

One Month In: The Biggest 2026 WNBA Storylines So Far

Episode Summary

This week, the Monday Night Squad is back for their first WNBA season check-in. Monica and Sara are joined by T and Kaycie to break down the biggest surprises of the season so far, from breakout rookies and expansion team success stories to the teams already looking like serious contenders.

The conversation also explores how much the league continues to evolve. With more teams, more opportunities for players to shine, and a growing level of competition across the board, this season is already showing why the WNBA keeps getting more exciting to follow.

They also get into:

- 🏀 The Minnesota Lynx's hot start and Olivia Miles' impressive rookie season
 - 🔥 Early impressions of the Portland Fire and Toronto Tempo
 - ★ Paige Bueckers, rookie expectations, and player development
 - 👁️ The teams and players surprising them most so far
 - 💪 Why expansion is creating new opportunities across the league
 - 🏆 Early predictions for where the season might be headed
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Fact Check Notes

- 🏀 Record Confirmation: Angel Reese became the fastest player in WNBA history to reach 900 career rebounds and the fastest player to reach 900+ points and 900+ rebounds, accomplishing both feats in just 71 games.
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Transcript

Welcome to Play Like a They, your go-to podcast for all things sports beyond the binary. Hosted by Monica and Sara, former athletes, sports enthusiasts, and enbies, we're here to smash traditional... boundaries and cheer on progress on and off the court, field, pool, or gym. We're putting women's sports front and center, highlighting achievements, struggles, and triumphs. Expect hot takes on the latest sports topics and happenings, conversations about gender expansion in sports, and guest chats with athletes, coaches, fans, and more. So tune in every Wednesday to celebrate the vibrant world of

sports and identities. If you like what you hear, subscribe, leave a review, and follow us on Instagram at PlayLikeADay to join the conversation. Hi everyone, welcome back to Play Like a Day. I'm Monica, as usual, and... And I'm Sara.

We got some familiar faces back because we're one week, one month, not one week, one month into the WNBA season. So we've got T and Casey back for the Monday Night Squad. Yeah, welcome. What up? We can talk about all things W. We got a lot to talk about. There's a lot happening right now. I'm pumped. And this is like going to be the highlight of my week. So I'm stoked. Didn't you see Asia Wilson yesterday? That's true. I did. Oh, snap. Yeah. That's so true. That's so true. Okay, but before we get going, we have to talk about our last episode. A social media post, which, by the way... The last episode we did, we were just, it was like right before the WNBA season started.

So it was sort of like a... preview. This is what we're excited for coming up. Episode, right? The draft had just happened. A lot of players were coming out of college. We were like talking about how excited we were. That's it. The end. That's it, the end. That's it. Then we posted it on social media. And then, Monica, would you please tell us what happened? And the post, by the way, no takes, no pics. literally oh my gosh we're so excited about summer coming in the w End scene. Apparently we cannot say the letter W. I guess not. And now for context, everyone, that post. Has 770 ,000 views. On Instagram. Crazy. Y'all. And 103 ,000 shares. um and you know our haters i don't think they're very good at hating if i'm being honest.

They're not. honestly they're not it was like all recycled like honestly BOTS It wasn't even like comedy. I was like. I was laughing. I was reading it. I was laughing like, oh. I was laughing at the pure stupidity of their comments because they clearly thought that they were like. being funny but it's super low bottom of the barrel comedy that only red incels would laugh at literally literally like are we serious Crazy, crazy. But I was just like, hey, listen, thanks for the engagement. Yeah. It's viral now, so they know who we are now. Exactly. Yeah. All they had was lesbian and buzz cut. That's all. He's like, yeah, duh. And honestly, they aren't wrong. Like, yeah, we are lesbians. Yeah, we know that. Yeah.

Oh, so thanks to everyone for giving our post some more attention. We appreciate y'all. Big fans. Big fans. Yeah. And also, by the way, anyone who's listening will know this, but the W has dubbed itself the W. This is not like... This is not like... We didn't make that up. We didn't make that up. We are not getting paid for that. That is not our IP. We aren't getting paid for it. Like that's just what it's called. It just goes to show how ignorant they are. Like they really live in a whole other world. And it's just, it's sad. It's so sad, but you

know, whatever. I knew it was out there, but when someone, one of the comments was like, 'Oh, this and the seven other viewers that go to the games.' And I was like.

I am so confused right now. Paying attention? Exactly. I don't know. I'm pretty sure the boundaries have sold out like 30 games in a row. For sure. For sure. Oh, I'm like, yeah, that's why I'm like— they're just retiring old rhetoric. Like, it's like, you really don't even know. You're so ignorant. Like, you really don't know. Yeah. Just sleep. These are the people who are still living in their parents' basements that are just clicking on YouTube videos. And it just gets, the YouTube videos get worse and worse on the like conspiracy scale as we go. You know what I mean? Yeah. Yep. Yep. Anyway, let's not give any more attention to those. Dum-dums. Okay, let's move on. Let's do it. So... What do we want to talk about first?

