



Final4

**SOPRON
2019**

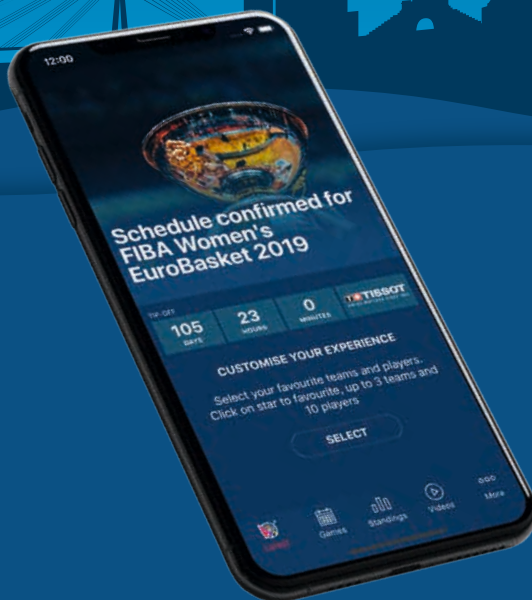


EVENT GUIDE

FIBA
WOMEN'S
EUROBASKET
Latvia Serbia 2019



27 JUNE - 7 JULY 2019



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WELCOME



We are happy to be in Sopron again for one of the most prestigious events in female basketball and one that has such a special tradition and history.

The EuroLeague Women Final Four remains one of the most significant events not only in our own region, but it is recognized globally for the quality of the players who will again be on show.

Continuing with what we have seen down the years, we can look forward to the biggest stars in the world competing against each other in a competition that continues to grow every year.

Our hosts Sopron are a famous and respected club, having showed last year what a great job they will do. We are pleased to be able to rely on such a warm welcome and their organizational skills once again.

After another successful Final Four is concluded, we will quickly turn our focus to the FIBA Women's EuroBasket 2019 Final Round in Latvia and Serbia.

This demonstrates what an important year it is for the many of our female athletes, while we also look forward to seeing the next generation at the various youth competitions as well.

Sincerely

Turgay Demirel
FIBA Europe President



We are delighted to be here in Sopron again for the EuroLeague Women Final Four and if it is anywhere near as welcoming and exciting as 2018, it will be a treat for everyone.

Sopron showed what a great club they are on and off the court last year when they impressed us all as hosts. It was a memorable experience and we are grateful for being able to enjoy what will be another excellent tournament and I have no doubt the usual great atmosphere created by the fans.

I am sure the Final Four will live up to expectations once again, not only for those inside the Novomatic Arena, but also many more watching on television or online.

This season was a landmark one for our premier women's club competition. For the first time in 12 years, we had seven different nations represented in the Quarter-Finals.

This confirms the competitiveness and quality of the tournament, with three of the clubs who have reached the Final Four 2019 having only a combined two titles. It further demonstrates how open the competition is for everyone who enters.

Enjoy the games!

Kamil Novak
FIBA Executive Director Europe

WELCOME



Dear Journalists and Guests,

Hungarian women's basketball is currently enjoying its best ever time. Our women's national team has qualified for the third FIBA Women's EuroBasket in a row, and Sopron Basket have grown to become one of the best clubs in Europe, while our youth program is now mentioned as being among the best in Europe and the world. One of the celebrations of this wonderful era is the EuroLeague Women Final Four in Sopron, which the Novomatic Arena will be hosting for the second time in two years.

Being able to host the four best teams of the Continent is the result of a huge collaboration. The historical success of Basket Sopron, the support of the Hungarian government, the help of the town of Sopron and also that of the Hungarian Basketball Federation have all been crucial. This collaboration is what makes sure that this beautiful town and this great club will crown the season with a memorable tournament! I am asking you all to spread the word about Hungarian hospitality and the development of its women's basketball!

Ferenc Szalay
President, Hungarian Basketball Federation



Dear Journalists and Guests,

In the name of the City of Sopron, I welcome you again to Novomatic Arena for the occasion of the EuroLeague Women Final Four 2019!

Sopron has been a powerhouse of our nation's basketball life, so it is a great pleasure and honor for me that they will host the Final Four for the second time in a row.

Sopron is one of the most historic towns of this country. Thirty years ago, in 1989 the iron curtain dividing Europe into two parts was taken down here, eventually resulting in the reuniting of Europe. This is why being hosts to a European Final on an anniversary this big, is so important to us.

I hope that you will have a great time in our city, and that you will also return to Sopron in the future.

Dr. Tamás Fodor
Mayor of Sopron

HISTORY OF THE FINAL FOUR



Sparta&K M.R. Vidnoje (2010)

ONE OF THE MOST RESPECTED AND RENOWNED COMPETITIONS IN THE SPORT, EURO-LEAGUE WOMEN HAS A PROUD TRADITION OF PRODUCING SOME INCREDIBLE GAMES, MEMORIES AND EXCITEMENT FOR FANS AND THOSE INVOLVED.

As the premier FIBA women's club competition due to the sheer number of European, WNBA and international stars, EuroLeague Women continues to grow and also off the court, where fan interaction is soaring.

On the floor, the competition can be traced back 60 years, with the modern-day version of the tournament coming in the last couple of decades.

One of the key landmarks during the more recent chapters of the tournament's history was back in 2007, when Sparta&K M.R. Vidnoje climbed to the top of the podium and it proved to be the first of a staggering four successive titles.

Since then, the drama has flowed freely. No club has managed to successfully defend their title and as well as the likes of UMMC Ekaterinburg winning in their role as favorites, there have also been a few surprises along the way.

These included memorable first titles for Galatasaray in 2014, who also became the first Turkish winner in the tournament's rich history, while ZVVZ USK Praha collected their maiden title 12 months later.

Meanwhile it hasn't always been a Final Four, with a Final Eight being initiated during 2012 and in following editions, before reverting back to a Final Four in 2015.

The one common theme at the Final Four is that there are no second chances for anybody. Only two wins will do the job and that is just one of the reasons that makes it so absorbing, tense, and entertaining.

