

WNBA Draft

Thursday, April 15, 2021

Natasha Mack



Q. I saw on your TV interview, you mentioned working in a chicken processing plant and the time you took off from basketball. What did that experience bring to your playing career, and what are some of the lessons you learned from that very unique experience?

NATASHA MACK: I just learned to appreciate the game more. I took it for granted. I admit that to take that time off and be away from it made me just realize that this is what I'm meant to do. It's what I love to do.

Q. Have you ever been to Chicago before? And what do you think it'll be like being a professional off of the court?

NATASHA MACK: Oh, I've never been to Chicago, so I'm completely excited.

Being a professional, that means a lot. I just heard it gets cold, so I need to pack some jackets.

Q. Can you just walk us through what those first initial moments were like for you when you heard your name called?

NATASHA MACK: You know, at first I got a little frustrated, like I guess I'm not going to be called anytime soon. So when I finally heard my name, my face lit up. I was excited. I just had so many emotions running through my body. It was just like, finally, I know where I'm going, I know what team wants me and where to make an impact at. So that means a lot.

Q. What part of your game do you think will best translate at the next level?

NATASHA MACK: Definitely my hustling and my rebounding. With everything else, I would just have to work on it for it to come naturally.

Q. Playing in the Big 12, do you have any memories or thoughts on the Indiana Fever's No. 4 pick, Kysre Gondrezick? What are your thoughts on her and the matchups against her?

NATASHA MACK: She's an excellent player. She's always tough to guard. Every time we played her she gave

us trouble. I was happy for her to see her go in the first round. I couldn't be happier for her. Big 12 player doing it. Charli Collier. Big 12 people.

Q. What are you going to bring to that roster, and what are you looking to learn when you get there and who are you going to look to?

NATASHA MACK: The things I will bring to the team is just being a great player, trying to communicate with everybody. The things I hope to learn is how to be as great as them players. They're great for a reason. They made their impact. Hopefully they can help me be great, as well, in my own way.

Q. You had your heart and soul set on this moment. You had plans when you were just in the third grade and had backups, but tonight you won't need any of those backups. You mentioned having to deal with peer pressure and not having a lot of support when you were younger. This is a very proud moment for you overcoming that. What do you have to say to the old Natasha Mack?

NATASHA MACK: You did it! You finally made it! You can dance, do a happy dance. You can just hug your mama real big. Hug your support system that's been there since day one. I finally did it. Whoo! That's would I would say to my old self. This is one of the best moments in the world. I couldn't ask for anything better.

Q. On the back of what you said in terms of what you're bringing to the team in terms of hustle and rebounding, that's a real hard-nosed mindset. Do you pattern that or did you look to any particular player, especially any player that's in the league right now, to guide you on how you play that part of your game?

NATASHA MACK: That part of the game just always came natural to me. Hustling up and down the floor and rebounding, that's something I've always been good at since I was in the third grade. Even before I had the ball in my hands, I've always been good at that. To bring that to the next level is going to be -- I know I wouldn't be the show-off, the face of the team like I've always been, which



I'm okay with. I'm just happy I made it and can contribute in any way possible.

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Q. I noticed you like the Jordan 4s. Is that your favorite sneaker? And how will it feel to be on a video game?

NATASHA MACK: My favorite sneaker -- honestly, I love wearing Crocs. Most women wouldn't say that, but I love Crocs. Following that it would be Nike, of course.

To have my own player in 2K, that's crazy. I can't imagine that. This doesn't feel real to me at all. That's amazing to me. That's crazy.

Q. Obviously you are an elite defensive player and you bring that kind of motor and that skill, especially along with finishing around the rim. As you know, the league has moved in the direction of more and more stretch 4s and 5s. I wonder how much you feel that is part of your game now, how much you're looking to make it part of your game and how necessary you think that is at the next level?

NATASHA MACK: It's very important. What people don't know is I've really been working on that. In college, you had to play a certain position where the coach wanted you to play, and so off the scenes I've really been working on that and trying to improve that as much as possible.

Q. We saw three of the first seven top picks in the draft be players you've competed against in the Big 12. What you said is you might want to prove that you belonged in the first round. How much are you anticipating those matchups and kind of showing what you can do against those players this year?

NATASHA MACK: I have a chip on my shoulder. I'm ready. Like I've been saying, I've always been slept on, so this is nothing new to me. It's just time to go out there and prove myself.

Q. I noticed watching you, you play very sneaky on defense, getting steals from the backside, but you also play with a very physical nature on defense, getting blocks. You kind of fit that Chicago grit. How do you think that's going to translate to the WNBA?

NATASHA MACK: Hopefully it translates well. I learned to read offensive players. That's been my game. I read people very well. That's why my defense is great. I don't try to brag on it a lot. I just let my game speak for itself. I hope my game fits in well and I hope I make some type of positive impact on the team.