

**Head Coach and General Manager
James Wade
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On the first practices

"I guess the first week of practice is basically about getting people healthy and in shape. That was the first week and I'm not coming at it like we're unhealthy it's just that I counted healthy as being in shape and ready to play game minutes. So I guess a better word for it is conditioning. That's probably what we're focused on. Focused on our offense too, playing with pace. The way we played I think it was second in pace last year so conditioning and playing with pace and making correct reads, spacing and things of that nature. Because when you have a team that's not in game shape, they're not going to really space the floor as much as we would like. So, that's the things that we're focused on this week."

On where he feels the team is with its tempo

"I think we're getting there. They know the way I like to do things. So I think it's a process. We try, but of course it's difficult to do that for the time period that we have in practice so we have our ups and downs but I think we're well on our way. They're in a lot better shape than I expected them to be in coming into the first week so we've been able to play and do some up-tempo things and kind of play with some pace. But after when the fatigue sets in and then you start seeing some bad decisions and things of that nature so we just had to get those things out of there. But I think we're not we're not far from what we need to be."

On his views toward what is going on in the country

"Well, I mean this is a discussion you want to keep going. We recently experienced some things that we've seen as a team and we talk about it. We try to have a safe space for each other but I try to encourage them to all have an open mind and be open minded to all the situations that are going on. I encourage them to talk to each other about it. And I think the misinterpretation of the society that we're

living in, especially in the USA is that this is a black problem. It isn't. This is a world problem. I mean, and one of the main issues is every time something goes wrong with the black community, it's our problem. That shouldn't be that way. I think this is a world problem. These are issues that affect a certain population, but I definitely think that everyone should be affected. But I think that it's getting twisted to say 'Hey, this is a black problem you guys, how are you going to solve it?' I think that's a bad way to look at it and I think we, all of us have to be involved in the solutions and we all have to be comfortable being uncomfortable. So, that's what we try to encourage our group to do and that's what we're trying to accomplish as a group."

On Azurá Stevens

"She's been great. The coaches love her. Her teammates love her. She has a beautiful personality. She plays hard, she's coachable. We're happy to have her in our organization. We think that she's going to be a Chicago Sky player for a long time to come. We don't see her going anywhere so that was really a joke. We really love her. It's good to see her healthy. I think the best of her is yet to come. And I think people are going to be surprised by what they see."

On if he's planning to scrimmage other teams

"It's in our plans. I think it's beneficial especially since we're practicing in gyms that are right next to each other. This layout is a little unique in the way that it is that you can just call another team that's right next to you and I'm sure other teams will be open to it. So the coaches have to be creative. The coaches have to be open minded and that's what we're

trying to be because you're right the wear and tear is real. And so if you're going to practice that an hour and a half, two hours, three hours then they have to have breaks and they have to be able to spell each other so I see us doing that. We've talked to some teams. But, we still have to wait on the protocols in place. I think what the WNBA will feel more comfortable with is if we have enough testing time where we have enough negative tests, where they can be comfortable with us playing against each other. We're just waiting on the call from WNBA saying, 'Hey it's okay for you guys to scrimmage.'

On Stefanie Dolson's return from COVID-19

"Yes, it's very admirable the way she was able to come back from COVID and get into the market and do her testing. The way she's practiced and things of that nature. I think she had enough time to recover where she was actually getting in shape while she was in quarantine with her family so after she was able to recover from it. And so she's in a good place physically. And I thought that was commendable. She's a pro. She's a leader on our team. So when she came in she was accountable to everything and she was holding other people accountable. We didn't see a Stefanie that was recovering from COVID, we saw a Stefanie that had already recovered. We didn't get a chance to see that. So, right now she's in a good place. She's in a good place mentally. She's in a good place physically. So we expect good things from her and good leadership from this year."

On Gabby Williams

"Gabby is the ultimate utility player. She's been knocking down shots at a great rate. We felt like the year last year at point guard really helped. The way she saw the game. The way she sees the game right now. And she's been everywhere. We've had her at the wings spot but it's been sometimes she's taking the point guard, taking the ball out of the point guard's hand and starting to run plays. And it's also been times where she's filled in at the four for us too. We see her as a full-

time guard but she's going to be doing everything for us so we expect a good year from her where she has a lot of responsibility and it's a year that she doesn't have to look over her shoulder. We expect her to just be able to play through things this year."

On his experience in the bubble

"The experience has been interesting. I mean we've only been here for a week or so, even less, and I feel like it's been good. I mean they have everything pretty structured. Like I said, our team is pretty close together because we're not at the lodges so we're at the villas and the hotel. And so everybody's pretty close so we're basically at the headquarters of the bubble. And now that we have the lay of the land and everybody's off quarantine were able to move around freely and do things of that nature. It's a beautiful campus. The food is good. We're getting to do what we love. Hopefully, that feeling lasts when we start playing games. I think that's the only thing that's missing. I think the time will take us. But I think everybody, all the teams here are on a mission here to to win. And so that's what I think is occupying everybody's minds but the fact that the WNBA and IMG have come to have come together and put us in a comfortable environment where we're not as... It's not a reflection of what's going on as much in society as far as people not respecting people's rights or not appreciating life at the rate where they're saying that you wear a mask is going to minimize the percentages of passing a virus. I think everybody here is on the same page, and they're trying to respect people and they're not putting people at risk. So, you see everyone wearing a mask and I think it's a good reflection of what society could

be because the players here and everybody here for the most part are strong, athletic people. But just for the respect and welfare of others they say, 'I'm willing to sacrifice a little bit. I'm gonna wear this mask because I don't want to get anything and I don't want to give anybody anything.' And so for me that's why I think that it's a success so far to the fact that the WNBA is trying to make sure everything is safe, and everybody's safe."

On if he feels safe in the bubble

"I mean it's still early. But I think they're taking the proper precautions as far as what the requirements are and what the protocols are. So they're trying. They're trying. Of course, it's difficult trying to get however many people on the same page and say, 'Hey look we have to take this seriously,' because as soon as you see one person relaxed, it starts a trickle effect. But for the most part, nobody has really been out of line as much and everybody's really trying to get this thing done and you can tell that the players are all for it and the staff is for it so hopefully hopefully it works out."