

Reese enjoying first season in Atlanta

BY CHARLES ODUM
ASSOCIATED PRESS

COLLEGE PARK, Ga. — Angel Reese looked like a perfect fit for Atlanta when she was traded from the Chicago Sky to the Dream.

Dream guard Rhyné Howard predicted before the season Reese “could be exactly what we were missing.”

After 13 games, the fit still looks perfect.

As it prepares for back-to-back games against Caitlin Clark and the Indiana Fever, Atlanta has one of the best records in the WNBA. Reese has been on a double-double tear, providing the inside presence on the boards and clutch points to keep the offense balanced even while All-Star center Brionna Jones continues to recover from a knee injury.

Reese and the Dream are winning and the two-time All-Star can't stop smiling, especially when she interacts with new teammates. The wins and smiles mean the trade has delivered just as Howard expected.

“Yeah, for sure,” Howard said. “I think there's a lot of games where in the past we would have let them slip away. The tenacity that she brings, the fire that she brings, is forcing us to match her energy. You know she's always gonna work hard, she's always gonna be a dog, and we're gonna always have her back. So if she's going out to play hard, we're also gonna play hard for her.”

Reese has filled in for Jones at center. When Jones is healthy, Reese will move back to forward, making the Dream's lineup even more daunting. With Howard leading the league in



SAMMY KOGAN/Associated Press

Atlanta Dream's Angel Reese doesn't like the foul called against her.

steals and 3-pointers, Jordin Canada ranking among the assists leaders and Allisha Gray and Howard ranking among the top 10 scorers, Reese is surrounded by talent.

Atlanta (9-4) was a half game ahead of the Fever (9-5) before Wednesday's game at Indiana. The teams play again Saturday at Atlanta's State Farm Arena.

The Dream have become accustomed to moving their biggest games, including visits from Clark, to State Farm Arena because their primary home, Gateway Center Arena in College Park, has a capacity of 5,000 fans. Clark and the Fever were already a big draw, but Reese's rivalry with Clark, which created headlines in college and has continued in the WNBA, makes the matchup even more attractive.

The Dream acquired Reese from Chicago on April 6. Atlanta gave up first-round draft picks in 2027 and 2028

and received the right to swap second-round picks with the Sky in 2028.

Reese is averaging 14.6 points and leads the WNBA with 12.3 rebounds per game. The averages are nothing new. After all, Reese led the league in rebounds in each of her first two seasons with Chicago.

What's new is the winning atmosphere that she missed in Chicago. Reese is all smiles as she is surrounded by talent and depth that makes the Dream look like a championship contender.

When asked whether the camaraderie with her teammates or the winning record are the best part of her first season in Atlanta, Reese beamed and said, “Oh my. You said everything. I don't know, I'm just really happy.”

“I'm in a lot of joy just being able to be here, be surrounded by so many great

people and every day I just show up to work and I don't have to think about anything else. That's probably the best thing, just being to show up at work and take care of my job and everything feels great.”

Through 13 games, Reese already has nine double-doubles. Her 59 career double-doubles are the most in WNBA history through 76 games.

Reese set a career high with 11 offensive boards, one shy of matching the WNBA single-game record, and finished with 15 points and 17 rebounds in Atlanta's 102-



ABBIE PARR/Associated Press

Atlanta Dream forward Angel Reese handles the ball as Minnesota Lynx forward Natasha Howard (1) and guard Olivia Miles (5) defend during the second half of a WNBA game.

77 win Sunday at Toronto. She appears to be peaking just in time for important back-to-back games against Clark and the Fever.

Reese also has contributed to Atlanta's strong defense.

“We love that our team takes pride in defense, and that has been pretty consistent in every game,” Dream coach Karl Snesko said. “That we're willing to compete each possession, and we understand that we wanna work to make sure that we don't give up anything easy at any time. Angel is somebody who's very

serious about her defense and wants to learn to have every advantage defensively.”

The Dream-Fever matchups will be important as Atlanta tries to remain close to the top of the Eastern Conference. Reese said she's trying to be patient as she seeks her first winning season in the league.

“Probably just telling myself, give myself as much grace as I can,” Reese said. “I'm a player that really wants results to happen fast, and I'm sure every player wants that, but I have to give myself grace and pace myself.”

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