

I'm Morgan O'Brien and this is the latest edition of the Diplosport podcast. This week I talk to Ruth Riley who I first became aware of when I was an undergrad at Carolina and she was starring at the University of Notre Dame. In 2001, when we were both seniors, was a national champion and she was the leader of the team, most outstanding player of the Final Four that year. What I've come to find in working with Ruth is she is one of the most humble human beings on the planet for all she's accomplished. In addition to being a NCAA champ, she's also won an Olympic gold medal, a couple WNBA titles, and has been the most outstanding player of the WNBA Finals. I got to know her initially when I was working on sport diplomacy with the State Department and we sent her out as a sports envoy. She was a fantastic representative, wonderful human being, and everything you would want when you are sending an athlete out to represent the country overseas.

We have a really fun interview. I think I made her laugh a couple times. We talk about her growing up in small town Indiana and the Hoosier hysteria that basketball fever that takes over the state. We talk about her college playing days, beating UCONN, going to the Olympics, being a pro ball player. The core of the interview focuses on her values, her patriotism, the importance she places on empowering girls and young women through sports. She talks about some of the important women in her life and I was really touched about how she talked about her mom.

It's really humbling to get to talk to somebody like this that is your exact same age and has accomplished so much but is so humble. I know if I won an Olympic gold medal, I'd wear it around my neck every day on the way to the office. Oh this? I just found this in Athens in 2004. I'm really thankful for Ruth's time, but even more than that I'm thankful for her generosity and dedication to causes she finds important. Right now she's a grad student at her undergrad alma mater. She's getting her MBA from Notre Dame and she's definitely bound for some big and wonderful things in the way ahead.

Morgan: Where did you grow up?

Ruth: I grew up in Macy, Indiana

Morgan: I looked this up. Do you know what the population of Macy is?

Ruth: Around 300?

Morgan: It's 285. You went to a local high school?

Ruth: Yea, it was a consolidation of a lot of different country schools.

Morgan: How many kids were in your graduating class?

Ruth: I think 82.

Morgan: You were able to obviously to field a full girls basketball team in high school, right?

Ruth: Yeah..well it is Indiana so most people growing up in Indiana live, eat and breathe hoops

Morgan: It was still single class when you were in high school for the state tournament?

Ruth: They changed that rule right after I graduated. The typical Hoosier story...

Morgan: I've actually been to Milan high school which is what Hickory is based on. It's incredible. They have all the old banners. It is pretty sharp. You guys were pretty good in school, right?

Ruth: We made it out of our sectionals which was big news

Morgan: Who won state your senior year?

Ruth: Oh my goodness..I do not know, but a much much much larger school than ours. Probably a big Indianapolis school.

Morgan: Growing up in Indiana was it always a dream to go to Notre Dame? Did you think about going to IU or UCONN? What directed you towards South Bend?

Ruth: I probably grew up a Bobby Knight, Indiana basketball fan, but when it came to women's basketball I didn't go to any games. My mom was pretty strict on our rules about watching tv so I didn't see much either. When I really started to think about where I wanted to play, Notre Dame was by far the top choice for me.

Morgan: Great academics...you were a good student also I would imagine.

Ruth: Yea, I was competitive in the classroom as well as on the court.

Morgan: How did you first come into playing basketball in the first place?

Ruth: I've always been tall. I was 6' in the 6th grade so I wasn't very good, but I enjoyed playing sports. My mom encouraged us to be active so we were always doing something active. I loved whether it was volleyball or basketball or softball. Just doing something..always staying active.

Morgan: Where did you find competition when you were growing up? Growing up in such a small town where did you find that outlet?

Ruth: I was the only girl playing so there would be pick-up games at one little town on Saturdays. You could go to the gym on Wednesdays. You knew where they were going to be. It was having the confidence to be the only girl out there on the court.

Morgan: Did you see how that shaped your game differently than other girls and young women that you ended up playing with later.

Ruth: It made me tougher. It helped me develop my skillset. Hook shoot is one of the hardest shots to block. I had to be crafty, use a lot of fakes, moves, and countermoves and I think that really helped me develop my post skills.

Morgan: You still made quite a name for yourself coming out of a small high school. You were still a USA Today All-American. Notre Dame has been a strong program the last 10-15 years plus. What were they like in the mid-90s when you got there?

Ruth: They were on the rise. They went to the Final Four for the first time in 1997, my senior year in high school. I was excited because that is where I'm going to go to school. I would say it had been a work in progress and probably the class before mine really set the bar high.

Morgan: We're going to get to your roles as a sport envoy as the conversation moves on. When the State Department sends you out as a sports envoy, one of the things that we want are impressive

female athletes to talk about is the role of Title IX in their life. Were you conscious of Title IX as a little girl or as a high school player? When did it first come to your awareness?