LAST 12 CHAMPIONS

 **(2018)** UMMC Ekaterinburg [RUS];

 **(2017)** Dynamo Kursk [RUS];

 **(2016)** UMMC Ekaterinburg [RUS];

 **(2015)** ZVVZ USK Praha [CZE];

 **(2014)** Galatasaray odeabank [TUR];

 **(2013)** UMMC Ekaterinburg [RUS];

 **(2012)** Ros Casares [ESP];

 **(2011)** Halcon Avenida [ESP];

 **(2010)** Sparta&K Moscow Region [RUS];

 **(2009)** Sparta&K Moscow Region [RUS];

 **(2008)** Sparta&K Moscow Region [RUS];

 **(2007)** Sparta&K Moscow Region [RUS]

THE FINAL FOUR 2019 FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW

- ★ UMMC Ekaterinburg, Dynamo Kursk and Sopron Basket all appeared the Final Four 2018.
- ★ This will be the first time in the last eight years that no Turkish team have been at the Final Four.
- ★ No club has defended their title since Sparta&k M.R. Vidnoje in 2010.
- ★ This is the third time that the Final Four will be played in Hungary, after Pecs in 2004 and Sopron last year.
- ★ Since 2004, only three European players have been Final Four MVP; two will play this weekend in Alba Torrens (2011 and 2014) and Emma Meeseman (2018). The other was Ann Wauters (2004)
- ★ In the last 11 years, only Diana Taurasi (3) and Alba Torrens (2) have been the Final Four MVP more than once.
- ★ The four head coaches at this event have 9 titles between them (Natalia Hejkova 5, Lucas Mondelo 2, Miguel Mendez 1, Roberto Iniguez 1).
- ★ UMMC have won 4 titles, while Dynamo Kursk and ZVVZ USK Praha have one each, with Sopron still searching for their first crown.
- ★ UMMC against Sopron Basket is a repeat of the 2018 Final, while Praha have lost all seven games they have played in EuroLeague Women against Dynamo Kursk.
- ★ Alyssa Thomas of Praha is the only player this season to lead a club in points, rebounds and assists.
- ★ Breanna Stewart of Dynamo Kursk is the only player in the competition averaging more than 20 points per game.
- ★ Dynamo Kursk have made more free-throws and blocked more shots than any other team this season.
- ★ UMMC have scored more points, handed out more assists, grabbed more rebounds and shot the ball better than anyone else this season.



Galatasaray (2014)

SOPRON BASKET TEAM PROFILE

IF MAKING THIS STAGE LAST SEASON WAS A SURPRISE THEN PERHAPS AFTER A ROLLER-COASTER SEASON, IT IS EVEN MORE IMPRESSIVE THEY ARE BACK. HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT OUR FINAL FOUR HOSTS.

ROSTER

Player	Position	Height (m / ft)	Nationality	Date of Birth
CASAS Queralt	SF	1.80 / 5' 9"	ESP	18-Nov-1992
CRVENDAKIC Aleksandra	PF	1.87 / 6' 1"	SRB	17-Mar-1996
CZUKOR Dalma	F	1.82 / 5' 10"	HUN	29-Mar-1999
DUBEI Debora	SF	1.82 / 5' 10"	HUN	04-Jan-1997
DUPREE Candice	F	1.87 / 6' 1"	USA	16-Aug-1984
FEgyverneky Zsolia	PG	1.78 / 5' 8"	HUN	29-Sep-1984
HATAR Bernadett	C	2.08 / 6' 8"	HUN	24-Aug-1994
HONTI Katalin	G	1.78 / 5' 8"	HUN	24-Aug-1987
JOVANOVIĆ Tina	C	1.90 / 6' 2"	SRB	12-Jan-1991
TURNER Yvonne	PG	1.78 / 5' 8"	HUN	13-Oct-1987
VARGA Kamilla	G	1.82 / 5' 10"	HUN	13-Apr-1999
WENINGER Virag	G	1.78 / 5' 8"	HUN	20-Jun-1997
ZAHUI Amanda	PF	1.96 / 6' 4"	SWE	08-Sep-1993

Coach: INIGUEZ Roberto (ESP)



History

Sopron have a rich tradition of participation in this competition, having been almost ever-presents for two decades. Their maiden Final Four appearance was in 2009 which was a shock at the time, as was last season, when they reached the title game for the first time. They have also now punched their ticket to successive Final Fours for the first time.

Play-Caller

Roberto Iniguez is one of the most respected coaches around. He won the title with **Ros Casares** in 2012, took Fenerbahce to a couple of Finals, delivered **Nadezhda** a historic Final Four appearance and masterminded that Final with Sopron in 2018. Meticulous in his detail and well known for the faith he puts in his players, the Spanish play-caller has an incredible track record. He has also landed plenty of domestic success in Hungary as well.

4 DIFFERENCE MAKERS

- 1 Yvonne Turner** – The guard has had a sensational season and remains the primary scorer and creator that makes Sopron tick. If she plays well, the team plays well.
- 2 Candice Dupree** – The veteran forward has been superb and her efficiency, ability to get it done in the clutch is vital. Her experience is absolutely priceless.
- 3 Amanda Zahui** – The Swedish center has a lot of work to get through at this event with some big talents in the opposing front-court. But, she can use her shooting range to cause problems and open space for others.
- 4 Queralta Casas** – The arrival of the versatile Spanish ace coincided with an upturn in fortunes for Sopron in the Regular Season. She can make an impact off the bench with her energy and also make a difference on defense.



Yvonne Turner

4 KEY QUESTIONS

- 1** Can Sopron avoid foul trouble and injuries in this competition (as they are not as deep as the Russian teams)?
- 2** Can they keep their rivals below 70 points?
- 3** If their defense is usually their safety belt in games, can they find the shooting touch to keep pace with their big-hitting opponents?
- 4** What tempo will they choose to play at? It is hard to run with the other teams that are here and so will it be a half-court game and keeping it ugly that sees them land success?



