

WNBA Draft

Monday, April 14, 2025

Dallas Wings

Paige Bueckers



Q. Paige, you got emotional talking about your teammates. How have the Husky teammates and UConn prepared you for this moment and this next chapter?

PAIGE BUECKERS: Yeah, they mean everything to me, all they've helped me get through, all the ups and downs, the highs and lows, they've seen every side of me, and the love there is unconditional, so forever grateful for them. I want to cherish that relationship for the rest of my life, and I wouldn't be here without them. I just want to show a state of gratitude to them.

Q. Paige, I'm sure you dreamed about this moment as a kid. How does this compare in real life to what you thought it would be like?

PAIGE BUECKERS: A lot faster than I thought, just going up there, getting the jersey. But super surreal. Just like I've been talking about, just so grateful to be here. I don't want to take this for granted. I've been focusing a lot about being present and being where my feet are, so to be at this stage, to be here, to have a lot of my supporters here and people who have helped me get here, it just means everything to me.

Q. You were known to go No. 1 this entire time, but still, when you actually hear your name called, what was going through your mind and the hugs that you had with Azzi and Geno? What was that moment like?

PAIGE BUECKERS: Yeah, you don't ever want to assume anything in life. Nothing is guaranteed, so for this moment to be here and it actually happen, it's nerve-racking. You just have a level of excitement, nervousness, bittersweet feeling knowing that my journey at UConn is over, but excited for the next one to begin.

To be able to share that moment with the people sitting at my table and also the people not sitting at my table, they played a huge role in it. So just happiness and joy.

Q. I'm curious if you could take us through some of your pre-draft conversations with the Wings and what gives you confidence that this is going to be a place

that will allow you to have a successful WNBA career?

PAIGE BUECKERS: Yeah, honestly, the conversations were brief, but just for them to know that I am coming in and wanting to give everything I have to that organization. We have established that there's new levels of standards that are going to be set in play, and there's a new GM, new coach, new assistant coach, a whole new team, so we're excited for that fresh start.

It's not a rebuild, it's just a build from where we are. Excited for the new arena, the new practice facility and conversations with the CEO, the GM. We're excited for the future, and we only think the best is ahead.

Q. You were last year at the WNBA Draft as a fan. What do you remember about that experience and how did that compare to this year? And also, when you woke up this morning, how did you feel?

PAIGE BUECKERS: Yeah, last year was definitely a different role just in the supporting cast role just being so extremely happy for Nika and Aaliyah to see them live out their childhood dreams and especially coming in with them as freshmen, to go through that entire journey together and to see them get rewarded like that was extremely great to be a part of.

And this time it's super different just being in those shoes where Nika and Aaliyah were last year, but also again having my supporting cast here and everyone that's meant so much to me. I know there's a lot of people at home, and wherever they are, that deserve to be here, so just super grateful for both experiences.

Q. What message do you have for the Wings fans, and what kind of player can they expect to see this coming season?

PAIGE BUECKERS: Yeah, I'm just extremely excited to be there. I've only heard great things about the city. So excited to start that new chapter and be in a new city and explore that and give everything I have to the Wings organization. I know we're going to do great things, and it's a fresh start, and I think we're all ready to do something



special.

So just extremely grateful that they have -- they took the pick on me. I can see the city has great love for that pick, and we're just super excited for the future.

Q. There's been a lot of discussion already about your salary with Unrivaled. Will that impact your desire at all to maybe participate in the Players Union, be a player rep in your rookie season?

PAIGE BUECKERS: Yeah, I think those are conversations I'm continuing to have, what that looks like to be a player rep, but I definitely want to be in those rooms, have those conversations, be a voice for the players and stand up for us. Just knowing what that takes and knowing what that will be if I do that, I think those are conversations I'm going to continue to have.

Q. The last eight days have been a complete whirlwind I can imagine. What has that been like going back and forth between New York, the parade yesterday, and what has this experience been like since leaving Tampa?

PAIGE BUECKERS: Yeah, it's been fun. I'm glad New York and Storrs are pretty close to each other because there's been a lot of back and forth. Part of me wants to stay at school, celebrate with the team, be with them, enjoy the last moments of being in Storrs, and the other part of me has to get ready for the next chapter. So, it's been a lot of back and forth, but I'm running on great fumes, grateful fumes, and wouldn't trade it for anything, the life that I'm living. I'm extremely blessed.

