

WNBA Draft

Monday, April 14, 2025

Washington Mystics

Kiki Iriafen



Q. How would you describe the moment of being drafted, finding out where you were going, and also knowing you'll have some other young talent around you? I don't know if you've seen everyone who got drafted alongside you to Washington, but how would you encapsulate everything that just happened?

KIKI IRIAFEN: I truly have no words. My heart is still beating super fast. I told myself I wasn't going to get emotional, that I was going to be a big girl, but once your name is called, truly everything that you worked hard for, it just flashes through your mind.

So I feel, one, super blessed and grateful that the Mystics chose me. I'm super excited to play with Sonia and with Georgia. They're great girls. I've been competing against them, so I'm excited to be teammates now.

But yeah, I feel like just this opportunity is such a blessing, and there's really, truly no words to describe how I'm feeling right now.

Q. When you hear the words "I am beautiful, I am enough," what's the first thing that comes to your mind? If you can write two words on a mirror entering this next level, what would it be?

KIKI IRIAFEN: When I hear the first part of your question, I think about just being confident, being unapologetically yourself and just staying authentic. Could you repeat the second part of your question?

Q. If you could write two words on a mirror entering this next stage, what would they be?

KIKI IRIAFEN: I would write "keep going and trust the process." I know that wasn't two words, but yes.

Q. Flash forward, it's the night before your WNBA debut. What message do you have for your future self?

KIKI IRIAFEN: You belong here. Stay confident, be confident. The journey is not linear. Again, just trust the process.

Q. Your game took a leap this season. What changed in you personally, emotionally to allow that growth to happen?

KIKI IRIAFEN: Yeah, this whole season, truly I title it "the season of growth." I feel like I grew in all areas, physically, spiritually, emotionally. I think on the court I grew the most as a leader. I had to really step up. I've never really had to be in a leadership role. But I had to this season, and I had to balance being new but also being a vet. That was an interesting journey for me, but I learned so much from it.

Then more tangible on the court, I feel like defensively is where I really took a leap. I had to guard more guards, shooting 4s, guard on the perimeter, guard flares, stagers. So really just be challenged defensively. I feel like that's the one thing that will help me get some minutes in the W.

Q. What message does you being drafted send to other young girls that look like you?

KIKI IRIAFEN: You can do it. If I can do it, you can do it. But even better, I think in my position I'm just trying to make the league, the world a better place for the girls coming up behind me that also look like me. I think it's great seeing representation. I'm doing it for the Nigerian girls, little Black girls, the girls in L.A., honestly everybody that has helped me get to this journey.

I think I'd just tell them, do it but do it even better than I did.

Q. How important are your Nigerian roots as a person, as a basketball player, and are you already thinking about the possibility of playing for the Nigerian national team in the future?

KIKI IRIAFEN: Being Nigerian, if you ask any Nigerian, it is kind of like a personality trait. We're super proud. We're very confident, and we have this phrase, naija no dey carry last, and that just means in everything that you do, you strive for excellence. If someone can do it, you can do it even better. I think that's something that I live my life by.



Then in terms of the Olympics, I don't know yet. We'll see whatever happens. But I'm excited for D.C. There's a great Nigerian population over there, as well. So I can't wait to get over there.

Q. You talked about your growth as a leader and now going to a team that is a young team, has some vets but a real young team, how can you use that growth as a leader to continue to grow but also be a leader on a more younger squad?

KIKI IRIAFEN: Definitely. I think for me, I'm still going to listen to the girls ahead of me and hear all that they have to give me, their advice. But I think for myself, also knowing that I have a voice, I have something to bring to the table, and still navigating with them, I feel like that's the beauty of being on a young team. We're kind of growing together.

So I'm just super excited to get to work with all these ladies.

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