Amanda Zahui

FINAL FOUR FOCUS

Aleksandra Crvendakic, Sopron Basket

A huge favorite with the local fans, Crvendakic has been one of the pillars behind Sopron Basket rising up from some difficult times to make successive Final Four appearances for the first time in their history.

Whether it is scoring, rebounding or utilizing her excellent passing skills, the small forward is also a centrepiece for the Serbia national team and will be one of the stars for the co-hosts of the FIBA Women's EuroBasket 2019.

But, let's put those thoughts aside for a moment, since she must firstly find her focus to answer our quick-fire questions:

Four words to describe you as a player

Professional, fighter, optimistic, perseverance

Four words to describe you as a person

Kind, loyal, ambitious, sincere

Four words to describe the Final Four

Emotional, exciting, passionate, competitive

Four players past / present you admire

Dejan Bodiroga, Dirk Nowitzki, Maya Moore, Sonja Petrovic

Four songs for you if stranded on a desert island

Matt Simons - Catch & Release, Gibboni - Libar, Tose Proeski - Volim osmeh tvoj, Petar Graso - Ako te pitaju

Four books / movies /TV box sets for that desert island

'Game of Thrones' (TV), 'Pirates of the Caribbean' (Movie), 'A Thousand Splendid Suns' and 'The Red Sari' (Books)

Four foods you can't get enough of

Risotto, chocolate, mandarin orange, watermelon



Aleksandra Crvendakic

Four foods you could never eat

Tuna, olives, cheddar cheese, beef steak (rare)

Four places on your travel 'bucket list'

Singapore, New York, Kuala Lumpur, Tokyo

Four things to do on your life 'bucket list'

Winning the EuroLeague Women title, travel the world, build a house on the beach, helping charities

Four must follow social channels -

@EuroLeagueWomen @mzbiancarenee @9GAG @veseleen

Four reasons for fans to follow/watch women's ball

There are a thousand reasons!

You can follow Aleksandra @crvendakic11 on Instagram and Twitter

BEING A FINAL FOUR COACH

There is a strong justification that 2019 will be the year when we see the best coaching line-up in Final Four history – at least in the modern-day era.

Every coach present knows what it takes to lift the title, since we have the reigning champion coach in Miguel Mendez of UMMC, who collected his first silverware in this same building 12 months ago.

Roberto Iniguez of Sopron Basket won it 2012 with Ros Casares and has also been in multiple Finals, while a third Spaniard in Lucas Mondelo, won it all in 2011 with Perfumerias Avenida and then again in 2017 with Dynamo Kursk.

Although with more titles than her three peers put together, is the veteran Natalia Hejkova of ZVVZ USK Praha, who has won this competition an amazing five times – including her team's only ever title in 2015. It is no wonder she will deservedly be inducted into the FIBA Hall of Fame.



Roberto Iniguez

But, what does it actually take to be a EuroLeague Women coach and to make it to the Final Four and onto the top step of the podium?

"This know-how should be very expensive," joked Coach Hejkova.

"I think the most important thing is to go through the Play-Offs, especially if you coach other team such as Ekaterinburg or Kursk.

"Every coach obviously needs basketball knowledge to prepare the team, but then what is more important is psychology, mental power and self-confidence to react to pressure in the Play-Offs and at the Final Four.

"The coach, as a model, needs to lead by example. It is so simple," she insisted.

Meanwhile Coach Iniguez, another supreme navigator of the competition gave his take.

"Firstly, I really think it's not about EuroLeague Women or the Final Four; it's about coaching itself," he stated.

"Coaching basketball is the best job in the world, or maybe there is only one better - playing. Coaching is not about you (and whoever thinks like this is ignorant), it's about them, the players, the staff – 'the team'.

"So, from this starting point, there are many qualities needed to stand out, but I'm sure these are the four essentials.

"Firstly, unconditional LOVE for the game and your team, secondly leadership (sometimes pushing hard and other times creating chemistry), thirdly belief and perseverance.

"Lastly, to always keep learning as you must be ready to answer questions from your players – any-time and everywhere."

Meanwhile UMMC play-caller Miguel Mendez, who is expected to help UMMC defend their title, commented: "The first thing I think a coach needs to play a Final Four is obvious - great players! I have always thought that the players are the most important part of our sport.

"From there on, you must be clear about the type of basketball that is the most effective to play well, have fun and win games."

He continued: "In my case, think about the collective, when the good players use their talent to help the team, a lot of the work is done. The experience to manage all the resources well at your disposal then becomes basic."

Lucas Mondelo has a huge reputation for his accomplishments and his take is an intriguing one too.

He said: "If you ask me, the good path for a sensitive coach is to learn how to listen to the players and being able to re-write a game plan in the same game. We have to share an idea. Not my idea, but our idea."

"Then you have to learn how to live with many stars on your team. Stars in their countries, in their national teams, who you have to convince to work together."

"If you get to deal with the pressure and taking decisions without fear, the work will be done. The game is in the hands of the players who win the games. To lose them, that is where we have the coaches," concluded Mondelo.

Whatever the theory, the mentality or how much you take from these super insights, one thing is crystal clear. If you look through the history books, you will struggle to find four better coaches (as a collective) who have all been with their teams at the same Final Four.

"...THE GOOD PATH FOR A SENSITIVE COACH IS TO LEARN HOW TO LISTEN TO THE PLAYERS AND BEING ABLE TO RE-WRITE A GAME PLAN IN THE SAME GAME."

Lucas Mondelo



UMMC EKATERINBURG TEAM PROFILE

THE REIGNING CHAMPIONS ARE BACK TO DEFEND THEIR TITLE AND HERE IS OUR RUN-DOWN OF ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE RUSSIAN POWERHOUSE.

