

MARI BICKLEY | PRINCETON BASKETBALL

Hi guys I'm Mari Bickley I play basketball at Princeton University during high school but I think I focused mostly on during my training that I feel like really shaped the player I am today was working on the stuff I wasn't necessarily good at Um so I know it's hard to like want do things that you're not necessarily good at but I feel like working on it over and over again and repping It made me a much better player And another thing I also feel like was playing against and or training with players that were better more athletic or stronger than me So I played a lot growing up with boys and that I feel like that helped me a lot also as a player just training with people that were a little more skilled than I was Some of the best advice that I feel like I've gotten was um from my mother actually So one of the things I remember most that she used to tell me all the time was to step on the court like I was the best player every time um whether it was true or not Um just having that mentality that I was the best player on the floor or just being like having that confidence in myself really helped me play the game how I wanted to play it and helped me play with a lot of confidence and just really helped me believe in myself a lot So I feel like that was the biggest thing biggest piece of biggest piece of advice I feel like that really helped me as a player I think something a lot of college coaches saw in me was the fact that I was a team player Um I really focused on like I feel like I was a player that made the people around me better also Um I always wanted to make the right basketball plays I was always being a good focusing on being a good leader um cheering for my teammates even when I wasn't in the game Um I felt that's a big thing college coaches look for is that player that's vocal Um The player that can lead their teammates the player that's always clapping cheering for their teammates picking their teammates up when they fall So I feel like that was one of the biggest things was just how much of a team player I was a big thing I that gave me an advantage when um during the recruiting process with college coaches was just establishing a genuine connection with those coaches Um I feel like that's one of the most important things Um a kid could look for when they're being recruited It's just establishing a relationship that they know is genuine that their their coaches actually care for them outside of basketball which is a big thing just because you're going to college you're leaving your parents where you're normally like your guardian or your college coaches essentially become your guardian So you wanna establish a very good relationship with those people So I feel

like the biggest thing the most important thing is just making sure you have a good relationship with those coaches a genuine relationship So just talking to them a lot getting to know them outside of basketball as well I would say the biggest challenge I faced becoming a top prospect was just the outside noise So once you once you become one of the top one of the top players you know there's a target on your back Everybody has something to say about the player You are everybody critiques your game Everybody just has something to say And it's especially as a young player it's hard to not get so caught up in that and so affected by what people have to say about you or about people's opinions So that was something that you know it was a challenge for me at a young age But I feel like the how I overcame it was just relying on the people the support system I already had and just realizing that that was all that mattered and trying not to care about um others opinions and obviously it's easier said than done but all that matters honestly is just the people that you have behind you So your mom your coaches your parents like si siblings teammates just just relying on the support system you already have So what led to me deciding to commit to Princeton was um just the best of both worlds honestly Um Obviously many you know that Princeton is like one of the best academic schools um in the country And so that was a big factor in my decision I've always been big on education first My mom has always um instilled that into me like education before anything else being a student athlete Um And then obviously the basketball side of it was just a plus Um um my coach has built a great program here I built a strong relationship with that coach Um When I came on my visit here I had a great connection with the team I got to watch a lot of their games how they played which I feel like fit me So just I feel like the biggest thing when being recruited is going to a school that you know will fit you and it's on your business It's important to pay attention to how you interact with players that are already there Pay attention to how you interact with coaches and all and all those things Um Just helped me pretty much decide what I was gonna do I say the biggest thing I picked up at the college level was the attention to detail So one thing I did like like one thing I didn't really do in high school much was pay attention to the small thing So I feel like coming into college like my first couple of practices I realized how important details are and you know your college coaches are gonna nit pick at every single little thing because they want you to be a great player and details really do matter and they do really help um when you start to play an actual game So the biggest thing I learned which is paying attention to like the smallest little things and

seeing the result and how they help you on the court was the biggest thing I picked up So the way I balance academics with um my basketball career honestly it just planning in advance Um I really had to learn how to make a schedule days before because we have our basketball schedule already So just making a schedule with that in your classes making planning when you're gonna do your homework when you're gonna study like you have to really plan all that things out because the days happen so quick and the time is so short So the biggest thing I had to learn was just time management and planning out what I wanted to do ahead of time which helped me a lot And then I would also say just asking for help Um that's something I had to learn that it was ok to get help in certain classes It was ok to ask for help if you need it Like that's a big thing that especially when you go to such a procedure school it's something I really had to learn that everybody needs help in certain areas So the biggest thing is just if you if you need help with something definitely don't be afraid to ask I would say to an athlete that's trying to earn a division one scholarship for their sport The biggest thing I would say is having confidence in yourself I find confidence goes a long way especially in whatever sport you're playing as long as you're confident in your abilities Um That's a big thing And I would also say just putting in the work when you when you put in the work it really does show and it also shows when you don't put in the work and playing a division one sport is definitely not easy It's not for everybody it's definitely not easy So putting in the work is gonna be the most like the very very important thing for you to do is just working on your craft so that you can be confident in yourself So NIO experience one of my first actually that um I experienced that was pretty good for me was a deal that I had with my entire team Um my basketball team we made it to the March Madness tournament And with that we um I offered a deal to post a picture of ourselves in a team environment empowering women Um which was something I was very like happy to be a part of which I feel is very important Like we always talk about the empowerment of women and the women and the women sports is growing tremendously So just being able to be a part of something that's helping that grow was such a great experience for me Um I actually ended up starting my own clothing brand titled um called Mind of Motion Um That was something I decided to do with um all the opportunities and io opportunities I've been receiving and all the media attention I've been receiving I thought it was a good idea to promote myself in another way besides basketball also And a clothing brand was something I wanted to do for a while And I in my

clothing brand I put a big emphasis on Mindset because that's something I feel like it is very important especially for student ale Um As we talk about we you see a lot people talk about mental health within you know like the one athletes and all that type of stuff And that is something that I actually have struggled with in the past And I found ways to overcome that And like with this brand I'm try I'm trying to promote you know having a positive mindset healthy mindset growth mindset like different type of mindset So that was definitely something that I wanted to like implement and use my um use my platform just to push that And that was pretty much how I came up with starting my own clothing brand