

# WNBA Draft

Thursday, April 15, 2021

## Iliana Rupert



**Q. Wondering when you look at your fit on the Las Vegas Aces, obviously there's quite a lot of different players up front who can do different things. How do you see your game standing out and being singular within that group of players?**

ILIANA RUPERT: I'm really happy to be part of this Las Vegas team. As you said, they already have a really beautiful team, especially inside players, and I think it would be really, really interesting for me to have amazing players, like Liz Cambage, all those players, and I think my game is a little different from them, but I think I can also learn a lot.

So this is why I think it's really the best thing that could happen to me.

Yeah, practicing against those players will be amazing. It would really help me a lot. Amazing girls, and I'm just super excited.

**Q. You have way more experience at the professional level than a lot of the girls that were drafted before you. Will it be a motivation for you in your career to know that you were drafted a little lower than your talent should have gotten you drafted?**

ILIANA RUPERT: I mean, I think the most important for me was to really be on a good team and a team that will let me play obviously with the French National Team. I wouldn't be able to be there all the time, and I know for some teams it's a problem, and I talked about this with Las Vegas and they are aware of that, and they were okay with that. So I think it was really important for me to be on a team that accepted that.

Yeah, I know that I have already a lot of experience for my young age, and I'm super happy and excited, and I just want to show that on the court and start to play right away.

**Q. What do you feel are your two biggest skills that will help you make an immediate impact in the WNBA?**

ILIANA RUPERT: As I said, right now I have experience. I've been playing pro for three years now in EuroLeague, so it's obviously one of the best things in the world, played on French National Team. So the experience, I think I

have this to my advantage compared to the other girls, so I think that will be an asset to the league.

On the court, my vision, I'm an intelligent player, I can read the game well, and it's important, especially with a team like Las Vegas and they have really high goals, so they will play really important games, and I need to be able to make the good choices, and I think this is really something that I can do and have a really good shot. Also midrange, really confident in that. So yeah, it will be all those good things.

**Q. I just wanted to ask, going into the WNBA, just what matchups are you most looking forward to? Who are you most excited to learn from playing against?**

ILIANA RUPERT: Well, I mean, we have a really, really good team. My favorite players, I have maybe five, six favorite players, and two of them are on the Las Vegas Aces, Liz Cambage and A'ja Wilson. Being drafted to this team is already something crazy for me, being able to practice with them and learn from them on a daily basis. It's really something that I'm looking forward to, and I couldn't be more happy right now.

**Q. Since you talked about A'ja Wilson earlier, how does it feel to have a chance to play alongside her this season coming up?**

ILIANA RUPERT: You know, I really -- I don't think I realized fully how lucky I am right now, A'ja just got the MVP trophy. Liz Cambage, we all know how amazing player she is. Dearica [Hamby], also, she's a really, really good player. I don't fully realize how lucky I am to be able to -- will be able to practice with those girls and learn from them. It will be tough, but this is what I like, and this is why I came to the league, to play against those amazing players, and it will be really an amazing experience.

**Q. What would be your dream matchup going into the league? And also, on the flipside, off the court, you're going to be on a video game now. How do you feel about that, because I think that's something very unique, and that's very rare to happen.**

ILIANA RUPERT: Matchups, there are so many amazing



players that it would be hard to choose. I played in EuroLeague for about three years so I had a chance to play against a lot of WNBA players, but I know that it will be different because obviously they are at home, so it will be totally different players.

I'm sorry but it's really too hard to choose only one matchup. I think there are so many. I really don't know. Maybe Elena Delle Donne because she's a player that I didn't see in Europe and I really love her game, so it would be a matchup that I would be really excited about.

And yeah, the video game. I talked about this with my brother maybe one or two weeks ago, and I said maybe in a few weeks he would be able to play with me, and we laugh about that. Yeah, it would be really amazing. I hope that they will do me really good and it will look like me and it will be really cool.

**Q. I'm assuming it's pretty late in France, so how was it going through the day and then staying up for the draft?**

ILIANA RUPERT: Well, it's almost 3:00 in the morning right now, so yeah, it's really late, but I have a lot of energy. I feel like it's the afternoon. There's no problem about it. And yeah, it was a really, really fun day. I came to Paris to be in my agent's agency, so I could be with some of my friends and family. I had a photo shoot next to the Eiffel Tower and Arc de Triomphe, so beautiful fun day in Paris. And then I get to get ready with the makeup artist and all this nice stuff that I saw for the past few years when girls were getting ready for the draft, and it was finally my turn, and it was an amazing experience. And I took a nap, also, because I knew I'd stay up really late, so to be sure I had a lot of energy.

**Q. I would like to ask you how excited you are to play alongside A'ja Wilson, and what would you like to learn from her?**

ILIANA RUPERT: I mean, as much as I can. As I said earlier, I don't fully realize now, that I got drafted, that I'll play with her and with other amazing players. Yeah, I think the thing that I'll really be focused on is learning as much as I can from those players. I'm really lucky to be on a team where inside you have really, really good players. At my young age, it's really amazing to be able to have this kind of opportunity, so it's really something that I will try to do.

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