ROSTER

Player	Position	Height (m / ft)	Nationality	Date of Birth
BARIC Nika	PG	1.69 / 5' 5"	SLO	02-Sep-1992
BEGLOVA Elena	PG	1.76 / 5' 8"	RUS	01-Sep-1987
BELIAKOVA Evgeniia	SF	1.82 / 5' 10"	RUS	27-Jun-1986
GRINER Brittney	C	2.03 / 6' 7"	USA	18-Oct-1990
KOMAROVA Elizaveta	SG	1.74 / 5' 7"	RUS	01-Feb-1995
MCBRIDE Kayla	SF	1.80 / 5' 9"	USA	25-Jun-1992
MEESSEMAN Emma	PF	1.92 / 6' 3"	BEL	13-May-1993
MUSINA RAISA	SF	1.92 / 6' 3"	RUS	31-Mar-1998
TORRENS Alba	SF	1.91 / 6' 3"	ESP	30-Aug-1989
VADEEVA Maria	C	1.90 / 6' 2"	RUS	16-Jul-1998
VANDERSLOOT Courtney	PG	1.73 / 5' 7"	HUN	08-Feb-1989
VIERU Natalia	C	1.96 / 6' 4"	RUS	25-Jul-1989

Coach: MENDEZ Miguel (ESP)



History

UMMC are now closing in towards a fifth EuroLeague Women title, having previously won in 2003, 2013, 2016 and 2018. Viewed by many as the team to beat every season, there will also be the added incentive for UMMC to get ahead of their one-time major rivals Sparta&K M.R. Vidnoje who have also won four titles. UMMC also continue their astonishing run of perennially making the Final Four.

Play-Caller

After missing out in 2017 and after a bumpy start to the 2017-18 season, the club moved for Spanish play-caller Miguel Mendez. It was a master-stroke, with the former Famila Schio coach bringing a fresh approach and injecting more fun and style into the team's play. Within 6 months he had landed the title, won deserved plaudits for his stellar work and will now be looking to add another this weekend.

4 DIFFERENCE MAKERS

- 1 Emma Meesseman** – The MVP at last year's Final Four, the Belgian frontcourt star continues to astound with her play and a career that continues on a near-vertical trajectory.
- 2 Brittney Griner** – The sheer size of the center poses problems for any defense, but she is about more than only this. She dunked last year and we would love to see another in 2019!
- 3 Alba Torrens** – Even if not quite in top gear yet, Torrens has built her career on coming alive in the biggest games. Whether big shots, amazing handles or running the floor, she's always MVP material.
- 4 Kayla McBride** – A newcomer to UMMC this season, the scoring ability of McBride from long-range is potent and she creates too. Nobody has played more minutes and it speaks volumes.



Brittney Griner

4 KEY QUESTIONS

- 1** With so many talents to choose from, will it largely be down to Coach Martinez and how effectively he rotates his stars?
- 2** Will UMMC be able to get a commanding early lead in the Semi-Final against Sopron to silence the locals in the crowd?
- 3** If any of the games are close and require a clutch intervention during crunch time, who takes that responsibility with so many options available?
- 4** If they end up meeting Dynamo Kursk in the Final as most people might expect, how will their loss last month in the Russian Premier League against their rivals affect them?



Alba Torrens

FINAL FOUR FOCUS

Emma Meesseman, UMMC Ekaterinburg

The Belgian national team standout and WNBA star returns to the Final Four and to the scene of her greatest moment in the competition last year and one of the high points of her incredible career so far.

Meesseman was crowned Final Four MVP here in Sopron after leading UMMC to the title with some brilliant plays and contributions. But forget dropping buckets or pulling up rebounds for a moment, since she has to tackle our quick-fire quiz as we find out more about her.

Four words to describe you as a player

Team-player, calm, focused, learning

Four words to describe you as a person

I am the same person as on the court. Maybe just a little bit stubborn off court though!

Four words to describe the Final Four

Exciting, unpredictable, teamwork, beautiful basketball

Four players past / present you admire

Sonja Tankrey (my mother), Tamika Catchings, Ann Wauters, Larry Bird

Four songs for you if stranded on a desert island

Bohemian Rhapsody (Queen), Allemaal (Wim Sou-taer), Run (Snow Patrol), Goud (Bazart)

Four books / movies /TV box sets for that desert island

I'll need more books, because I would take all the Harry Potter books.

Four foods you can't get enough of

Belgian fries from the 'frietkot' (a kind of take away place for fries in Belgium), hesperolletjes (an oven dish with ham, endives and cheese), papsaus (a sauce based on buttermilk, a typical 'grand-mother's' dish), Maltesers



Emma Meesseman

Four foods you could never eat

Can you consider drinks as well? Because coffee, foie gras, blue cheese and coffee again.

Four places on your travel 'bucket list

Kenya/Tanzania, Iceland to see the northern lights, Australia and if it is ever possible – Space!

Four things to do on your life 'bucket list

Olympics, start something to help other people, study after my basketball career, backpacking with friends

Four must follow social channels

Nothing in particular and it's mostly basketball and Belgian athletes. Although I think the 'Only in Russia' account on Twitter is quite funny.

Four reasons for fans to follow/watch women's ball

If you watch women's basketball, you see team-play, teamwork, tough competition and our enormous passion for this sport.

You can follow Emma @Emma_ Meesseman on Instagram and @Emma Meesseman on Twitter

FINAL FOUR GAME AND PRACTICE SCHEDULE

Game schedule

Friday April 12, 2019

ZVVZ USK Praha v Dynamo Kursk	17:00
UMMC Ekaterinburg v Sopron Basket	20:00

Saturday April 13, 2019

Rest Day

Sunday April 17, 2019

Loser of Semi-Final 1 v loser of Semi-Final 2	17:30
Winner of Semi-Final 1 v winner of Semi-Final 2	20:30

Practice schedule

Thursday April 11, 2019

15:00 - 16:30	ZVVZ USK Praha
16:40 - 18:10	Dynamo Kursk
18:20 - 19:50	UMMC Ekaterinburg
20:00 - 21:30	Sopron Basket

Friday April 12, 2019

09:00 - 09:55	ZVVZ USK Praha
10:00 - 10:55	Dynamo Kursk
11:00 - 11:55	UMMC Ekaterinburg
12:00 - 12:55	Sopron Basket