Let's talk about the Lynx and how they're in first place. Yeah. No, they're crushing. Without Nafisa. Cool. Yeah. By the way. I think they only returned four players, including Nafisa, so three that are currently playing. Wow. Yeah. Well, Natasha Howard is killing it. And I'm not even gonna lie, I... Was waiting for her to retire. I'm not gonna lie But... She's still got it, and she is— Killing it. And then Olivia Miles is just better than I thought, like yeah, she was already good, but like she's doing what she was doing in college against pros and she makes it look so easy. Like, every time I watch her, I'm like, what the hell? You know, it's so fun watching those kinds of players.

I remember growing up, my coaches used to say, 'not all of them, but some of them are like the cream rises to the top.' Right, like athletes who are that good, just rise to the occasion, and they rise to the level of their competition. I think Olivia Miles is a perfect example of that. It's like she crushed it in college, obviously, and there's always like a 'next gear' for her. Right? And like we're seeing it now, and that's really fun to watch. Literally, yeah—like, it's easy to do that against college girls, but can you do that in the pros? And she is like, 'Yeah.' Like, easily. I am just so impressed. So impressed. And who let Minnesota get the number two pick? My word. Bye. Bye. What?

They were, you know, like, a final, like... final level and they just get the gift of Olivia Miles literally like that is not fair— it's unfair. And we're seeing the results. Yeah, for real. Yeah. Without one of the best in the league. Other than... Other than Kaitlyn Clark and a few other rookies, like, who was coming? Out of the gate starting like that. Hmm. Like, she started. For minutes, like, Who? Thank you. Oh, well, Paige, yeah. Paige, Caitlin, and Olivia. I guess point guards, that started. Right out of college. It may be the last one. Who's the last one that maybe liked starting straight out of college? I don't even know, honestly. I can't think of one. There's probably one, but I'm just like— It didn't start right away, right?

No, no, no. No. But just incredible. Incredible. Absolutely. Yeah. Thank you. And did you see that, it was like three other players, um... Shot over like 70%. uh in their game against Was it against Dallas? Yeah. Yeah. It was Dallas. Yeah. I was in Dallas the first time they played the Lynx, and I was really impressed with Dallas scoring-wise. I think they got up in the upper 80s, 90s. They just had their way. But defensively, like, I think the Lynx shot, like, 60-plus percent from the field, which is insane. And, like, Howard was up there. Like, just, like, layups. Yeah. I need to watch back that second game, but yeah, they were just... Yeah.

In one of the press conferences, Natasha Howard, I don't think she meant it this way, but she said that she likes playing against teams that don't defend the paint. I was like, oh, God. That's so rude. I know. Yeah. I was like, ooh, dang. It kind of hurt a little bit, but she's not wrong. No, no. Yep. Dude, it's hard when shooting so well, like even like kind of shifting to the aces last night. 'T i were at the game but if y'all watched Chelsea Great I mean Eight, right? Yeah, eight? Actually, she hit nine. She hit nine. She hit the franchise record for most three different games. I only missed one, yes! I was in the stands like, 'Oh, my God,' in my Chelsea Gray jersey. But, yeah.

I was going to say, who are you cheering for? Of course. Every time she was open, me and Keyshawn were like, 'Oh, no. Yeah. No.' And someone under a screen. How are we going to go under a screen against Chelsea Gray? Like, what are we doing? Especially after she just made, like, three in a row. I'm like, what are you doing? What are you doing? Anyway, my mind was blown yesterday. Golly, man. I was like, I wish that I could shoot like that, but I can't, I just can't, but I wish. By the way, in case everyone, anyone's wondering. You got to get in the flow state. But speaking of the Aces, they are number two right now. The defending champs are defending their champs. They're doing good.

They're doing better than they were last year at this time. They are. But then they still won. Yeah, exactly. Yep. New York, number three. Atlanta, number four. doing their thing too. Atlanta got good, man. Mm-hmm. They got really good. I think there were—there was a lot of movement with players this year in the league, which obviously made some teams better than they were last year. Obviously, you have your, you know, top two right now, which were still top two last year. Especially going into playoffs, but I'm a bit concerned about the future of the Connecticut Sun, to be honest with you. It's a fair concern. I should have given them like just a year off because I should have. Like, just take the year off and then we'll see you in Houston.

