

Image not found or type unknown

Following Phenomenal Career in College Basketball, Aliyah Boston Goes Pro

Sports / **Published On April 03, 2023 06:06 AM /**

Janeka Simon **April 03, 2023**

Image not found or type unknown



Aliyah Blston is expected to be the number 1 pick in the 2023 WNBA Draft. By. GAMECOCKS

U.S. Virgin Islands native Aliyah Boston on Saturday made it clear that she will pursue her dream and declare for the 2023 WNBA draft, a decision welcomed by many as the college basketball superstar is expected to be the number 1 pick in this year's draft.

“I have decided to further pursue my dream by declaring for the 2023 WNBA draft,” the young basketball star [wrote on Twitter](#), ending speculation that she might have opted to take advantage of the extra year of NCAA eligibility.

Ms. Boston on Friday had [left the question open](#) following the Gamecocks' final NCAA Tournament game, when asked whether she would make the move to the professional arena now, or take advantage of a pandemic-related opportunity to play a fifth year for her college team.

Saturday's announcement closes the chapter on Boston's incredible tenure with the Gamecocks. Her debut game with the team resulted in the first ever triple-double by a Division 1 player, and she ended her first year by being selected as player of the year and national freshman of the year.

That was just the beginning of the string of awards to follow. In the course of her South Carolina college career Ms. Boston racked up four Lisa Leslie awards, was adjudged the Naismith Defensive Player of the Year twice, and the Naismith Overall Player of the Year once, among many, many other awards and points of recognition.

She helped her team to three consecutive Final Four appearances, helping the Gamecocks establish their #1 NCAA ranking. Before losing to Iowa State on Friday to get knocked out of the running for the championship, South Carolina had not lost a game all season. In fact, the team only lost 9 games over the four years of Boston's tenure, compared with 129 wins. Ms. Boston's dominant performances on the court played a significant role in those victories, averaging 14.1 points and 10.8 rebounds per game.

On Saturday, Gamecocks' head coach Dawn Staley reacted enthusiastically to the news that Boston will participate in the WNBA draft this year as the expected #1 pick. "She has been the cornerstone of our program for the past four years. She elevated us. She raised the standard of how to approach basketball. She's never had a bad day. She's never come into practice sulking. She's always just the person that you saw so very, very consistent," Staley gushed. "I slept very well knowing she was with our program, and I'll sleep well knowing that she's okay and she will definitely make her mark at the next level."

Coach Staley said that Boston was prepared to make the step into professional sports on April 10, the scheduled date for the WNBA draft. "She's great. She's ready."