But it's been a very blessed week, regardless of the outcomes or circumstances. I'm blessed and highly favored.

Q. For the next generation of UConn Huskies, what would be your advice for them playing on the biggest stage and that leadership component when this comes to this program?

PAIGE BUECKERS: To be present, to be where your feet are. There's a lot of pressures and expectations that come with playing at UConn but just win every day that's in front of you. Don't worry about the future, don't worry about the past, don't worry about your mistakes, don't worry about anything but what you're doing in that moment and making the most of that day and winning that day, conquering that day, and just be where your feet are.

Q. Some of the players in the WNBA obviously you have some history with in the college ranks, and now

you're in the W, are there any particular players you're looking forward to playing against that you haven't before and any people you're looking forward to meeting again in the pro ranks?

PAIGE BUECKERS: All of my former teammates that I used to play with, Nika, Aaliyah, Liv, a few others. Those are definitely the ones that I'm most excited about.

Q. I want to ask you about the undeniable impact you have on young people and especially young girls. Fans say you inspire them as athletes and you encourage them to persevere through challenges, and they're proud of you and your journey. What is it like for you to know the impact that you have on young people?

PAIGE BUECKERS: It means everything. I aspire to be a great role model. I have three younger siblings myself, so to be a great role model, to be somebody that people look up to and find a good influence on is extremely important.

I know through the injuries and all the setbacks and the ups and downs, I've tried to use that as motivation to show people that they can get through it, too, and you can come back on the other side better. And just to share my faith, share how that has impacted and changed my life and continue to be a great role model for the next generation.

Q. You're joining a team that has a solid core and your dynamic with you being on the team, I'm curious how excited you are to play for Dallas and being in a marketplace that's just as passionate as New England and the UConn Huskies.

PAIGE BUECKERS: Yeah, Dallas is a sports city, so I'm super excited for the support, the new wave of being there, being in a new city, being with a new team and conquering those challenges as a group. But super excited to be there. We've got great pieces, a great ownership, great GMs, great coaches. So the entire organization from up to down, I'm extremely excited for it.

Q. What can you express about this draft class and what this means for women's basketball moving forward?

PAIGE BUECKERS: Yeah, I think this draft class is amazing. I think there's a lot of college stars and overseas stars, as well, but we just have a passion and a love for the game, and I think just the new wave and generation of basketball players are bringing so much to the game, but obviously off the foundation that the players before us have built.

So we're just continuing to try to grow the game, expand the game, bring the viewership from the college game to the WNBA. So, I think we're all extremely excited as a draft class.

Q. How does it feel knowing that your new teammates are so excited to play with you? Arike has expressed it on social and I spoke with DiJonai earlier and she said she would love to have a player like you as her teammate.

PAIGE BUECKERS: Yeah, just to feel loved, feel supported, it means everything. I can't wait to play with that system, to play with that team, to embrace that new city. To be in a place that you're loved and wanted, that's very important.

Q. Your stepbrother wrote on social media that you guys were just doing runs every day in the summer growing up. What are some other -- who are some other people that helped you really develop your game that we wouldn't expect other than PTs and trainers, etc?

PAIGE BUECKERS: Yeah, that's a good question. Definitely him. We played a lot of one-on-one growing up at the park, and then my old teammate KK Adams from Hopkins, we used to bike and scooter to the park almost every day and always play. But yeah, there's so many people, Chauncey Hollingsworth was one of my trainers that trained me in high school. Reid Ouse was another one. There's so many people that contributed to the love for the game at such a young age.

But yeah, my stepbrother Randy, he was one of the huge ones.

Q. In the sneaker world, obviously a ton of momentum in the sneaker world in women's basketball specifically. Obviously, you're signed to Nike. The sneaker world is dying to know when can we expect the Paige 1 signature shoe and talk about the process was working for Nike.

PAIGE BUECKERS: Yeah, I have no idea. Just based off staying in the moment, I haven't even thought about those conversations, nor have we started those, but there's a lot of people in line for that that that deserve it, as well.

Whatever happens in the future, we'll see. It's been great working with Nike. They invest so much in me and women's basketball, in women's sports. So it's been great to have that partnership. They've done a lot of stuff with me creatively, as well, in the lifestyle department, not just basketball. They have a great creative team who comes

up with great ideas, and they've just been very supportive of me.

It was easy, it could have been easy to give up on me going through all the injuries and go to someone else that didn't have that history, but they stuck with me, and I'm extremely grateful for that.

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