Because I think all of the movement and confusion and the, like, newness and changes and changing of ownership at the... That's tough. Like they're going to continue to have a rough year this year. Yeah. Thank you. That's rough. Hopefully some of the players can use it as like development or something. I don't know, you know, at least do whatever you need to do. Who are the rookies with Connecticut? I don't even know. This is my reverse from last year. I know BG's there. I'm trying to think of some of the rookies, though. I don't know. I think there's one. Andrew Walker from UCLA? No. Let me see... Is Haley Van Liz still there? I know. Or did they wait? Yeah, she's there. Yeah. Oh yeah, on the D contract, yeah.

Yeah, but she's not a rookie this year. Yeah, I'm like, I don't know the rookies. You know the Neapkins? Didn't she go to Texas? UCLA. Yeah, a shooter from UCLA, yeah. Yep, she's a rookie. Oh, yeah. Um... Yeah, Neapkins, Liger, Walker. Oh, yeah. I mean, the storm aren't doing much better. Ha ha! You know? That's true. 3-11. I got Heidemann on my fantasy team and she's gonna help me out. Okay. Yeah. Wow. Stormer. Good lord. What happened? And the mercury, like, what happened? I know. It's kind of weird this year, honestly. Like, I mean. One, two, three. They're always there. Yeah, it's kind of weird how bad they are. Yeah. Yeah, I know AT's been out. She was out when they were up here. True, true. Fire, and then so was...

It's the guard blanket. And then they just lost to Dallas, so... Yeah. And Dallas is actually doing good this year. Dallas is doing great this year. Wings up. Wings up. Shout out to the Portland Fire and the Toronto Tempo. I mean, I think they're in the middle of the pack, which no one's going to beat out the Valkyries for like breakout season ever. That was insane last year. But, you know. The fire and the tempo are doing the tempo. Sit at 8 and fire sits at 10. That's not last. No, yeah. You know. Yeah. They're holding their own. They're holding their own. Yeah. Yeah. Surprisingly, I'm not going to lie. I'm not going to lie. With all the changes that the fire was making with the waves and the...

then re-signing people. And I'm like, what is happening? What's going on here? But they're doing pretty good. So I'm just going to shut my mouth. Just watch. Shout out part of the league though. Yeah, on the Valkyries last year I'm a fan. Yeah. Killing it. And you know what's crazy is Dallas had her and did not utilize her. No. And then she went to the Valkyries and killed it. Now she's killing it on fire. I'm like, why didn't the Wings use her? They could have used her. But, you know. Whatever. Let's have a good one. Vibes, whatever. He's like, whatever. They're waiting for Paige. I knew Paige was coming with that. I guess so, yeah. Thank you. And honestly, I'm gonna say this, Paige is the savior that everyone thought. Yes.

Oh, I agree, but also, like, I always thought that... Yeah, no. But I always thought that Paige was better in college than Caitlin was anyway. BAM! Same, you know? Yeah, with two less years. The two years she redshirt, like... Yeah. Yeah, because she got hurt. If she never got hurt, then we probably wouldn't even really know Kaitlyn Clark's name like that. That's what I'm saying. Yeah. Hmm. I mean, timing is everything, right? Yeah. Yeah. Being in the right place at the right time is everything when it comes to opportunities in general, right? I'm not taking athletic ability away from anybody and like. Timing is everything, you know? Yeah. Everything happened the way it was supposed to happen. Exactly. Injuries are always like, people are like, so-and-so wouldn't have won if this person wasn't injured.

I'm like, but they were, that's how it works. I can't. Yeah. Okay. But yeah. You can't live in hypotheticals, you know? Thank you. Should we talk about Cece? Yeah, we're bringing that up. I'll take it. Hot take. Go ahead. Not a hot take. Maybe a hot take. Not a hot take for this group. Not a hot take. We've been saying this for two plus years at this point. But sorry for those of you who are listening. Let me hold your hand when I say this. Galen Clark is not. That good. No. No. She's not good. A player or a person. No. It's actually probably worse of a person than a player. Yeah. Like her character's not great, she supports racist, homophobic entertainers. Yeah. Like, we're not doing this.

It doesn't speak out against her fan base that are racist, homophobic fans. Like, she stays quiet in really tough... Political cultural environments and like we're not doing that in the league and I'm actually surprised that Her teammate, Aaliyah Boston. Like, outwardly supports her so much. Yeah. You know what I mean? Like, I feel disappointed in that because I really like Aaliyah Boston. She's a great player. And, you know. But like, what are we doing? I think it's like they people this is what people have said like the theory is because Aaliyah Boston wasn't an American citizen, so she didn't grow up. Like experiencing a lot of the racism that Americans or Black Americans have. And so she just has like a different perspective. And that's fine. That's fine. But it's like.