Ruth: I think when you have that conversation with your mom trying to talk about shared experiences and you realize that she didn't have this opportunity. I think that was a light bulb on. She always encouraged me because she didn't. Just having that strong female figure in my life to encourage me to get an education, participate in sports. As you get older, you look into the actual legislation and what that has done over the years.

Morgan: Notre Dame, across the board, their athletic department...it starts with football, but every sport they pride themselves on men and women. That must have been a great environment to go to school and be a student athlete in.

Ruth: Yea..it really had everything for me. It was strong academics, athletics, great community service and faith component..the complete package. It was a smaller university. I knew I didn't want to go, growing up on a farm, to a very large state school. Having one that was so good relatively close to home was perfect to me.

Morgan: Was your mom a farmer?

Ruth: Yea..originally we grew up on a farm. We didn't farm once my parents got divorced, but we've always lived in a farmhouse somewhere.

Morgan: You were born in Kansas. Another really small town, also around 300 people too. Is that a Riley family tradition living in small towns in the Midwest?

Ruth: I think it has to do with farming communities. When we moved back to Indiana, it was the same county she grew up in. The by-product of the Midwest.

Morgan: Was she able to go to all your games in South Bend when you were there?

Ruth: Yea..it was so nice. She made it to the ones she could. Obviously some work nights didn't work out so well, but for the most part she was able to come.

Morgan: I was listening to Zach Lowe from ESPN. He was doing a podcast last week and he was talking to Sue Bird and he introduced her as a woman that had been a NCAA champion, an Olympic gold medalist, and a WNBA champion and I said I know somebody like that. You are also one of the most modest people I've ever met. The way you carry yourself. Is that something you learned through sport? I guess I'm asking you to be immodest to talk about your modesty, but maybe talk about some of the values you've learned from the game.

Ruth: I think my modesty comes from I do play a team sport. It's not just me on the court. I need all of my teammates. Also the way I was raised. My mom really instilled in me gratitude for what you are given and I try to take that with how I see the world.

Morgan: You mentioned that one of the selling points for Notre Dame was that it was faith based. Are you Catholic?

Ruth: Christian. I think that is where I really first saw the opportunity to use my platform in a meaningful way outside the sport itself. Notre Dame has such good community service whether its schools or hospitals. Recognizing that not only being a basketball player, but a citizen, the need to have a desire to give back.

Morgan: The loyalty the school instills in the alumni. It's historic. It even extends beyond it. I grew up as a Notre Dame football fan due to my last name and the fact that we went to church every Sunday. There really is a lot about the school being that aspirational entity that lifts us all up to do better, right? That is basically what I hear you saying.

Ruth: Now that I'm back finishing up my MBA, our (inaudible) motto is a call for business to be better and to do more and to not only have values, but to live them. I think that Notre Dame has that call to action across the board to our extended family.

Morgan: I know a lot of people that when grad school comes around, its going to back to Mendoza or law school at Notre Dame. That says a lot about the community that the university strives to cultivate, but we'll get to that in your post playing career in a second. First thing, with March Madness upon us that I want to get to. Your senior year, you are up against the might UCONN Huskies. You are down 10 at halftime?

Ruth: It could have been more than that. I think it was 13...a lot.

Morgan: This is the National Championship or the Final Four?

Ruth: We faced them in the semi-finals of the Final Four.

Morgan: What's Muffet saying in the locker room? Do you believe in yourself or do you think that these women are unstoppable? How do you think you're going to pull yourself out of a 13-point hole at halftime with 20 minutes left and beat UCONN?

Ruth: Surprisingly, we're pretty confident. It wasn't a locker room where you felt like you lost the game. There were 20 minutes left and we knew how much hard work and preparation we had put in the entire season. I don't know that Coach had words of wisdom as much as a captain or senior on the team. This is what we need to do so let's go on the court and do it.

Morgan: And there you go. Had you beaten in your career in South Bend? Had you beaten UCONN before?

Ruth: We beat them earlier in that season to get our first number one ranking, first sellout crowd in our history. Then, Sue Bird hit a half-court shot in the Big East, at the time, conference championship to beat us. This was our game 3.

Morgan: Who did you end up beating in the finals?

Ruth: We played Purdue. It was an in-state rivalry. It came down to the wire.

Morgan: Check that box. You are a NCAA champion. That must have felt great. At that point the WNBA was 2 or 3 years old?

Ruth: We were a unique class in that we entered college knowing there was an opportunity to play when we were done. The WNBA started in the summer of 1997. It was encouraging. Women didn't have that opportunity before.

Morgan: Did you know that you wanted to be a pro ball player if given the opportunity? Was that your number 1 choice on your list coming out of school?

Ruth: Yea, absolutely! To be able to play a sport that I loved for a living. That is a dream.

Morgan: What did you major in?

Ruth: Psychology

Morgan: You come out, you were a first-round pick and you started your career in a relatively new WNBA. What was that like?