Saturday April 13, 2019

15:00 - 16:30	Loser SF ZVVZ USK Praha - Dynamo Kursk
16:40 - 18:10	Loser SF UMMC Ekaterinburg - Sopron Basket
18:20 - 19:50	Winner SF ZVVZ USK Praha - Dynamo Kursk
20:00 - 21:30	Winner SF UMMC Ekaterinburg - Sopron Basket

Sunday April 14, 2019

09:30 - 10:25	Loser SF UMMC Ekaterinburg - Sopron Basket
10:30 - 11:25	Loser SF Loser SF ZVVZ USK Praha - Dynamo Kursk
11:30 - 12:25	Winner SF UMMC Ekaterinburg - Sopron Basket
12:30 - 13:25	Winner SF ZVVZ USK Praha - Dynamo Kursk

Address of Hall

Novomatic Aréna Sopron, Lackner Kristóf u. 48, 9400 Sopron, Hungary

NOVOMATIC ARENA SOPRON VENUE MAP



NOVOMATIC ARENA SOPRON

- 1) FAN ZONE
- 2) SPECTATORS' ENTRANCE
- 3) VIP AREA
- 4) TICKETS AND ACCREDITATION CENTRE
- 5) VIP TRIBUNE
- 6) MEDIA TRIBUNE
- 7) MEDIA ENTRANCE
- 8) PRESS CONFERENCE ROOM
- 9) MIXED ZONE
- 10) @EuroBasketWomen THRONE ZONE



DYNAMO KURSK TEAM PROFILE

THE 2017 CHAMPIONS ARE BACK AT THE FINAL FOUR FOR THE FOURTH TIME IN FIVE YEARS AND HERE IS OUR GUIDE TO THE RUSSIAN JUGGERNAUTS.

ROSTER

Player	Position	Height (m / ft)	Nationality	Date of Birth
ANOIKINA Natalia	C	1.96 / 6' 4"	RUS	13-Feb-1987
CRUZ Anna	PG	1.72 / 5' 6"	ESP	27-Oct-1986
GOLOVCHENKO Ekaterina	PG	1.74 / 5' 9"	RUS	11-Nov-1994
HOLLINGSWORTH Quanita	C	1.97 / 6' 5"	TUR	15-Nov-1988
HOWARD Natasha	PF	1.93 / 6' 3"	USA	02-Sep-1991
KIRILLOVA Elena	SG	1.81 / 5' 9"	RUS	27-Jan-1986
PETROVIC Sonja	SF	1.89 / 6' 2"	SRB	18-Feb-1989
PRINCE Epiphanny	SG	1.75 / 5' 7"	RUS	11-Jan-1988
STEWART Breanna	PF	1.93 / 6' 3"	USA	27-Aug-1994
VIDMER Tatiana	C	1.90 / 6' 2"	RUS	08-Jan-1986
XARGAY Marta	PG	1.80 / 5' 9"	ESP	20-Dec-1990
ZHEDIK Natalia	SG	1.83 / 6' 0"	RUS	11-Jul-1988

Coach: MONDELO Lucas (ESP)



History

Having won EuroCup Women in 2012, Kursk have largely been impressing in EuroLeague Women ever since. They made the Final Four in 2015 for the first time and then two years later, they won their maiden title. Last year they reached the Final Four again, but handed over their title to UMMC.

Play-Caller

Lucas Mondelo doesn't just have a sky-high reputation in this competition, he is also known globally for his accomplishments with Spain. He is very much the women's basketball 'Alchemist' since most things he touches turn to gold. A big personality and always getting his teams competing for titles, he will want to make up for 2018 when his team were not at their best.

4 DIFFERENCE MAKERS

- 1 Breanna Stewart** – Could an amazing rookie season for the Regular Season MVP end up in silverware? She is the player every opponent needs to stop because of her scoring power and top-drawer abilities.
- 2 Sonja Petrovic** – Few players have the outstanding resume of Petrovic who has spent most of her career at the Final Four. Doesn't matter what statistical category it is, the classy Serbian will contribute.
- 3 Epiphanny Prince** – After an up and down season, could the guard be an 'X-Factor' at this event? Especially having had to sit out the 2018 edition with an injury.
- 4 Natasha Howard** – After joining mid-season, the power and presence of Howard has seen her rack up some monster numbers. She will be a tower of strength under the hoop.



Breanna Stewart



Epiphanny Prince

4 KEY QUESTIONS

- 1** What happens if Breanna Stewart has a rare off-night, gets into foul trouble or picks up an injury?
- 2** Is this the time for the brilliant Sonja Petrovic to have her best games of an otherwise ordinary season by her sky-high standards?
- 3** Can Kursk improve their shooting percentage, which is only the 7th best in the competition?
- 4** After winning so many close games this season, will this track record of getting it done in crunch time prove vital?

FINAL FOUR FOCUS

Sonja Petrovic, Dynamo Kursk

There are few more respected and talented players in the women's game than Petrovic, who has an amazing record of being a near ever-present at the EuroLeague Women Final Four throughout her distinguished career.

She is a colossus in this competition – and beyond. Having also stepped out in the WNBA and as a walking highlights reel while wearing a Serbia vest, she will be one of the main attractions at the FIBA Women's EuroBasket Women this summer too.

First, let's find out more about Sonja.