UUUUUUUUUUUGH Like it doesn't look good when, like, her black teammate is like just letting shit slide, you know? Right. God, like, say something. But it might cause a divide on the team or, you know, like, even like Kelsey Mitchell, she just, she's like, she doesn't say anything. You know, you can tell she probably wants to. Is her white teammates that you're saying? But I think the difference is, I mean, yes, definitely, like, her white teammates need to say something. But I think the difference between Kelsey Kelsey Mitchell and Aaliyah Boston is at Kelsey Mitchell. doesn't like, hype up Caitlyn, whereas Alia defends Caitlyn a lot in press conferences. I don't know if you've noticed that, but like that's the difference is like I really like Kelsey Mitchell, she's a great player, love to watch her, she's not there defending her, whereas Alia.

And it is also, I'm not saying it's the Black players' responsibility to like, uphold these standards, and like hold hold their teammates accountable, like I do agree with you, Monica, I think the White players need to say something also, like Lexi Hull. Come on. Like you have a platform. You know, I really used to like Lexi too, but now I'm like, dang, I don't know. It makes you uh, yeah. Question makes you think. Makes you question. Exactly. You know, Cunningham is still over there too, right? Yep. Cunningham is still there. Exactly. She's never. She ain't gonna say anything. She's just like Caitlyn. Yeah. Oh boy. Oh boy. And then, player wise, like, I don't know, man. Like. Meh. Flashy shooters? Yeah! You can read her like a book. She's very easy to defend.

Like the other day I was watching the game and I noticed that. When she shoots threes like off the dribble, she can only shoot them going left. So she's going to dribble and she's going to take two steps, like maybe a step back. She literally travels through because she takes a step. As she's picking up the ball, and then she takes two more steps to get set. Then she shoots, but she can only do that going left. So it's like, okay, that's really easy to defend. Just don't let her go right. And then... on penetrations, she has to have like already like steam like she has to be like in fast break or something. So in a half court set, she's looking to pass, she's not looking to do anything else.

So it's very easy to guard her. It's very easy and then on defense, she can't play defense. So if you've noticed, people are just attacking her as soon as she's guarding someone with the ball, they're just going to the hole. Thank you. It's like, okay, we've got you figured out now. Shout out to the fire for holding her to six points probably. Yeah. Masterclass. Casey mentioned before we hit record, the crash outs, bro. When she fouls, when she... No, I just can't as a coach. It's like. There's so many people watching her. And I get it. There are times where crash outs are valid, but like every game, every other possession, every foul. You just have to have a little bit of humility with it. Yeah. I think Paige does an incredible job.

She'll crash out on a ref and go crazy, but I know she has a bet with one of her teammates where she's not going to get a tech all year. Yeah. Like, that means something that's two points which can shift and momentum that can sway. It's very true. Not Marina. Like, okay. I was just going to say, it's like Marina, but like worse. Yeah. But like Marina just knows how to do it. Yeah, but Marina only does it when people try her. She's not going to crash out for no reason. Right, exactly. Yeah. Like, she's like also is a tough player too. Like Marina is the one who gets in people's faces. Also, she can dish it out and take it. You know what I mean exactly? There's the difference right there.

Yeah. Absolutely. Tempo saved her. Can we say that? Yes. Man, yeah. One day, huh? Get me out of here. Shout out Brittany Sykes on the tempo, too, because dang. Pretty psyched on my fantasy team. This year. Yeah. Yeah. Thank you. Did you see her bringing the coke on the bench? Yes! Oh my god! I hope she gets some kind of money from that. I hope coke reaches out. And she's making a bunch of money. Yeah, I saw that and it just made my day. I was like, 'That's Yeah. Yeah.' My rep was saying, 'My season ticket rep called me and we were talking about the league. She was saying how, like, if you saw Meg Gustafson's... post-game interview when they played.' I forget who it was, but it was a really good game, and Meg, like, did so good.

And she was like crying because she was like, 'I've never been taken this seriously as a basketball player before.' So she was so happy to the Portland Fire. for giving her an opportunity to shine. And so then. My rep was talking about that and she was saying how. This. These expansion teams are giving players that normally wouldn't have gotten a chance to be the star player or the franchise player. They now have an opportunity to showcase their skills in that way. And it's just so beautiful because like. They're getting validated finally. Like you are good, that's why you are in the W and like here's your chance to show it. And so, like seeing Brittany Sykes. Be what she is for the tempo, I'm like, oh my, I knew she was good, but I'm like, dang.

Why? She's very good. Very good. And the money's falling. Yeah, I hope so. Well, she had a great, unrivaled season this past... winter also, you know, I got a. I actually got a chance to meet Brittany Sykes, and Yeah, and she is the most lovely person. Like, ever. And I think a lot of W players are... sort of like, hold their cards close to their vests, they don't really show a lot of emotion, they don't do a lot of fan engagement if they don't have to. And when they do, they have to put on this front because they know that they're going to sign autographs at the end of the game, right? But Brittany, when I met her, she was so genuine and excited and, like, lovely.

