



## 2009 NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Championship First/Second Rounds

Hosted by the University of Georgia  
Arena at Gwinnett Center • Duluth, Ga.  
March 21 & 23, 2009

# Pre-Tournament Quotes

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March 20, 2009

### Arizona State Head Coach Charli Turner Thorne

"I just like to thank the people of Duluth. Its wonderful to be here. Obviously we're excited, honored to be here. We would like to thank the representatives of the Committee (NCAA). We are excited to be here but obviously we have had some transition recently losing our starting point guard Dymond Simon. We have had some time to practice and we feel really good about our team. We have six seniors and have a veteran team that has played in a number of NCAA Tournaments. I've coached against Andy (Landers - Georgia head coach) a number of times. Obviously a really tough draw in the first round.

"Honestly, this is where the tournament is at right now. The last couple of years we have had the 18 pods and tried to go to neutral sites but obviously we weren't ready. We realized that and we have gone back to tournament sites. The reason the coaches did not want predetermined sites was because the higher seed would end up playing on a lower seed's home court or hometown. You know what? It is where we're at and I understand that and appreciate that. Bottom line is that we are here and we would not be in the NCAA Tournament unless we knew how to win on the road.

"Its kinda hard to really verbalize it (Briann January's leadership); she's tremendous. Obviously these three women (Dymond Simon, Briann January and Sybil Dosty) and we do have six seniors on the team this year, so we have been extremely blessed. We appreciate her attitude whether she starts or doesn't start. She's a key player. She puts her heart and soul and energy into the game and is kind of a role model for our team.

"They (Georgia) are still a very solid team. Obviously I haven't watched all 30-plus of their games but I have watched some and I watched Angel Robinson score 30 on Vanderbilt. They are very deserving of being in the tournament. They are an outstanding team with a tremendous inside game. They are a very talented team that is well coached. They are often a slow starting team that lost some games early. Andy gets them to peak at the right time. We know it's going to be a tough game. They rebound well. They finished second defensively in the SEC."

### Arizona State Player Dymond Simon

On NCAA Tournament – "I'm very excited to be here. We all are excited about the tournament and can't wait to play."

On her new role with the team/injury – "I'm just trying to help keep the team upbeat even though I'm not able to play. I'm kind of like a second coach. I'll get into Briann's and Sybil's ear and everyone else's the whole game! I'm just going to do whatever I can to help this team. I'm just really excited for tomorrow and I can't wait."

### Arizona State Player Briann January

On post-season motivation – "We're excited to be a part of the NCAA Tournament. We're here to play hard and win the tournament. We do have motivation in winning, just like every other team in the tournament does."

On adjusting to Dymond Simon's injury – "We really just worked on toughness. That was the one thing coach wanted us to take from the USC game. A lot of the practices this week allowed us to lock down and focus on that. The extra time practicing without Dymond has helped us be comfortable with the roles we will be playing."

### Arizona State Player Sybil Dosty

On comparing Georgia to teams Arizona State has seen this year – "I think they compare very well to some of the teams we have seen this year."

On adjusting to Dymond Simon's injury – "We really just worked on being tougher. I think in the USC game we weren't ready to play without Dymond, but I think we're definitely more ready to play without her now."



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### Georgia Head Coach Andy Landers

"We're excited. We had a good week of preparation for the opening game in the NCAA Tournament against Arizona State.. We're excited about playing in the tournament again and playing a very, very good Pac-10 team in an Arizona State team that's really excellent on both ends of the floor. They run very good stuff defensively, and very are efficient offensively with the basketball. I feel like we prepared well for this challenge.

"I think [the selection process] is good, and I think it's been good through the years. There are things that the NCAA has done, and has attempted to do with the sites. In my view, all these things have been attendance-driven. This is a piece of the tournament that all of us want to get better. Anything we can do in planning process has been good for the tournament through the years. When we started the tournament, the advantages generally went to higher seeded teams in terms of hosting, and you could make the argument that those teams were deserving. We grew that to the point that we then wanted to do things away from campuses, more and more, first in later rounds, then to the point of doing it in the early rounds at neutral sites. Our Committee and leadership are such that there's no need to question what we've done. There is no question that hat we're seeking to do is what's best for women's basketball at this point. I think that's the mark of good leadership and good decision-making"

On ASU not having Simon Dymond:

"Whether it's late in the season or midway through, whenever you lose a key player, you have a six-day schedule to do whatever you're going to do about it. Where ASU is fortunate is that they're a deep basketball team to start with. They have philosophy of playing a lot of people a lot of time. It's an easier adjustment for them than it's been for us, through the years [when we've lost a key player]. You're always more confident plugging junior or a senior into a position."

### Georgia Player Ashley Houts

"We're grateful for the opportunity to be in the NCAA Tournament. We're playing a very good team and we hope to play hard and to execute the game plan against a tough team. We also hope to have the support from our fans here."

"Briann January's quickness reminds me of Erica White from LSU. She's a great player and attacks the basket and makes her teammates better."

"I definitely think tomorrow's game will feel like a home game. Hopefully our fan base will turn out. We're excited to be playing close to home so that many of our families can see us."

"We're grateful of the opportunity to play in the tournament because of the opportunity itself. This year has been trying physically and emotionally but we've done a decent job of handling it. We're grateful to have the opportunity to have another game."

"Arizona State is a tough team with or without Dymond Simon. She's a great player. It's unfortunate but we'll deal with what we have to. We're just hoping for a good game."

"After the Vanderbilt loss, a lot of us didn't know what to expect about whether we'd get into the tournament or not. As a player, we don't really know how the committee makes selections but Coach Landers did a good job of making us aware of where we stood."

