

# WNBA Draft

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New York City

Connecticut Sun

Charlisse Leger-Walker



**Q. Gabriela was talking about everything you guys have done since last Sunday. Are you tired at all from the coast-to-coast celebrations?**

CHARLISSE LEGER-WALKER: You know, it's been a lot. It's been a whirlwind but can't complain. I mean, it's all very fun things that we're getting to do. I get to do it with the best group of people as well, so no complaints from me.

**Q. What excites you most about playing for Connecticut and joining Gianna as well?**

CHARLISSE LEGER-WALKER: They're an amazing organization, and I'm humbled and grateful that they saw something in me and chose to bring me along to Connecticut play with them.

Obviously with Gianna there, it's just extremely amazing for me. Obviously having someone I know but also just the friendship that we have has been one of the best parts of my year, honestly, this past season and also just being able to play alongside someone like her. Obviously I know her game very well, and she's one of the best players I've played with. I'm just excited that we get to continue that journey together.

**Q. What has this experience of this night been like for you being here with so many of your teammates and kind of getting to watch them all go through this process and then go through it yourself?**

CHARLISSE LEGER-WALKER: Yeah, this has just been such an amazing experience. It's been such a dream of mine not only to make the league, but also just get the opportunity to play against some of the best players in the world, if not the best players in the world.

So just having the chance to do that, again, I'm just so grateful and humbled that I get that chance. Just to experience all of this with my teammates has been absolutely unreal. I'm so proud of them, just seeing them walk across that stage and seeing all the emotions and having all of our families here together, I could not be

prouder of every single one of them. They deserve it so much.

I have a front-row seat to all of their unique experiences. So to be able to share this with them and celebrate with them as well, I'm just overjoyed.

**Q. What are you most excited about, I guess, playing in Connecticut with the Sun? But also the relocation to Houston next year, what's your thought process like?**

CHARLISSE LEGER-WALKER: Again, I think it's such an amazing opportunity to go out to Connecticut and play with some really amazing players and just get to experience that organization and, again, feel welcomed into that.

I honestly haven't thought too much about the relocation, but obviously that's a really exciting opportunity as well. Just brings a lot of new things to the table, which again is only a positive thing.

Just grateful to have this opportunity to go to Connecticut.

**Q. Curious if I could, as you rehabbed from the ACL injury, did you picture this night or something like it, and how much did tonight feel like, if you did picture it, what it looked like?**

CHARLISSE LEGER-WALKER: I did picture this night. I think it was one of my biggest motivators, honestly, in rehab. Knowing that this was still a huge goal for me and something that I envisioned myself doing was playing pro, especially playing in the league.

I think throughout that entire process, I learned a lot about myself and a lot about how much mental toughness comes into play, especially when you're going through a rehab injury that kind of extensive.

Just having this opportunity, I couldn't be more grateful for that. This whole entire night has just been a dream. Walking across that stage is unlike any other feeling I've ever had. Just hearing my name called out was such an amazing thing. Also just to have my family there right



beside me. For a long time, I didn't think they would be able to make the trip out. So just having them here tonight meant a lot for me.

Also I just want to give a massive shout-out to Angela. She actually gave up a couple seats for me to sit at her table and experience that with my mother. So I could not be more thankful for her and the friendship we've had. That was really big for me.

**Q. I just wanted to know if you could sort of build upon what the experience was, because obviously there was a certain amount of people who were invited, and you sort of were like, you know what, I'm going to come to New York. Can you just take us through how you planned that, how you were able to get your family here?**

CHARLISSE LEGER-WALKER: There was never a doubt in my mind that when that invite list came out that I was not going to be here for my teammates. One way or the other, I wanted to show up for them because that's what we've been doing for each other all year. I think it's almost a cherry on top when we can be in this moment together.

We had a lot of our other teammates out here celebrating us tonight as well. And, yeah, there was never a doubt that I was going to be here supporting them and hope to hear my name be called as well.

For my family, again, to be here, that was probably for me the hardest thing just navigating if I could get them tickets and where they were going to sit and all of those things. Like I said, Angela, almost immediately after she got the call was like, you have a seat at my table and all those things. Again, super grateful for my teammates and I think it just speaks to what this whole season has been for me and our team, just so selfless, such a sisterhood. I could not be more grateful that I got to spend my last season playing with UCLA.

**Q. You've mentioned multiple times how proud you are of others. What are you most proud of with yourself? You mentioned resilience. Is it bouncing back from the injury? Is it obviously winning it all? What are you the most proud of within yourself?**

CHARLISSE LEGER-WALKER: I think probably a couple of what you just said. The resilience to come back from my first real injury, and just really believing in myself. For a period there it was, you know, am I going to be the type of player that I want to be? Am I going to come back from this the same way? I think it took a lot from my support system. I had an amazing group of people around me to get me back to where I am. But also just that belief in

myself that I could do that and pursue my goals at the level that I wanted to.

Just staying true to who I am. I have such a huge village in New Zealand supporting me, and I just always want to stay grounded in that and rooted back to my culture. I think I'm really proud of the way I'm able to represent that and just put on for a lot of the kids, especially the young girls back home that see this pathway, and now I think it has become a little bit more realistic for them.

**Q. To kind of build off that, what you experienced in coming back from the injury. If you could go back to that injury or that gap year between your transfer and moving to Westwood, what would you want to tell yourself back then, what sort of advice would you give yourself, your younger self, as you made the Bruin journey?**

CHARLISSE LEGER-WALKER: I think if I was to go back to that day or week of going through that injury, I think it would just be to tell myself to trust the process and trust your instincts.

I think I knew pretty quickly what I wanted to do following that injury. A large part of that brought me to UCLA and brought me to this moment right now, and I think I've grown a lot since that injury. So, yeah, just telling myself to really trust myself, trust the work ethic I have and just trust my ability in being able to come back.

I think, also, kind of extending on that, going to my younger self, it's pretty much the same message, just trying to instill that belief and confidence in me very young because, yeah, if you had asked me a really long time ago, I probably wouldn't have said that I would be sitting here as a draftee. But also winning a national championship and all the other things that we've accomplished these past two seasons. So those things.

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