So I'm just happy for her that she's doing amazing. Job so far this season, you know? Heck yeah. Heck yeah. And another player. I mean, Valkyries, you know, but Veronica Burton, most improved player last year. Oh my gosh. And one unrivaled with the Miss. Yes, exactly. Yeah. Yeah. Another Dallas fumble. From the Bay, Gabby Williams. Yeah. Sighted. Yeah, another player that Dallas had and didn't use right. But... I love Dallas, guys. I promise I do. Well, I talk about us like this because I love them. I can imagine being a GM for a WNBA team and a coach and whoever makes those like roster decisions. I can imagine that's hard because what there's only 14 spots. And when you don't have enough teams, it's like you have to make really tough decisions of who you're going to cut, who you're going to keep.

And I'm just happy that these expansion teams are coming up now. So just to your point, T, it gives other players who are so good an opportunity to shine. Another team like if you have Kelsey Plum on your team that's kind of hard to like beat out, you know what I mean. If you have Paige Beckers on your team that's kind of hard to beat out, and so you have these other teams that now are giving opportunity. Next year we have Philly coming too, so like that's going to be where more players can really shine and showcase. It's tough, so like. You know. I can imagine, as a GM and a coach, those kinds of decisions are really hard. Yeah. Yeah. Good point. You're right. Yeah. Yeah. Like Kate Martin.

I wouldn't have wanted to wave Kate Martin. And like, especially she was such a pivotal player to the Valkyries last season and their huge success. I mean, that was a place where like. She wasn't the best player in college, but I think that she shined on the Valkyries and she had a great season too. Like, she's a great support player, right? She's not a star. She's a great support player. And she's, she's with the Sparks now, but like, that's probably, that probably was a really hard decision, you know? Oh yeah. Oh, yeah. Yeah. I think even Natalie Nakase was talking about it. Like you said, it's tough and I don't think she wanted to do it, but she probably had no other option. So, yeah.

And you could tell Kate was hurt, but she knows it's just business and she got picked up. So, hey, you know, it worked out. Exactly. Yeah. I'm glad she got picked up for sure. Yeah. And the Valkyries, Sparks, Tempo, they're all 8-9-10. Or sorry, 7-8-9, just like middle of the road. I mean, it's so early. And so many teams have like, these records are like within one game, most of them. So they don't have anything. But. uh, it's very exciting to see the like the playing field like pretty besides a few outliers, like pretty level, like pretty competitive. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. It's like every game is a good game, you know? Yep. Yeah. Never know what to expect. I love it. Freaking love it. That's what you want. You want the competition, right?

Like you want that. You want to have a diverse group of good players on each team so that you can watch these really tight, tough, exciting games, like that's what you want as a fan, and sorry for anyone out there who's like Dynasty Teens, like I'm not—I don't want that, no. I don't. Personally, I don't want that. I want to see other teams win every once in a while, you know? Yeah. I just want it to be hard. Like, I mean, I was like, and I still am a huge fan of the Aces, but they were beating teams by like 40 points. It was like, okay, this is boring. I want every game to be within five, and I don't care which team wins. I just want every game to end that way.

It'll be over time, please. Yeah. Give me a buzzer beater or something like I just yeah, I need that adrenaline rush. I believe. I mean, the aces, though, like, watching... Asia and Chelsea and Jackie, like, just, they're so. They're so good. Dude, it's, like, it's, like, not even fair. But really, like, I was watching it yesterday. Like, they're all such high IQ players. Like, everyone on the court. Just made the right pass or they took the right opportunity to go to the lane or... they took the right shot, like it was just like Y'all are so good because you're so smart and you're talented, but like you just know how to play the game. And it was just beautiful to watch that. And I will say that about New York too.

New York, they have high IQ players, man. They are so good. Yeah. You're so good. What about the coaching staff wearing this? The jackets and the hoodies just like... we're just like just like the aces— the whole aces coaching staff were wearing the hoodies and the blazers, yeah, like Becky, yeah, yeah, yeah, are they all doing it? Like that. That's what they all do now. It's so funny. I feel like it's like a ritual or like a superstition. Yeah. Like, that's what you wear. Like, I don't know. One team, one dream, baby. There you go. One band, one sound. Thanks. Okay, drumline. Hell yeah. Oh man. Fun stuff. Yeah. Um, how are we feeling? Okay, we haven't really talked about the mystics, and I just feel like, when I think about the mystics, I haven't seen them play like a lot— if I'm being honest.

