

# WNBA Draft

Monday, April 13, 2026

New York City

Connecticut Sun

Gianna Kneepkens



**Q. You ended the regular season in the elite efficiency club of 50/40/90. How have you learned over the course of your career to prioritize efficiency and consistency over flashiness?**

GIANNA KNEEPKENS: Yeah, for me I think just my whole career never been about like, oh I want to be in the 50/40/90 club. It's just been about making the right basketball plays. Taking shots I've worked on, finding my teammates when I need to. So, yeah, just really putting emphasis on making the right basketball plays.

**Q. I'm not sure if you know this, but Charlisse was just drafted by the Sun. What's your reaction to that? What are you looking forward to about joining her in Connecticut?**

GIANNA KNEEPKENS: I am so incredibly excited. Charlisse is one of my best friends. We talked, oh, we really want to go on the same team. Obviously it's hard and you have no control. But when I was back there, I was so excited. So that's going to be really fun.

Yeah, it's insane, but I'm really excited for that.

**Q. You talked about going to UCLA, in order to kind of level up, have your pro habits be reinforced. You've always talked about this, about the fact that one of the reasons why you fit in so seamlessly with an established team was being able to do that. What are some specific habits that you want to take into your WNBA career now and want to bring to Connecticut right away?**

GIANNA KNEEPKENS: Yeah, I think just high-level consistency. I think one thing that was really special about our UCLA team is they're just incredible players all around. So I think it's a skill to know how to play with great players. And you obviously need that in the WNBA. I feel like I got great practice with that. I'm just going to continue to do that.

You have to know when you have to hit your teammates and you have to know when it's kind of your time. So that's

something that I really learned and will be useful for me.

**Q. You just talked about some of the pro habits that you will be bringing into the WNBA. But what are some things that you're most looking to learn or things that you're looking to develop, whether inside the game, outside the game, when you get into the W?**

GIANNA KNEEPKENS: Yeah, I think something that everyone talks about is just the physicality and speed. I think that will be a really fun thing to learn and grow in. I think just coming into the league with an open mind, and you know, wanting to learn, wanting to just continue to elevate your game is something that's going to be really important. I'm looking forward to doing that.

**Q. What does it mean to enter this league at this point in this class post-CBA, one where it's apparent that the players will fight for this generation and the next, as well as having a league that's willing to talk with its players and negotiate like this?**

GIANNA KNEEPKENS: Yeah, I feel so incredibly grateful for all the women who have fought for what they've earned. I mean, just to see what they've done for the past 30 years is incredible.

So to know that there's women I can look up in the league that are willing to do that, I think it helps me want to do that and continue to grow the league as I step into it.

**Q. Who are you most excited to play against in the WNBA?**

GIANNA KNEEPKENS: I'm excited to play against anyone. I think when you play against familiar faces, that's pretty fun. So maybe some of my old teammates. But I'm just excited to play against anyone and learn and grow.

**Q. Connecticut will be moving to Houston after this season. Is that a story that you followed? And what are your thoughts about having to enter a kind of complicated and unique situation like that as a rookie?**



GIANNA KNEEPKENS: Yeah, I definitely know that I've seen it in the news that they're moving. I'm just going to kind of go at it one day at a time and kind of focus on this year.

But I think if they believe that's what is right to grow the league, then that's exciting. I'm just willing to be part of any opportunity that there is.

**Q. UCLA is cleaning up the draft tonight. One of the hardest parts with leaving college is the relationships you have with your teammates. How does it feel now, knowing that you're going into the league with so many of your teammates? What is it going to be like to play each other at this level?**

GIANNA KNEEPKENS: Yeah, it's really special. It makes the transition a little bit smoother because you know they're experiencing the same thing. So when you can lean on them in tough moments, that feels nice to have someone like that.

I'm so proud of all of them. Grateful that I got to do this journey and continue to do this journey alongside them.

**Q. Along those lines, you guys seem like such a close team. Have you tried to spend any extra time together this weekend while you were all here? Have there been any goodbyes yet, or have you thought about we're going to have to say goodbye, that kind of thing?**

GIANNA KNEEPKENS: No goodbyes yet. We definitely have spent some time together. We're gonna spend some time together tonight.

But, yeah, those girls mean the most to me, and good thing we live in this day and age and we have phones. So hopefully we'll keep in touch, and obviously we'll see each other around.

I'm just so proud of them, and I just feel grateful to have them alongside me.

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