### Georgia Player Danielle Taylor

"We're grateful for the opportunity to play in the tournament and to capitalize. Our coaches have done a great job of preparing us with the quick turnaround and the team responded well. Hopefully we will be able to come out and get it done."

"We definitely have a home court advantage. We look forward to people coming to support us tomorrow."

"We thought getting into the tournament was 50-50. Either we get in or we don't. The pressure is still there. We have to play either way. We don't have to beat 64 teams, we have to beat two, then three."



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### Florida State Head Coach Sue Semrau

"We are thrilled to be here. Obviously it's the goal of every college basketball team to be here at the end of the year. It's a first-class event in every way and we're excited to be here at the Gwinnett Center. We played here two years ago in the ACC-SEC Challenge and they do a tremendous job and we are just so excited to be here. My team is a team of balance and I think that is why we have had the year that we have. Not only balanced in scoring but very balanced in personalities.

"It is nothing that we haven't seen before and she (Amber Bland - NC A&T guard) demands a lot of attention. She is someone we recruited out of high school so we are very familiar. Shooting 45 percent from the three-point line she is going to pose a threat. How do we do that? That's a great question. If I gave it up, I'd have to kill ya.

"Yeah I do (feel like it's a neutral site). I think that having an Arena that's away from someone's campus for us that seems like a neutral site. Georgia is a tremendous host and I'm excited to have someone that cares about women's basketball the way Georgia does is great. We didn't have to travel a long way and we are excited about that."

"We had games early in the year that we hoped prepared us for this type of game and we didn't fare very well in those games. It is difficult I think to guard those quick guard-like post players and so we put ourselves in a position to do that with a size advantage. Some people say we have a size advantage but on the defensive end of floor that isn't always a good thing.

"With the women's tournament and the end date of the ACC Tournament and the start of the NCAA Tournament is so long that we just want the clock to tick. We are excited to get playing and the players are watching basketball to get ready for basketball in the men's tournament. I'm excited for us to get a feel on the court here and tonight we will get together with our band and watch our men in the first NCAA Tournament that they have appeared in awhile."

### Florida State Player Tanae Davis-Cain

"As coach said, we're excited to be here, We're just ready to play.

On the number of teammates who played high school basketball in Georgia – "I grew up mostly in Georgia and it'll be nice to have friends and family come up and watch us."

On playing and competing in the ACC – "The ACC's an unbelievable conference. From top to bottom, every game is a tough game. The ACC prepared us exceptionally well coming into the NCAA Tournament That teaches you to not take any team for granted."

On high expectations and dealing with that pressure – "We've been doing exceptionally well this year but we don't let that go to our head. We just prepare and play our game day-in and day-out. We're most people's favorite to win, but I told coach 'I like being the underdog.'"

### Florida State Player Mara Freshour

"We've been locked (NCAA Tournament berth) up for a couple weeks. We're getting ready to play and we're ready to go.

On success/accomplishments of this season – "A lot of it can be contributed to what coach Sue said about our chemistry. Our team chemistry has clicked really well this year. Our confidence and believing in ourselves has really allowed us to do everything that we have done in the ACC. That's something we've been really excited about."

On playing and competing in the ACC – "I would say half the teams in the ACC were ranked in the top-25 at some point or another during the course of the season. Maryland and Duke were our No. 1 seeds and we won the conference. I mean that just shows this is a power house conference and that really allows you to help prepare for the NCAA Tournament. There's no being scared, or a lack of confidence when you have to face that during the regular season."



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### North Carolina A&T Head Coach Patricia Cage-Bibbs

"It's great to be here, of course, and to be facing Florida State. I have so much respect for that program. I'm so happy for these seniors."

[On taking her third team to the NCAA Tournament]

"I'm truly blessed to have been here three times. We always say that regardless of what you face in life, my purpose has always been to make sure our ladies are on top of everything and to get as much exposure as possible."

It's great to be on ESPN. I've prepared my ladies really well. You may not have seen us on television, but doesn't mean we can't perform. We intend to perform because of who's watching. You don't know who's watching. The camera's shining on you, so be yourself and you'll be just fine."

[About the matchup with Florida State]

"What can you say? You can't say enough about the team and the conference. It's a very strong conference. They are big and that's going to pose a problem for us. Some of my big people can step out and be a guard, and I love that. Inside, it's going to be a battle for us. They have tremendous guards, and an all-around team. If my people stay focused and do what they need to do, it'll be a really good game."

"When we got the selection, it was so great when came up as 14th seed. And I told my ladies that this is an indication of respect people have for you."

"With the preparation, you just have to do what got you here. I have always, as a coach, wanted to have a strong schedule. I do that not only for the game itself, but for life, because you are going to meet some of these same young ladies girls out there after college."

"I have wanted so much for the Amber Blands and Brittanie Taylor-James's to get this experience during their senior year. This is nothing different than what we were doing for preseason."

"I have some really good kids. They deserve to be here and they are going to do their very best. There's nothing like the Aggie fans. They're going to be here. They supported us throughout, on the road, everywhere we go and regardless of who we played. They are a great group of fans."

### North Carolina A&T Player Amber Bland

"We are happy to be here. I came in my freshman year and got to play in the tournament, so it's good to go out being in it again."

"It's a different ball game when you're in the NCAA tournament. I've told my teammates to keep their heads in it and to stay together."

"Even though we're on ESPN, we just have to pull together and not worry about it. We just have to play our game."

### North Carolina A&T Player Brittanie Taylor-James

"We're just happy to be here. We have high expectations and we've worked hard. We look forward to a good ball game."

"We've talked with the team and wanted to encourage them to stay focused. Our coach gives us a hard pre-season schedule so we're prepared to give it a fight. It will be a battle."

"It's a great honor to be on ESPN but you can't let it get to you. It's all about preparation. It's you, the game, and your fans. You never know who you have watching you."