But I just feel like they have a lot going on. Yeah. We're out. We're putting out content. I always see them like all the young ones goofing around. They have such young players. Yeah, their team is super young. And I think Sophia started off hot, but I think injured now or has been for a bit. Who? Citron? Sonia Citron? É isso? Aw, dang! Yeah. THANKS! Is Rory Harman injured because she hasn't been like playing lately? I don't know if she just hasn't been getting minutes or she's hurt. Okay. All right. Yeah. Poor thing. But she's starting behind Georgia Amor. So Georgia's back. So it's like, like Sara was saying. When you got players like that, Kind of hard to get your shine, so. Did you see Georgia has a younger sister who just signed at Kentucky?

Really Emma Amore, yeah. What no I didn't know yesterday and I was like, 'Oh, it's like Georgia, like on the coaching staff now or something' and they're like, 'Identical.' Oh, wow. Yeah, you gotta check it out. Yeah, I will. Wow. Didn't even see that. Well okay. How is Lauren Betts doing? Like, I feel like she's not really like. I haven't heard her name in a while. Yeah. I'm like, dang, man. Like. Kind of tough. Kind of tough. Time for the sparks? No. Oh, the Mystics. Mystics! Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, when I went to Atlanta recently, I went to a dream game. And Betts was in the game, but it was like they weren't giving her the ball, you know? But I mean, okay, but Atlanta does have that super tall girl.

I forget her name. And she was defending Betts pretty well. But it was just like, they just... It was like they're not running plays for bits, you know? And it was like, get her involved, you know? But... I don't know. Yeah. Might as well. Another young team with a bunch of like young players, where maybe they finished like bottom of the pack, but just to get all that experience and. Yeah. I think would be huge. Oh, absolutely. A lot of them are like the San Antonio Spurs. They're like year one to four. Yeah. Thank you. Yeah. Which is wild. But that is one of those things where some rookies show up right away, like Olivia Miles, and some need some time to develop. And I think sometimes people don't.

Give rookies that. That time, that consideration. Yeah. Especially. Especially with the timeline that they're working on, like the national championship games, first weekend of April, then a week later is the draft. Crazy. Two weeks later is training camp. So they've been playing basketball. They're tired. Yeah. We play once, twice a week. And I'm like, you know. They're playing for, they're doing that for a year every single day. And I think people don't realize like. how hard that is, like, on your body, of course, if you've played like you you know, but like at that level to just keep it going, yep, through like the final four and then just expect immediate WMBA results is yeah. You got to kind of see like the bigger picture.

And I think that could be, I know that's something they've always talked about with the transition. Yeah. Trying to find a way to make that a little better, but. Could you imagine, though, like, graduating with your degree and then you got a professional job immediately, like, a week later, and then they want you to be, like, the highest, like, producer? Yeah. You know, like, wait, hold on. Like, let me ease in. Let me learn the business first. Yeah, for real. For real. Oh, go ahead, go ahead. No, I was just saying, that's a great point. Like, I never thought of it like that. Yeah, actually, like you get a sales job and you're expected to be like the top performer when people have been there for 20 years. You know?

I never thought of it like that, but I think that is definitely unique to... Professional athletics is like. If you are, you know, a first round draft pick, there are expectations, yeah, right. And like, where as a coach or a GM or an owner, do you sort of. Um. Uh, like reset those expectations a little bit, like yes, you want them to perform, like, like Olivia Miles, like seems easy for her, right that's not that's like a rare occasion that, Especially because he played every minute of every game during March 1st. That's tough. Yeah. It's very impressive. It is. It is. But then you have like... AZ, who was the number one pick, and then she wasn't starting, and people were all mad about it.

But it was like, let her ease in. Chill! Like everyone calm down. Yeah. Like she's still as good as she was, but she just got to figure out where she fits in because Dallas is very guard heavy. So give them a chance to adjust. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, and if you don't understand basketball, you're not understanding testing the, like, the system and who's on the court when and, like, when. Vibing and all that so it's exactly Yeah. But at the same time, like... I guess it is entertainment. And I'll just use my dad like. i my dad grew like i grew up watching with my dad watching me right and i thought he really enjoyed women's basketball. And then... I remember I went down there and he wasn't watching like a W game or something.

He was like, Oh, it was just kind of boring. And I was like, what? Like dad, like, and he's like, well, I mean, I would rather watch this as more entertaining. And I was like, Oh, my God. So he sees it as a form of entertainment. And I thought this whole time, like, he was really invested. Like, I was. And I'm like, okay, so he sees it as entertainment. So I'm like, okay, people see this as entertainment. So they want to see their favorite players playing, you know? They're getting upset if AC's not in the game. And it's like. But guys, like... Like... give the organization a chance to put her in the game and then she can be whatever you want her to be. You want your team to win, though, right? I mean, I don't... Yeah, like... I want the team to win. I don't want just AZ to win. Like, dang. Thank you. But see, people want AZ to win. Yeah. Right. To your point, like. They want to see her win. You know... Fever did better without Caitlin Clark, so what do we

... Yeah. How's that... How's um Oh my gosh. Why am I blanking on her name? How's Angel Reese doing? OH! She's doing okay. She's doing decently. Yeah, it's been a couple when we moved to Portland. Yeah. I just feel like things have been a little quiet around her lately. Yeah. Yeah. I mean, she's still rebounding a lot. I think she just hit. She just broke a record or something. Oh, nice. Got like the I don't know, something happened recently with rebounds. But scoring-wise, yeah, not. She's lacking in that category, so. I think she fits in well with Atlanta, though. Like, she doesn't have to be the top scorer. True. She kind of brings that, like, grit, rebounding, and then, you know, when it does come to her, she can take it.

