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Student-Athlete Round Table Discussion

**SYDNEY CARTER
CAROLYN DAVIS
KYLEY SIMMONS
CASEY MORRIS
AARYN ELLENBERG**

BRENDA VANLENGEN: Good afternoon, everyone. If you weren't here with us this morning, I'm Brenda VanLengen, along with Debbie Antonelli, part of the FSN package on the Big 12 Conference.

And we're starting off with a roundtable with our fine young student-athletes today to try to elicit some off-the-court sort of stories and maybe you can develop these into stories when you get a chance to interview them one-on-one, but give them a chance to show their personalities a little bit.

So we'll start with if each of you. Could introduce yourselves with your name, year in school, and your institution, and then three words that describe you.

Sydney.

SYDNEY CARTER: Sydney Carter. I'm a senior at Texas A&M university. I'm outgoing, energetic, and goofy.

AARYN ELLENBERG: I'm Aaryn Ellenberg, sophomore at the University of Oklahoma. And three words that describe me are calm, quiet, and adventurous.

CASEY MORRIS: I'm Casey Morris, junior at Texas Tech. Three words are fun, outgoing, and caring.

CAROLYN DAVIS: I'm Carolyn Davis, junior at the University of Kansas. And I would say

three words that describe me are loyal, sarcastic, and laid back.

KYLEY SIMMONS: I'm Kyley Simmons. I'm a freshman at the University of Missouri. And three words that describe me are fun, outgoing, and competitive.

BRENDA VANLENGEN: All right. I always love to hear those words. Some of those are interesting, how they go together.

Sydney, let's start with you. Coming off a national championship, I'm sure life in the offseason was a little different this year. What are some ways that it was different?

SYDNEY CARTER: Well, they actually gave us a pretty good break afterwards.

We didn't have any individuals in the offseason, so that was nice, of course. But just speaking of how the fans are now, it's kind of like kind of celebrity status. Students are wanting to take pictures with you even though you go to school with them.

You have the little girls that run up to you all the time that want your autograph. So it's just been nice. The visit to the White House was really nice. And I'm kind of just soaking in the moment right now.

BRENDA VANLENGEN: You also went to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial and other things while you were in Washington D.C. What stood out to you the most on your trip?

SYDNEY CARTER: I think that when we actually stepped into the Oval Office and the President told us that we were role models for his daughters and women around the world and little girls around the world, that really hit home with me, just because you don't hear that too often coming from the President. So that was really nice.

DEBBIE ANTONELLI: Aaryn, you use the words calm and quiet. But I know from being at Oklahoma's practices that you guys are the loudest, rowdiest group in practice. Everyone is talking and has to communicate. Being in the back court playing for Coach Coale's team, how important is it for you to be that vocal leader this year and taking another step in replacing Danielle

Robinson in the back court?

AARYN ELLENBERG: I mean, it's extremely important just because we have a lot of young guys this year. And, you know, I'm still pretty young myself. But I kind of gotta take on a new role and be a little more vocal for them because they're not sure what to do right now.

DEBBIE ANTONELLI: You made 94 3s last year, which is quite a mark. But I thought we heard something about you working on your shooting form, or are you tweaking something about the way you shoot? Or is it something from your past? Who taught you how to shoot the basketball?

AARYN ELLENBERG: My club coach, actually. I had an ugly shot, but he fixed it.

DEBBIE ANTONELLI: What did it look like?

AARYN ELLENBERG: It was kind of like a side type of thing.

DEBBIE ANTONELLI: It wasn't even on the right side of your body?

AARYN ELLENBERG: No.

DEBBIE ANTONELLI: Now show us what it looks like.

AARYN ELLENBERG: (Demonstrating.)

BRENDA VANLENGEN: Casey, you're in Kansas City where your sister played for UMKC and is now a graduate assistant. Chazney is her name. What did you learn growing up from your sister?

CASEY MORRIS: I think she's an excellent shooter and one day I hope to shoot as good as she can, because her form is perfect and she shoots the same way every time. Hopefully I can get to that level one day.

But it's great playing with her. She started at post and then was a guard. So we were always really competitive.

BRENDA VANLENGEN: Head coach at UMKC is a Texas alum, Candace Whitaker. Did that have any impact on you going to Texas Tech?

CASEY MORRIS: Not exactly. The coaching staff is one that I always look for in a coaching staff, so I knew it was the right choice.