Four words to describe you as a player

Fighter, hard worker, all around and team oriented

Four words to describe you as a person

Direct, stubborn, witty and talkative

Four words to describe the Final Four

Fun, competitive, exciting and top-class

Four players past / present you admire

Penny Taylor, Maya Moore, Danira Nakic and Cathy Melain

Four songs for you if stranded on a desert island

'Twist in my sobriety' - Tanita Tikaram, 'Siempre me quedara' - Bebe, 'Desert rose' - Sting, 'Svoja i tvoja' - Marija Serifovic

Four books / movies /TV box sets for that desert island

Harry Potter, GOT, Friends and 'Fortress' - Mesa Selimovic

Four foods you can't get enough of

Peanut butter, cashews, sweet potatoes and popcorn



Sonja Petrovic

Four foods you could never eat

Snails, haggis, frogs and bugs

Four places on your travel 'bucket list'

Amsterdam, Taj Mahal, Machu Picchu and the Maldives

Four things to do on your life 'bucket list'

Spend a year traveling the world, start my own family, get a Masters degree and ride in a hot air balloon

Four must follow social channels -

@tastemadetravel, @healthyvegandesserts, @brana_antovic, @theawkwardyeti

Four reasons for fans to follow/watch women's ball

team basketball, emotions, wisdom over athleticism and approachable stars

You can follow Sonja [@sonjapetrovic5](#) on Instagram

REGULAR SEASON FAN AWARDS

An astonishing number of EuroLeague Women followers actively supported their favorite female athletes in the 2018-19 Fan Vote to decide the Regular Season awards.



Most Valuable Player of the Year **Breanna Stewart**

This gong for the Kursk star comes after her 2018 WNBA MVP, WNBA Finals MVP and FIBA Women's Basketball World Cup 2018 MVP awards. She scored 20.9 points per game, plus 8.6 rebounds.

Coach of the Year **Lucas Mondelo**

Dynamo Kursk have leaned heavily on the expertise of the play-caller who masterminded a 13-1 Regular Season record, with an array of victories during crunch time.

Best Frontcourt Player of the Year **Breanna Stewart**

Stewart has turned heads during her maiden EuroLeague Women campaign and added this gong to her overall MVP award.

Best Wing of the Year **Haley Peters**

The versatile rookie was sensational for Carolo Basket and one of the leading scorers in the Regular Season with 17.6 points per game.



Best Guard of the Year **Marine Johannes**

The French star averaged almost 15 points and 5 assists per outing for Bourges. Her near ever-present appearance on the top plays compilations each week also meant that 'Most Entertaining Player' award.

Most Entertaining Player of the Year **Marine Johannes**

Johannes has produced an astonishing number of jaw-dropping plays throughout the campaign with Bourges Basket. Her season mixtape needs to be seen to be believed.

Young Player of the Year **Alexia Charterreau**

The Bourges Basket and French national team forward impressed with 12.3 points and 3.6 boards per game, shooting almost 50 percent from the floor.

FINAL FOUR MEMORIES

For every player, stepping out at a Final Four is a special experience and down the years there have been so many memories for those involved. We caught up with some of the biggest names from past Final Fours to find out more.



Edwige Lawson Wade

Edwige Lawson-Wade French basketball legend

Special / Funny Moment - My husband always reminds me laughing off the Final Four that we won in 2002. Everybody was in tears after winning at home in Valenciennes except me, because it was my first year playing EuroLeague Women at 22 years old and I honestly had no idea how hard it was to win the title. But, now I know.

Toughest Game at a Final Four - It was the 2003 loss in the Final against Ekaterinburg. We lost by 2 points. It was one of the toughest disappointments. The kind that means you cannot sleep afterwards for days.

What makes the Final Four special? - What I love about the Final Four is that you play against some of the best players in the world, but with some of the best players in the world. Yet it is not always the best players in the world that win, but the best team!

Best Final Four Memory - I can't choose one best memory. It will have to be the three times I won EuroLeague Women. That is because each of those titles came with its own stories of love, joy, pain and sacrifice and therefore will be special in my heart forever.

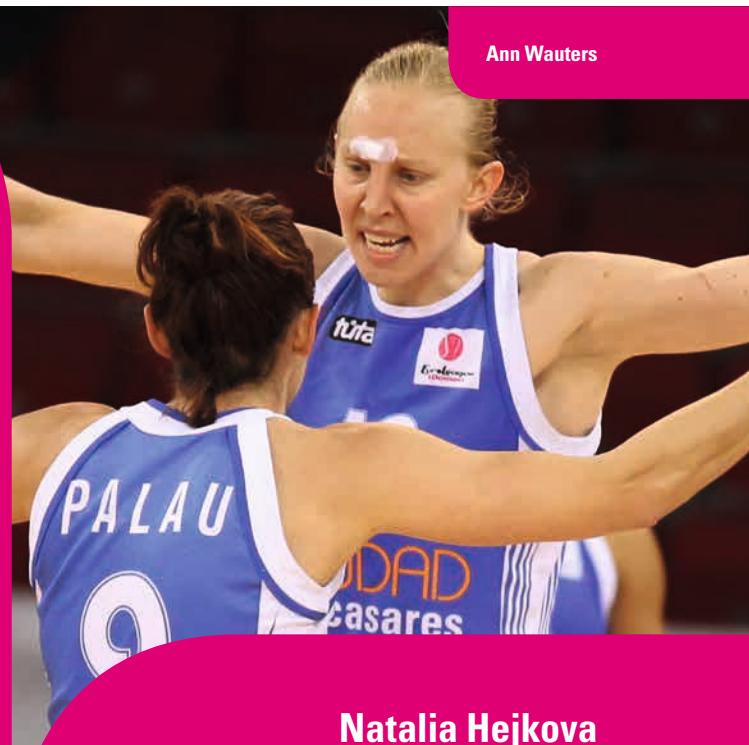
Ann Wauters Belgian basketball legend

Special / Funny Moment - I remember many great and funny moments, but one that stands out was when we won with Samara at the Final Four in 2005. We had a party and after six months in Russia, I thought I could party and drink like the Russians to celebrate. Unfortunately for me, it wasn't a long party. Masha Stepanova came into the restroom with me and gave me some very wise advice – "Ann, you need practise!"

Toughest Game at a Final Four - I am going back to my first ever Final Four during 2001 when I played for Valenciennes and we met our rivals Bourges in the title game. It was a really physical battle and I remember the last action like it was yesterday, when Cathy Melain went coast to coast for the win during the last seconds. We were devastated. But right there, we started our little dynasty with Valenciennes. We took so much fuel and motivation out of that game to go and win multiple championships in the following years.