Yeah. I feel like it's a better position where it's not as like. In Chicago, it seemed like just her and they needed... those like big time pieces around her to kind of. And whatever else happened where she wanted to get the heck out of there. Yeah, I think Atlanta just seems like a better fit for her overall. I think she's finally able to just like breathe and like relax in her position because it's been stressful for her since she's been in the W. So I think, yeah, like going to Atlanta, she's like, okay, I can like relax. I can chill. I don't have

to be the center of attention every single game, you know? And like, yeah, she can just turn her brain off and just play basketball.

So she probably needs to adjust to, to her new position or this new mindset. I don't know. Hmm. Makes sense. Yeah. Yeah. I feel like there's a loss of recognition for the art of the role player. Thank you. And that really gets me upset sometimes, honestly, because I just. It's so important. Good point, actually. Yes. I don't know. You always have these stars without the role player. I agree. I agree. And a good one that is now no longer a role player, but was. was D'Erika Hamby when she was on the Aces. Yes. Oh, my God. She was incredible for them. And she came off the bench, I believe. But every time she got in the game. And I think this was back in like 2021, 2022, but.

She was so, I feel like. integral in their winnings. So when she got traded, I was like, What? Because she was such a good role player. But... Yeah, so you're right like the the lack of recognition for role players is sad, but Now she's on sparks and now she's not a role player and she's a star and she's killing it. So yay, but yeah I think you're a good role player to be, you know, a good, like, franchise player. Yeah. Exactly. And to your point, the role changes. when the team changes. Exactly. Yep. Yep. Which is an adjustment, but I think there's just a lack of respect for people who are just filling the need of the team and letting their ego to the side when that part of them is not needed. Agreed. Yep. Shout out to you. And the personality hires.

But speaking of being humble, though, like... I think the best players are humble. Like, they're confident. But at the same time, they're humble because... I think you have to have both of those exist to be, Like, good. Because I feel like if you're humble, you can understand. your players' perspectives, your teammates' perspectives, and like, Because you're humble, you can have grace for them when they mess up. You have grace for yourself when you mess up. I don't know— like, I'm taking back to Paige. Like, Paige is just the... example of what. Yeah. Yotes are, like, just, oh, incredible, incredible. Agreed. Yeah, for like... of her talking to the refs and like complaining there even the refs are like laughing because it's like yeah Yeah. Not disrespectful, but still like.

This is a conversation. Yeah, yeah. Like, she's not calling them stupid and stuff and yelling in their face and stuff. This is a little eye-wrong. I felt pointed. Oh, God. Definitely felt like it. You were picking up what I was putting down. You were picking up what I was putting down. Love it. Love it. I'm just like, there's a way to go about it. I'm just saying. There is? Yeah. Yeah. Absolutely is. Um, are there any, do we have any early picks? I know it's early, but like, I don't, I would just love to see. I would love to see the new teams. kind of... keep rising ranks. Honestly, I think that, I think that's just like exciting. And I think that just is a testament to.

How much the game is growing, and that when people invest in women's sports and invest in resources and invest in, you know, the overall performance, health, wellness of these players, like, really cool things can happen. Yeah. Um. So I don't necessarily have picks. Again, a lot can happen in the next few months. And I just want to see the new teams continue to do well. I think Sandy at Toronto obviously is making an impact. And, you know, I'm glad that they picked her up. Like, New York kind of fumbled that, even though they're in third place, whatever. Yeah. I just, I think it's exciting. Yeah. Yeah. I agree. Yeah. I'm, I might call it now. Minnesota is playing so dang well that like. And you know, if y'all been listening.

I am not a fan of Minnesota. That's true. They are playing so well. I'm like, I like watching them play. Yeah, you got to respect that. Yeah. When Nafisa comes back, like... And she's just, I'm sure she just gives extra rest now because, like, they... Exactly. Like she can come in, dominate, sit for a little bit, come in, dominate again, chill. Or not feel like she has to rush her rehab process. You know, like you could easily just take a ton of practice reps, inspect the gameplay and then be, you know, be ready by end of summer. Literally, yeah. Yeah, I think they're itching for one because they got robbed, what was it, last season? Yeah. Yeah and like Cheryl was mad so she's hungry for a championship.

