBA is sort of like one-on-one breaking it down, and that's really how I like to play. So I feel like the style of play in the WNBA is really going to suit my game.

Obviously I'm going to be one of the youngest in the league, so it's a big step that I'm going to have to take, but I'm so excited for the challenge, and I can't wait to get there.

Q. Obviously it's a big year ahead, not just with the WNBA but with the Olympics coming up. I'm wondering how you balance those in your thinking, and if you've had it sink in yet that two of the biggest dreams that you've had are on the cusp of coming true.

SHYLA HEAL: Yeah, it's going to be a huge year. These have been my two goals since I started playing basketball. To have both of them hopefully come true would just mean the absolute world to me. I get emotional even speaking about it.



But yeah, look, I am just so excited. I can't wait to get over there.

Q. When we think about Australian athletes, there is always this image of players with a fighting spirit, intensity on the court. Of course, you have much more to offer than that, but do you think you have this kind of DNA in your game, and how do you explain it?

SHYLA HEAL: Yes, for sure. I mean, Australians are always really hard workers, play hard every possession.

I think a lot of -- I'm known in Australia for not backing down, so even though I'm younger than everyone else I never back down no matter who it is. I always play as hard as I can. I'm really just fearless. I don't fear anyone, and I really just play my game.

Q. For those who have never seen you play over here in the States, who do you model your game after or who is somebody professionally that your game resembles?

SHYLA HEAL: Yep, I watched a lot of the WNBA season last year, and obviously love how Sue Bird plays. She's just so good at passing but she can also score, as well. I love Kia Nurse. I love how aggressive she is. Even if she misses a couple shots, she never loses confidence, she keeps shooting, but she can also create for her teammates. Between those two, I really like both of their games. Just assists but can also score, good on D. Yeah, those are pretty much my favorites all around, yeah.

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