What makes the Final Four special? - It is the time of the year where you have worked for the whole season. There was always a special atmosphere most times, with some kind of surprise. It was also an unforgettable moment we could share with our fans. The four best teams confronting each other to take home that most beautiful cup! Best Final Four Memory - All of my 12 Final Fours, where every time it was the summit of the season. I remember both the good and the disappointments.

Ann Wauters



Natalia Hejkova EuroLeague Women legend

Special / Funny Moment - In 2015, it was after eye surgery for me and after the Final, I had champagne blown into my new lenses!

Toughest Game at a Final Four - In 2000, with Ruzomberok, we won in double-overtime against Bourges Basket.

What makes the Final Four special? - It is the four best international club teams in one tournament!

Best Final Four Memory - The first one is the first one - for me, it was in 1993. But, every Final Four is a special feeling. It shows your team is among the best in Europe and it makes you so proud.



Natalia Hejkova

Ewelina Kobryn Polish basketball legend

Special / Funny Moment – The most special will always be the first Final Four of your life. I had the chance sharing this moment with Wisła Can-Pack Krakow. It was a great time for me and the club. The funniest moments are always straight after the Final Four basketball has finished.

Toughest Game at a Final Four - I remember two games that were really tough for me . It was the first match against Ros Casares with Wisla Can-Pack in 2011, because of the emotions connected with the tournament. The second toughest game was my first match when I played for UMMC Ekaterinburg colors and I came back from six weeks of injury. It was difficult to play immediately at the highest level at the Final Four.

What makes the Final Four special? - This is the time of the season when the best European teams meet and play against the best players and coaches in Europe. The Final Four organization and also the rank of the event stays at the top, compared to other women's competitions. Every professional basketball player dreams of being EuroLeague Women champion even just one time.

Best Final Four Memory - That I could be there for the first time with Wisła Can-Pack Krakow and I could master it with UMMC Ekaterinburg!



Ewelina Kobryn

ZVVZ USK PRAHA TEAM PROFILE

FEW PREDICTED THEM TO STILL BE STANDING FOR THIS LAST PHASE OF THE COMPETITION, BUT, ZVVZ USK PRAHA HAVE POSTED A BLISTERING CAMPAIGN AND HERE IS A RUNDOWN OF THE CZECH GIANTS.

ROSTER

Player	Position	Height (m)	Nationality	Date of Birth
AYAYI Valeriane	SF	1.84 / 6' 0"	FRA	29-Apr-1994
BRABENCOVA Kristyna	SF	1.81 / 5' 9"	CZE	16-Dec-1999
ELHOTOVA Karolina	SG	1.82 / 5' 10"	CZE	07-Jan-1992
ELHOTOVA Katerina	SG	1.81 / 5' 9"	CZE	14-Oct-1989
HANUSOVA Alena	SF	1.90 / 6' 2"	CZE	29-May-1991
HARRISON Isabelle	C	1.91 / 6' 3"	USA	27-Sep-1993
OBLAK Teja	SG	1.72 / 5' 6"	SLO	20-Dec-1990
POSPISILOVA Julie	SG	1.82 / 5' 10"	CZE	20-Jun-1999
REZAN Marija	C	1.98 / 6' 5"	CRO	08-Aug-1989
ROMERO Leticia	PG	1.72 / 5' 6"	ESP	28-May-1995
SIPOVA Veronika	SF	1.81 / 5' 9"	CZE	20-Mar-1999
THOMAS Alyssa	PF	1.88 / 6' 2"	USA	12-Apr-1992
VYORALOVA Tereza	PG	1.78 / 5' 8"	CZE	16-Jan-1994

Coach: HEJKOVA Natalia (SVK)



History

Another famous club in this tournament, Praha have competed for more than 20 years and have been a permanent fixture in EuroLeague Women. Their biggest moment came on their home court in 2015 when as Final Four hosts, they won their first ever title. Since then, they have also appeared at the Final Four in 2016 and 2017.

Play-Caller

Natalia Hejkova has an unrivalled record in this competition with her five titles and the value of the veteran play-caller has been recognized by her recent induction into the FIBA Hall of Fame. She has not only landed historic success at Praha with that first EuroLeague Women title, but she has maintained the club's astonishing unbeaten record in their homeland.

4 DIFFERENCE MAKERS

- 1 Alyssa Thomas** – The only player in the whole competition who led her team in points, rebounds and assists, the rookie has been outstanding and will lead the way as usual.
- 2 Valeriane Ayayi** – A surprise departure from Bourges last summer, Ayayi has continued her good form. Scoring and rebounding power from the wing, but also 4 assists per game has caught the eye.
- 3 Marija Rezan** – With a field goal average approaching 60 percent, her finishing in the paint gets better and better and don't rule out a big double-double from the Croatian center.
- 4 Katerina Elhotova** – There are few better shooters around and if Elhotova finds the hot-hand, it can be a long night for her opponents. But she is more than just about three-point range as 34 minutes per game shows.



Katerina Elhotova



4 KEY QUESTIONS

- 1** Can Alyssa Thomas continue her incredible form and keep contributing in all statistical areas?
- 2** Will Praha be able to get out and run, making the most of their philosophy of gunning down opponents with their offensive power?
- 3** Will the relatively short frontcourt rotation be able to stand up to the physical test and challenges posed defensively?
- 4** What is Plan B if Thomas misfires, gets into foul trouble or has an injury?

FINAL FOUR FOCUS

Valeriane Ayayi, ZVVZ USK Praha

It was something of a surprise last summer when France national team wing, Valeriane Ayayi swapped Le Prado and stepping out with Bourges Basket in her homeland to suit up for ZVVZ USK Praha.

Yet, here she is at the Final Four, having been a central figure during a seriously super season for the Czech club – and one that might get even better if they make it to the title game here in Sopron. But for now, we're out to have some fun and find out a little more about the French star via our quick-fire questions.

