

## **Player Transcripts**

**Lady Vol Media Day, Oct. 30, 2013**

### **Senior Meighan Simmons**

(On this year as 2013 SEC Player of the Year and many preseason awards)

“It’s more of a motivation. I try not to focus on the accolades and more on getting better every day. I thank God for people choosing me as a favorite, but there are so many things that I can do better in order to actually receive an award like that. There’s going to be a lot of things I need to work on in order to get back to that position and do some work on the floor and see where that takes me and where I stand.”

(On what she’s looking forward to)

“Just to see all the hard work that we’ve put in and how that will unfold. Also how the freshmen will adjust to college. It will be a very exciting season and I’m excited for the Bahamas. I’m excited about everything and ready to see how the season goes.”

### **Junior Ariel Massengale**

(On USA Basketball)

“This summer was a great experience. It’s always a great honor to play for your country while doing what you love. Coming off of the bench, it was a humbling experience for me. I’m not going to lie, the first time it happened, I was pretty down about it and didn’t like it, but I had to refocus and think that if I wasn’t going to be a starter on the court, what else could I do to still help this team be successful. I was just encouraging and supportive of my teammates. I was able to be a leader from the sidelines and observe and see how the game was going, which made it easier when I did go into the game, to see who was open and things that I could do. It’s always great to play with great players. You can learn a lot by playing with them. One of the best things is just spending time with my teammates and getting to know other athletes. I know that a lot of people see us so competitive and don’t understand the friendships and bonds that we have off the court.”

(On practices)

“Practices have definitely been tough. That’s part of why we’re so excited for Monday night – we get to play another team that isn’t ourselves. It’s definitely been a grind every day. At the point guard position, we’ve definitely been getting after it every day. We compete against each other in practice, but the cool thing is that come game time, we’re all on the same team and playing for each other. I think we do a great job of competing, but at the same time, we still encourage each other and are there for each

other. (Draya and Jordan) have done a great job of asking me questions if they don't understand something, or if it's something I think they can work on or improve on. If they're doing well, I make sure that I let them know that. The main thing of being a point guard is confidence and I think both of them are very confident so far. They just have to keep that and keep improving on it."

(On what she's looking forward to)

"I'm just ready to play some games. I'm tired of seeing this arena empty. I'm ready to get some fans in here and get this season started."

### **Sophomore Bashaara Graves**

(On practices)

"They have definitely been really hard, but we know that they're just trying to make us better. We just come out here and work hard every chance that we get."

(On the year after SEC Freshman of the Year)

"I want to come out and do better than I did last year, you want to get better every day, really. Coming from my freshman year, I want to come into this year even better and show improvement."

(On what she's looking forward to)

"Just getting back on the floor and playing with my teammates and having fun."

### **Freshman Mercedes Russell**

(On being the No. 1 ranked 2013 recruit)

"It seems like there is a lot of pressure, but I don't really pay attention to it. I just go out on the court and work hard."

(On comparisons to Candace Parker)

"I watch how mobile she is. She's tall, but she can go in and out and she's very versatile."

(On what she's looking forward to)

"I'm just excited to play. Everyone says that since I haven't ever been to a Lady Vol game, I'm in for a treat. I'm just excited and a little nervous at the same time."