

Caitlin Clark: Seeking Normalcy Amidst Media Sensationalism

By: Victoria Greco

WNBA fans know Caitlin Clark for her game-changing career thus far; the media, however, seems fixated on making her personal life their next big story. Increasingly, Clark finds herself in the middle of media-made drama, her personal moments exaggerated and twisted into storylines that stray far from her wishes to stay grounded and, in her own words, to “[just be normal sometimes](#).”

Take her recent interaction with NFL rookie Cooper DeJean in October. The two athletes, both from Iowa, shared what was likely a friendly exchange when DeJean said he could beat Clark one-on-one on the court. A simple, lighthearted comment, right? Not in today’s media landscape. As [The Mirror](#) reported, Clark’s text in response was framed as a “defense of her reputation.” Suddenly, a likely harmless back-and-forth became a headline-stirring “controversy,” all written to heighten the tension between a male and female athlete. By turning a private and silly text exchange into a media spat, the story bends the line between professional rivalry and personal respect.

This kind of coverage isn’t rare for Clark. Recently, [Daily Mail](#) jumped at the chance to cover an “awkward” moment when she was recognized by a fan while trying to stay low-key in a drive-thru. Alongside her Indiana Fever teammate Lexie Hull, Hull and Clark were simply grabbing a drink and filming a TikTok reviewing the drink. Instead of enjoying an ordinary off-court moment, Clark’s joking around became a spectacle as she responded ‘maybe’ when asked if she was in fact Caitlin Clark. The headline played it as awkward, spinning a non-story into a negative, all because the Rookie of the Year dared to enjoy a quiet moment like most people.

The media’s fixation on Clark’s personal choices didn’t stop there. [Marca](#) recently reported on Clark’s attire at a Taylor Swift concert, contrasting her “modest” look with fellow player Angel Reese’s more “flashy” style. This takes the cake as the most pointless article I’ve seen yet, unless the point is to make an unnecessary rivalry out of two women simply expressing their own personalities. The piece painted Clark as “reserved” and Reese as “expressive,” building a narrative that puts each player into a box. This persistent back and forth between the women creates a rivalry where there should only be appreciation for two athletes with distinct personalities. By sensationalizing their fashion choices and implying some underlying tension, the media not only reduces these players to stereotypes but also distracts from their accomplishments. Clark and Reese shouldn’t have to defend or explain their personal tastes just because they are public figures; they deserve to be recognized for their athletic talents, not pitted against each other in some contrived storyline.

Across these few examples among many others, it’s clear that a handful media is more interested in Clark’s day-to-day than her game. Clark has made it known that she wants to focus on basketball,

to let her game do the talking. But with each overhyped headline and every minor interaction spun into a storyline, her wish for simplicity and normalcy gets buried under the weight of unnecessary attention.

In an industry that prides itself on telling the real story, sports media too often forgets the athlete's voice. Clark's story is extraordinary enough without fake drama. Let's keep the focus where it belongs: on her record-breaking season, her court dominance, and the talent that is setting a new standard for women's sports. As her career unfolds, let's hope the headlines shift from the distractions to the real action.