DEBBIE ANTONELLI: Kyley, freshman, welcome to the Big 12. It's challenging and a lot of fun to play in this league. But you have a little bit of a background with water sports. Now, I saw snorkeling. I didn't see water-skiing. Are you allowed to water-ski as a college basketball player?

KYLEY SIMMONS: Probably not now. I probably want to stay away from that. But I do love

water sports. I used to swim when I was little competitively. So it's always been something that I love to do.

DEBBIE ANTONELLI: Are you winning all the preseason swimming competitions for conditioning for the season?

KYLEY SIMMONS: We don't really do those, but I'm sure I would.

BRENDA VANLENGEN: Carolyn, I understand you're afraid of heights. But you actually mustered up enough courage to go zip lining and then also going to the top of the Leaning Tower of Pisa this summer as well. How did you muster up that courage?

CAROLYN DAVIS: The zip line wasn't that easy, because when you first start, they say lift up your feet and you'll go. I didn't lift my feet up. The gate opened and I looked down and saw trees and just -- it was really scary. And I couldn't go at first, took me about ten minutes to finally go. Once I got the courage to go, I've been zip lining three or four times. It's fun once I get out of it. But just to let go and jump off of something is what's terrifying to me.

And then the Pisa, it wasn't that bad because we were just walking up the steps inside a closed space, so I didn't realize how high it was until we got to the top. It was an awesome experience and I didn't want to miss out on that.

Q. How bad is your fear of heights?

CAROLYN DAVIS: I'd say it's about a 10 on the scale. I just like get really, really nervous. And I can't really explain it. It's really bad.

DEBBIE ANTONELLI: Are you scared right now?

CAROLYN DAVIS: Yeah.

BRENDA VANLENGEN: Good thing you're back away from the edge. You'll be fine.

DEBBIE ANTONELLI: Sydney, not everybody is willing to admit their superstitions. Everybody sort of has some. Some basketball players are willing to admit them. Do you have one, and what is it?

SYDNEY CARTER: I have two. I have to wear black socks every game and I have to put them on -- like I have to put my right side on all the time and I have to change my fingernail polish like every day. I have to wear like a certain color in a game, and for most home games I pick pink.

DEBBIE ANTONELLI: That will go along great with the Play for K games in February.

Anyone else have a superstition they'd be willing to admit to? Kyley, you're a freshman. Go ahead.

KYLEY SIMMONS: I don't have any, I guess. I put on my shoes and go.

DEBBIE ANTONELLI: Carolyn?

CAROLYN DAVIS: I don't think I have any either.

CASEY MORRIS: I mean, I have to eat before the game and --

DEBBIE ANTONELLI: Do you eat the same thing?

CASEY MORRIS: I don't eat a lot. I eat small amounts and I take a nap before the game and have to get up the exact same time before the game so I can be ready to play.

DEBBIE ANTONELLI: Like certain numbers on a clock?

CASEY MORRIS: No, I mean like a certain amount of time, giving me time to get ready and get moving before the game starts.

DEBBIE ANTONELLI: Aaryn, any superstitions?

AARYN ELLENBERG: None that I know of.

BRENDA VANLENGEN: We learned this morning that Brittney Griner got a long board for her birthday yesterday. We heard you're a skateboarder as well. Do you take it around campus? Is it allowed by the coaches that you're able to do that?

AARYN ELLENBERG: I don't think she actually knew about it until somebody kind of told on me.

DEBBIE ANTONELLI: We learn a lot of things from Oklahoma players up here about the risky nature of their activities in the offseason, because didn't Whitney Hand skydive before Coach Coale knew?

You are risk-takers, telling that information up there. I think Coach Coale's out there.

AARYN ELLENBERG: It was adventurous.

DEBBIE ANTONELLI: Tell us some dirt biking and other things you've got going.

AARYN ELLENBERG: Yeah, I skateboard around campus, and I actually only fell one time, because I was being a little reckless. But trying to -- my mom tried to get me into dirt biking, but I actually haven't done that yet. So that's something I'm looking forward to doing probably sometime soon.

BRENDA VANLENGEN: Your mom got you into dirt biking?

AARYN ELLENBERG: Well, she just knows I like to do crazy things. So she was like: Hey, how about this? I was like: Oh, yeah, yeah.

DEBBIE ANTONELLI: When you're skateboarding around campus, you get to the stairs, do you pick up your skateboard or do you try to go down?

AARYN ELLENBERG: Oh, no. I don't go. I let it roll off the stairs and I walk.

DEBBIE ANTONELLI: You've got 12 players back. You've got a strong nucleus from the team that went to the tournament last year, 22 wins on the season. What role are you taking on as being a more vocal leader for your team?

