

# Former Ohio State Guard Celeste Taylor Signs One-Year Deal With Sydney Flames Of Women's National Basketball League



Former Ohio State guard Celeste Taylor is headed to Australia to continue her professional basketball career, signing a one-year deal with the Sydney Flames of the country's Women's National Basketball League on Wednesday.

SO EXCITED FOR THIS !!! <https://t.co/SyMUdT69cD>

— Celeste Taylor (@\_celeste620) July 11, 2024

Taylor joins the WNBL, the longest-running women's sports league in Australia, just two weeks after being waived by the WNBA's Indiana Fever on June 25 to clear roster space for injured forward Damiris Dantas. Taylor, who was drafted by the franchise with the 15th overall pick in the second round of the 2024 WNBA draft held April 15, appeared in just five games for Indiana this season, logging just three points, one rebound, one block and one assist in 16 minutes of action before getting waived.

Taylor's stint in the WNBA was a short one — a fate that many second-round draft selections face in a league that features just 12 teams and a limited roster space — but she now has the opportunity to kickstart her professional career on a Flames squad that finished the 2023-24 season with a 11-10 record and sixth-place finish in the WNBL, according to flashscore.com.

"I am looking forward to playing my first year in the WNBL and under (Flames head coach Guy Molloy), learning and growing through his leadership," Taylor said in a statement released by the team. "I will

be bringing a lot of energy, excitement, defense and leadership! I will bring another style of basketball with IQ, it will be a great time for all our fans that come out and watch us!”

Taylor is the second former Buckeye to sign with an overseas team this summer after struggling to stay on a roster in the WNBA. Former Ohio State guard Taylor Mikesell, who was also drafted and waived by the Fever as a second-round draft pick in 2023, signed on June 26 with Gerbike KESB, a team based in Gernika, Spain, that competes in Liga Femenina, the highest level of professional basketball competition in that country.

But while Mikesell will hope to excel in Spain with her elite three-point shooting, Taylor will look to carve out playing time in Australia with her defensive prowess and improved offensive skill set, two strengths of her game that she showed off in her lone season with the Buckeyes in 2023-24.

The Valley Stream, New York, native started all 32 games for Kevin McGuff’s squad last season and averaged 10.1 points, 4.1 rebounds, 3.4 assists and a team-high 2.5 steals and 0.9 blocks per game, an impressive stat line that earned her Big Ten Defensive Player of the Year, her second defensive player of the year honor after winning the ACC’s award while at Duke in 2022-23.

“(Taylor is) a player we’re really excited to mold into our squad. She’s a two-time defensive player of the year who plays both ends of the court, as well as showing great pace and athleticism,” Molloy said. “We watched a lot of her film from Duke and Ohio State. Her due diligence along with her young basketball talent — her addition to the Flames pumps me.”