

WNBA Draft

Thursday, April 15, 2021

Awak Kuier



Q. Why don't you take me through, when you see what the league has right now, when you see a lot of teammates who are stretch bigs in a similar way, the way in which you are looking to differentiate your game with Dallas right away.

AWAK KUIER: For sure like I want to be one of the players that's very versatile and like does a lot of things, but for sure I think I want to just get like more -- get better with post play. I'm very good at driving and shooting but having good moves inside the paint is very important for me. So I'd say that for sure.

Q. You are going to represent Finnish basketball in the WNBA next season. How big a responsibility is that to you, and do you feel responsible to help young girls play basketball in Finland?

AWAK KUIER: For sure I would say, to be a role model for all those kids back in Finland is a really big responsibility, but I still take it as a positive thing, so it's just going to drive me more to like work harder and get better.

Q. How do you feel being top five pick draft? What do you expect in your first season with the WNBA?

AWAK KUIER: First of all, being the top five pick was like a surprise because I'm 19, so I'm the youngest in the draft class. It was a good, like, surprise, and I'm very happy about it.

What was the other question?

Q. What do you expect in your first year in the WNBA?

AWAK KUIER: For sure I expect myself to get better. I feel like I have a lot to learn, so I can't wait to learn new things.

Q. For a lot of people who have never seen you play being from Finland, who does your game remind you of or who did you model your game after?

AWAK KUIER: For sure I would say Candace Parker because she's very versatile, but in the men's NBA, I would say KD [Kevin Durant] is like the player I really like, also tried to pick up a lot of things. He's very versatile, and I

feel like that's the type of player I want to be like.

Q. I know that you play at the three, the four and the five position. What's most natural to you? Do you have a preference?

AWAK KUIER: I would say playing four. Like being able to still like attack from the three-point line but then also having the opportunity to play like back to the basket. I would say 4. Of the three [positions], I would say four for sure.

Q. As an American of Finnish descent, I want to say welcome to the WNBA. I'm just wondering how well prepared you have been from growing up in Finland to take on this challenge, and how well have your countrymen been supporting you through this endeavor?

AWAK KUIER: I would say I'm very well prepared because my last four years I've played in like the Finnish first league and now coming to Italy's first league, so I feel like I've always played against tough players who made me develop my game a lot.

Also I would say Finnish people have been amazing, really great supporters, like you could see in the media they've been really nice and always asking how I'm doing and what is going to happen next, and they've been amazing to me.

Q. I was just wondering, how do you feel like you'll be able to fit in Coach [Vickie] Johnson's system?

AWAK KUIER: I mean, I feel like she's really like a defensive coach, so I would just say to put a lot of work from the defense and then see what happens in the offense. I like to play defense, so I feel like I'm going to fit very well.

Q. Just wanted to ask you, I know the team has Satou [Sabally] and Arike [Ogunbowale] and now a lot of draft picks in the first round from this year. Are you excited about being with a lot of young players and are you excited about where the team is headed?

AWAK KUIER: Oh, for sure. I feel like Dallas is going to



grow into a great team, and to have so many young talents, it's amazing for me to play with them and also learn from them, so I'm very excited.

Q. In your recent appearance on the Winsidr podcast you talked about how difficult it was to cover Natasha Mack in EuroLeague and how you've looked up to Candace Parker for a long time now. Which player are you looking forward to matching up with the most in the WNBA?

AWAK KUIER: For sure I would say Candace, and I saw that we have the first game against them, so it's going to be really amazing, and I can't wait.

Q. A lot of people said that you boosted your draft stock over time. Can you elaborate on how excited you are to be in this position and to continue to inspire young people from Finland?

AWAK KUIER: For sure. I mean, in Finland there hasn't been anyone, first of all, drafted so high and ever play in the WNBA. So for me to be the first one is really like amazing. I'm really happy for it.

Like just having a lot of young players being like inspired by me is something that keeps me motivated, and it's like something very close to my heart. So I'm really happy.

Q. How does it feel to be playing alongside your new teammates on the Dallas Wings, including the players they've drafted in today's draft?

AWAK KUIER: Oh, it feels amazing. I can't wait to come to Dallas and start training camp with them and just getting to know each player.

Q. Being a Finnish player and playing against pro competition already, do you feel like that has prepared you to play in the WNBA?

AWAK KUIER: For sure. For sure European basketball, specifically Finnish basketball, is very different from American basketball, but I feel like just having the basics and like the ability to play together as a team and learning that from Finland is something that really is going to help me when I come to play for the WNBA.

Q. You mentioned your versatility earlier. My question is which part of your game do you think is going to translate the best to the WNBA, and then also what are you looking forward to strengthening and improving on?

AWAK KUIER: For sure I would say being very like athletic

and fast for my height and for my position, and also just being able to do a lot of things is something that I feel like is going to help me a lot.

For sure I want to get better with like physicality. That's something I've always struggled with, so that's something I really want to get better with.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports.