CASEY MORRIS: I mean, I think, like you said, my role would be the leader. But just having experience and playing with these same girls is going to be fun and exciting.

So I think all of us can take on that leader position as one. But it's nice having the experience and getting to play with the same people except for one.

BRENDA VANLENGEN: Kyley, I understand that you like to shop.

KYLEY SIMMONS: Yeah.

BRENDA VANLENGEN: And do you have a guess at how many pairs of shoes you actually own?

KYLEY SIMMONS: No. There's too many to count, really.

BRENDA VANLENGEN: Is that a combination of dress shoes and basketball shoes, or what is your preference?

KYLEY SIMMONS: I have a lot of boots, I guess, and some high heels and the flats. Just a little combination of everything.

BRENDA VANLENGEN: What is your favorite thing overall to shop for?

KYLEY SIMMONS: Probably tennis shoes. I like those.

DEBBIE ANTONELLI: Carolyn, cooking, what kind of meals do you dish up?

CAROLYN DAVIS: I'm actually a really good cook at times. I don't like to cook that much; it just takes too long and by the time I'm finished I don't want to eat because I'm just tired. But, yeah, I mean, I've cooked dinner actually the last couple of nights. And I've had a few cooking incidents.

DEBBIE ANTONELLI: Who do you cook for? Do you cook for your teammates?

CAROLYN DAVIS: I live with Angel, my roommate, and cook for her, and anybody else

who wants to come over.

DEBBIE ANTONELLI: What's happened in the kitchen? Because I'm sure we've all had some experience in the kitchen before.

CAROLYN DAVIS: We have sensitive fire alarms. That's what I'm going to blame it on. Because it was kind of smokey. It wasn't that smokey. But it was kind of smokey. And I didn't burn them, because I still ate -- well, they could have been burnt, but I ate them. I was cooking some sausages and it got a little too smokey, and I didn't get the fan out in time or open the door, so the fire alarm went off.

And it's just -- it's annoying in our apartments because they go off a lot. Every time it goes off, everyone's like: Who did it? I'm sorry, it was me. And the firefighters came and they kind of get frustrated, too, because like it's not a real fire, it's just cooking incidents. So they kind of laughed at me because I was sitting there eating the sausages that I had, like, burnt.

BRENDA VANLENGEN: My smoke detector is very sensitive, too. I'll go with that.

Sydney, you got to go to ESPYs this year. So who was the one athlete you made sure you got your picture taken with?

SYDNEY CARTER: Dirk. Even though I live in Dallas, I don't see them too often. But I literally harassed Dirk all night to take his picture and I finally got to.

Anybody know Carmen, the YouTube group? I harassed her on the elevator, too, and I got a picture, so both of those.

DEBBIE ANTONELLI: Did you guys teach Coach Blair that dance?

SYDNEY CARTER: Nobody taught him that. That's why it looks so bad. He's already trying to move on to "the wobble dance," and we tried to teach him that for Maroon Madness. And he just doesn't have any rhythm. So nobody taught him that. I've been trying to work with him. Me and Tyra are trying to work with him on his rhythm. But nobody taught him that. It looks like he's sweating and trying to wipe the sweat off.

DEBBIE ANTONELLI: Does he work hard enough to sweat?

SYDNEY CARTER: No, he doesn't. I'm glad he doesn't because he's always complaining about his elbows or something like that. He can't dance, though, but he likes to try.

BRENDA VANLENGEN: Aaryn, or anybody else, anything you'd like to reveal about your head coach here, an opportunity for you to

share something very interesting that maybe nobody else would know?

DEBBIE ANTONELLI: Or is there anything they say to you guys all the time in practice? They just drill it in you?

CAROLYN DAVIS: I was going to say, speaking of "the wobble," we had our late night in the fall last week and Bonnie got on the court and did "the wobble" with the whole team.

It was okay. She had a lot of practice, though. We worked with her.

KYLEY SIMMONS: As a freshman, I guess, coming in, Coach immediately said: What you see is what you get. And it's been the truth ever since I've been here. Kind of cool.

BRENDA VANLENGEN: Aaryn, anything from practice you want to share?

AARYN ELLENBERG: No.

BRENDA VANLENGEN: Do you like the amount of playing time you have?

AARYN ELLENBERG: I'm happy right now. I'm cool.

BRENDA VANLENGEN: Thank you very much to all the student-athletes for joining us. Again, they'll be available for one-on-ones later. And we appreciate very much you being with us. Thank you.

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