



Mississippi State Bulldogs

Anastasia Hayes and Ahlana Smith

Anastasia Hayes

How has it been learning from Coach Purcell.

"It's been really good. I want to get to the next level, and he's developing me to get there. He's helped me build a better IQ. Just the small things in women's basketball that you've got to have a focus in. You can do this stuff all your life, but there still always more to learn and always room to grow. Watching more film and putting up extra shots are what he (Purcell) thrives on. He loves that because he says those are the teams that are going to make it—the ones that do the small things, like extra shots and putting in more work, and I've really learned that from him."

Ahlana Smith

What does following your coach here mean to what he is as a coach and your relationship?

"I trust him. One thing about me, I am very big on family. I am family oriented, and ultimately, it's more than just basketball. I'm coming here to become a better individual. I'm coming here to get an education, and just build relationships and network with a lot of people. I feel that (Sam) Purcell has my best interest at heart. He's seen me for two years at Louisville so we kind of already had that relationship. I feel like if I would've gone to any other school, I would've felt like I was starting over—trying to meet a new team and get a relationship with a new head coach. When you're playing basketball, that's kind of what you work for. Me already having that relationship kind of put me a couple spaces ahead and made my transition that much easier. He's a great guy on and off the court and I trust him."