So I'm going to just, I'm going to say it now. I'm going to say Minnesota. Cause sheesh, with Olivia models. At the helm, Yeah. Wow. Thank you. It's hard not to say Minnesota, although I've said Minnesota before. I know. I've said it before. I don't know. I mean... I don't think the wings are going to win, but I'm optimistic that they're going to get to the playoffs. I, oh my God, that would make my entire year if they, I want them to make the semifinals at least. And I think they can. Yeah, I definitely think. They, in my opinion, like with more time being able to gel and grow over season can be like a force. I think Minnesota now is operating at a really high level.

Vegas and New York are up there. But Dallas has like so much potential. To just, like... turn into like a monster. Literally. Late. Yeah. They just have so many pieces where it's like they're figuring out, like we were talking about earlier with AZ, like where is she going to go? Minutes and all that, like I think they have the potential to like pretty especially if we can figure out the defense yeah yeah We can't. We can't. You got to talk, rotate. But speaking of like just their potential. I think bringing AZ in and because she's such a good shooter. I think that's made Arike realize that she has to do a little bit more. Um, because I think she... And I don't know, I can't speak for her, but it was like.

She thought she could go out, score 30 points a night, and she'd be okay. But now AZ's there, and AZ can shoot. Really well. And she can play defense too. And Enrique's like, 'Oop.' Maybe I should play some defense. Maybe I should pass the ball a little bit more. Maybe I should, like, be in the gym a little bit more. So you can actually see Arike, like. Like, she's, she's, um... crashing the boards and like getting rebounds and stuff like she's making better reads. Yeah. And I'm like, 'Oh, you could do that all along.' Like, 'Oh, okay, got it.' So I'm liking what I'm seeing. I'm liking what I'm seeing. Bye. Bye. Bye. Love that. What's the number one contributor? Rebounds. If all else fails, just go get a rerun.

Exactly. If you're not doing anything else, crash the boards. Yeah, exactly. Yeah. Exactly. Exactly. My high school. Oh, my God. My high school basketball coach in Allen, Texas. If you didn't block out, she used to fucking pull you out of the game. Cow pushes. On the side? Yeah, on the side. Yeah, I know. If you didn't block out. Yeah. That sounds about right for Texas, though. They don't even have a towel. You just take off your own jersey. Dang, dang. We didn't even get a towel. God dang, that's wild. There's... Ground, rebound in Allen, Texas. No, no. Don't forget to read. All right. We got any closing remarks for this first check-in for the WNBA season? I'm just gonna say go Wings, man. They're really good. Go, Bells. They're finally good.

Like, yes, I've been waiting years for this. I know. And I love the love because, you know. You were talking shit on earlier episodes as you should. And now it's like. And that's why I was talking shit because I love him, okay? Exactly, exactly. I just want better for them. I just want better. We are. Here we are. Yeah. What about you, Sara? I'm just excited to see a lot can happen in the next few months, right? It's like, I'm excited to see movement. Not again—I'm a little concerned about the sun, but you know. It is what it is, but happy that there's more teams for these amazing players to play on, happy that these seasoned vets are getting pushed by these young bucks to get better and be in the gym and work harder.

It's like, Thank you. Right. Iron sharpens iron. I say that all the time. And like, if we can continue to do this. Good things will happen with this. We'll just keep growing, you know? Hell yeah. Casey. I'm going to keep rocking with the Fire. I would love to see the Fire sneak into a playoff spot. I think they're doing things right, and we've all doubted them many times. Drafting, what are we doing? And just like, I mean, I think just having them in our backyard and seeing how quick. Like going from not having a team or a coaching staff and then putting together a team that is winning good quality games, playing high level basketball has been really neat to see. So I'd love to see them like sneak into a playoff spot, get that experience in the first year.

Continue to grow. Heck yeah. Monday Night Squad. There we go, y'all. Expect more from us soon. Maybe a month to check in. Yeah. All-star break. Little all-star break. Yeah, there you go. Oh, yeah. Yes. I'll be excited to see that too, especially with the expansion teams. Yes. Getting all-star bids from those teams. I think it just creates, yeah, like you're saying, Sara, like a competitive environment. Yeah, across the league. Mm-hmm. Hell yeah. All right, cool. Post-All-Star break. Monday Night Squad check-in coming at you. Let's go. Let's go. As always, thank you, T and Casey. We appreciate y'all so much being on the show. And, uh, yeah. Y'all, subscribe, leave us a review, come talk to us at Play Like A They, you know? Haters and all. You're welcome. Come at us. Haters, do your job. Exactly. All right, y'all. See y'all later. Bye. Bye.