Four words to describe you as a player

Emotions, team, competitor, hard-worker

Four words to describe you as a person

Generosity, smile, stubborn, abnegation

Four words to describe the Final Four

Reward, title, crazy, joy

Four players past / present you admire

Just my dad and my brother Joel

Four songs for you if stranded on a desert island

Three will be enough in 'La Vie En Rose' by Edith Piaf, 'Shooting to the Stars' by Diva Faune and 'A Good Night' by John Legend.

Four books / movies /TV box sets for that desert island

Again, I will need only three, which are 'A Star is Born', 'The Green Mile' and 'Friends'

Four foods you can't get enough of

French fries, Mom's food, avocado and seafood



Valeriane Ayayi

Four foods you could never eat

Brussel Sprouts, curry and cinnamon are enough to think about (not eating)

Four places on your travel 'bucket list'

Bordeaux, Belgrade, Benin, Maldives

Four things to do on your life 'bucket list'

To be me, to have a family, to win titles, to create my own handles

Four reasons for fans to follow/watch women's ball

We are awesome, we are more than athletes and we run the world (or maybe not ha, ha and I will leave it there).

You can follow Valeriane @valeriane_ayayi on Instagram and Twitter

SOPRON A HOTBED OF WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

It isn't only the hosting of the EuroLeague Women Final Four for consecutive years which has helped to cement the status of Sopron as one of the hotbeds of women's basketball.

Sopron are a club that have been punching in this famous competition for much of their existence and outside of a season in EuroCup Women during 2014-15, they have shown a permanent face for many decades.

That famous tradition and consistency has of course seen the added success in these last 12-18 months with successive Final Four appearances, their previous one coming in 2009.

The passion of the club's fans has impressed and the intimate atmosphere of the Novomatic Arena made for a special atmosphere at last year's edition and most likely, the same again in 2019.

Sopron are also still dominant in Hungarian basketball, a league that many feel is one of the most improved and competitive in the whole of Europe.

While the EuroLeague Women success and silverware in their homeland has written the headlines, if you look behind the top tier, Sopron are about much more than this.

They have successfully hosted a number of FIBA Women's European Championships at youth level in recent years, impressing with the level of their organization and that culminated last summer with the U20 event.

Outside of these national team competitions during the summer, Sopron have an Academy for younger players and have also held a number of fantastic tournaments at club level. These include the likes of the U16 Champions Cup.

Meanwhile even though it is only April, they have already hosted two major U14 tournaments. That is why Sopron continue to receive praise and compliments from basketball fans and followers in general.

So, we are not just parachuting into Sopron for a one-off weekend, because if you love women's basketball, you can normally catch tournaments throughout the calendar year. It is something that proves what a hotbed of women's basketball this is – at all levels!



Final Four 2018, Sopron

FINAL FOUR FAVORITES

There have been some amazing players down the years at the Final Four and we have asked some of those involved in the competition to choose their best five players of the last 10 years at the event. In other words, an All-Star Five of the last decade of Final Fours.



Martin Zibarts **TTT Riga and Latvia**

First up, Martins Zibarts, the Latvia national team play-caller who guided TTT Riga to the Quarter-Finals in what was an exhilarating return to the competition. He was also an Assistant Coach at Dynamo Kursk a couple of years ago when they won the EuroLeague Women title.

You can follow Coach Zibarts
[@Martins_Zibarts](#) on Twitter.

Diana Taurasi

She is the most competitive and biggest clutch player.

Anete Jekabsone-Zogota

Such a great shooter and basketball IQ, who is a good teammate and can create good chemistry in the team.

Maya Moore

A winner, leader and team player who can score when needed most. Two out of two EuroLeague Women titles.

Nneka Ogwumike

An efficient scorer who can post up smaller defenders and take bigger ones away from the paint. A defender who can guard all five positions and the most talented player I've had the chance to coach.

Lauren Jackson

One of the most versatile players in the EuroLeague Women history, who could do incredible things for her height and play multiple positions.



Jo Leedham-Warner CCC Polkowice

The Great Britain standout is a hugely respected veteran player who made the Quarter-Finals this season with CCC Polkowice and won Euro-Cup Women previously with Bourges Basket.

She also led her country in all the major statistical categories during the FIBA Women's EuroBasket 2019 Qualifiers to propel her country to the Final Round.

You can follow Jo via [@joyleedham_13](#) on Twitter



Silvia Dominguez Perfumerias Avenida

A three-time EuroLeague Women title winner with three different clubs, Dominguez is a legend and incredible fan favorite at Perfumerias Avenida, where she played this season in the competition. She has also won a stack of medals with the Spanish national team.

You can follow Silvia via [@sdominguez6](#) on Twitter

Laia Palau

A true playmaker who is a leader on both ends, knows how to win and is there a better passer in the competition, having handed over 1K assists?

Diana Taurasi

No explanation needed really. Wreaks havoc for any defense.

Sonja Petrovic

Impressively has been in the competition for more than 10 years and brings both grit and the ability to put a tick in every statistical category!

Lauren Jackson

A super versatile player who scored any way she wanted and brought that 'Aussie Toughness'. Her ability was unbelievable for her size and made her almost impossible to stop.

Brittney Griner

There is nobody like her in the competition. Her size causes issues at both ends. Is there anybody who owns the paint quite like her?

Sue Bird

She is probably the easiest position to choose for me. She has always been a leader and many times in the shadows, but without her, there is no success for the teams she played for.

Diana Taurasi

Dee is the G.O.A.T with 6 EuroLeague Women titles if I am not wrong. She always gave decisive performances. There are not enough words to say about her!

Alba Torrens

She has had some huge times at the Final Four, but I know how difficult it is to be under the spotlight every single time and it is not always easy. So, I don't know exactly how many Final Fours she has played in, but I'm sure she is one of the players that have experienced this the most and that will continue to be hungry to add much more.

Sancho Lyttle

As with Sue, I think she has so many intangibles and she had great performances to help her teams to win the Final Four.

Ann Wauters

I know her last title was during 2012 with Ros Casares, but as with Alba, how many times has she played to win the title? Her experience, smartness and help to her teammates was always there and that's why I choose her.

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HER
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