

MINNESOTA GOLDEN GOPHERS

By Genesis Austin

The women's Minnesota Golden Gophers have done really well this season with a whole new coaching staff. Led by new head coach Lindsay Whalen, who is no stranger to the Golden Gophers basketball court. Whalen is a Minnesota alumni who dominates Minnesota records in points, scoring averages, free throws made, and free throw percentage. The Minnesota Golden Gophers are a twelve woman team. The roster consists of #2 Barbora Tomancova, #3 Destiny Pitts, #5 Taiya Bello, #11 Delaynie Byrne, #12 Mercedes Staples, #20 Kehinde Bello, #21 Jasmine Brunson, #23 Kenisha bell, #25 Ralma Kapos, #31 Trene Garrido Perez, #34 Gadiva Hubbard, and #41 Annalese Lamke. In pursuit of another title, the Gophers are looking to add number eight to their collection of championships, which were obtained in 1904, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1940, 1941, and 1960. They have been playing in the Big Ten since it was first introduced in 1896. I recently had the pleasure of speaking with starting Center, Senior, Annalese Lamke and Assistant Coach Kelly Roysland.

(Genesis & Lamke)

G: What's it like playing for a new coaching staff? Did you find it hard adjusting to a new staff your Sr. year?

L: It's very exciting to learn from a new staff. It was a little nerve wracking because I didn't know what to expect. The staff is really nice.

G: Did you play any other sports while growing up?

L: I played volleyball, softball, karate, football, track & field, and basketball. I had colleges recruiting for both track & field and basketball, but basketball offered more opportunities and scholarships.

G: How do you describe your team?

L: The team is very fun and friendly. Everyone is easy going and likes to joke around a lot.

G: If you win the Big Ten tournament how will you celebrate?

L: I would hug all my teammates and give the biggest hug in the world to my parents.

G: What's next after you finish college?

L: I want to try and go into coaching. I haven't put that much thought into playing overseas.

G: What do you do before games?

L: I listen to music, one of my favorite songs is Mobamba. I relax by playing on a PT balance board with a roller. I am not injured I just like to challenge myself to get better at it.

G: What is your favorite drill to do in practice?

L: My favorite drill is called 11 Man.

G: What inspiring message would you share for girls my age that also play center?

L: Don't let anyone pick on you for your size. Sometimes you may feel like you don't get as much recognition as the guards do but it's a huge part and takes work. Use your size to your advantage.

(Genesis and Roysland)

G: What made you want to coach?

R: My parents were both coaches too. I love teaching so in college I studied Sport Management.

G: What does the team need to do in order to win the tournament?

R: The team will need tough defense and win ribbons on both sides of the court. On the offensive side, we need to take care of the ball.

G: What challenges do you face coaching adults?

R: Handling adversity, trying to empower them when things are not going their way. Having to be direct and not letting them take it personal, because it is just us trying to help better the team.

G: What advice would you give girls my age that play basketball?

R: To be coachable. To be able to take criticism. Work hard on and off the court. Practice a lot. Have a positive attitude.