Ruth: It was a bit of a culture shock for me. I went to South Bend, IN to South Beach. Every time that I've transitioned from high school to college, college to pros, it's taken me a bit of time as an adjustment period. Gratefully, I had really good coaches. Some old school NBA coaches--Ron Rothstein and Tony Fiorentino--that were the Miami Heat's first coaches. Great teachers of the game and taught me what it meant to be a pro alongside the skillsets I needed to be a basketball player.

Morgan: Was it different playing for a women and then transitioning to playing for men? Did you notice any difference there?

Ruth: I didn't really notice a difference there as much as playing for Bill Laimbeer and Ron Rossey. I think it's more personality than it is the gender.

Morgan: You knew what Notre Dame guys were like from your 4 years at South Bend so you were prepared.

Ruth: I don't think you're ever prepared for Bill Laimbeer, but I learned a lot. He's an incredibly intelligent coach. He just has a loud personality.

Morgan: He's doing a great job here in New York! Going back to Notre Dame for a second here. Did you do summer programs? Was there an outreach program that you did as a student in your student capacity or were you just totally committed to basketball and you didn't have time for that other stuff?

Ruth: We had a life skills department within our athletic department that would help facilitate that. A lot of people would ask me, can you come to our school? Can you come talk to this group? I played USA basketball most of the summers so I was traveling with them about half the summer and the rest of the time trying to spend some time at home.

Morgan: It must be incredible being a national champion at Notre Dame. There it must be incredibly special with the tradition. You played a couple years in the W and then the 2004 Olympics come around? You were named to the Olympic team in '04, right? Which was in Athens. Did you march in the opening ceremony?

Ruth: Yea. That was my dream as a little girl to play in the Olympics because the WNBA didn't exist. It was a dream come true. There is something powerful when you are walking the opening ceremonies when you see all the different athletes and countries represented. You are walking there honored to wear a jersey or outfit that says USA, but to be a part of something so much bigger than that is truly memorable.

Morgan: Who did you grow up idolizing on the court? Who were some of your role models? Were there female basketball players you looked up to or just NBA players? Who did you try to model your game after?

Ruth: Honestly, I didn't grow up watching anyone. There was no WNBA. I didn't go to any college games. My mom was pretty strict about what we could or couldn't watch on tv so I guess I'm not the stereotypical athlete that had posters on my wall. I was outside playing more than I was watching.

Morgan: You won the gold medal in '04. Who did you beat in the gold medal game?

Ruth: Australia. They are tough and going to be one of our competitions this summer in the Rio Olympics.

Morgan: What did it feel like getting the gold medal put around your neck and listening to the National Anthem when they raised the flag?

Ruth: It's so surreal. I'm very patriotic to my core. I cried when I was watching the Olympics growing up when they would raise our flag. I would dream and imagine what it would be like for those athletes on the podium so to be able to experience it myself was very emotional.



Morgan: I was watching an interview with Larry Brown a couple of years ago right when he started SMU. They were in his office and he had a poster. He played in the Rome Olympics which must have been in 1960 or something like that. You just think, he was on the Olympic Team and for all that he's accomplished in his basketball career he thinks to memorialize that in his office. Being an Olympic champion must be the coolest thing in the world.

Ruth: Regardless whether you win or not, to have that opportunity to represent your country at the highest level and playing the sport you love. To add on being the best in the world and knowing that its not just for you, it's for your entire nation. We felt so much love and support. It's truly amazing.

Morgan: You mentioned a couple things, being overwhelmed and blown away by the collection of different countries at the opening ceremonies. You also mentioned being patriotic..I can attest to that having sent you out as a sport envoy on behalf of the State Department. Bringing those two things together, when did you realize that basketball wasn't just played inside the lines at the Joy Center or wherever you played at Notre Dame or even in Athens. When did you realize that what you did with the basketball and hoop could transcend the barns in Indiana and make an impact all over the world?

Ruth: Twofold. I would say first at Notre Dame when our fans would wait, literally hundreds, after games. It would blow my mind like why are they waiting for an autograph or just to talk to me. Realizing that you have this touch point with people that you can use in a positive way if you chose to be intentional about it. Then, the first time I traveled on behalf of the NBA to Kenya in 2006. It was a World AIDS event. I saw this intersection of humanitarian work and sports. People opening the door just because of what I accomplished as an athlete. It changed the trajectory of my life.

Morgan: You go out for the NBA to Kenya in '06 and along the way you are winning 2 WNBA titles and you were the MVP in one of the finals. I'm sorry...I'll cut that out.

Ruth: Good teams...good teams..blessed for sure.

Morgan: Last month, at All Star, I interviewed Johann Olav Koss and he was the Sports Illustrated Sportsmen of the Year with Bonnie Blair in 94. Right after the Lillehammer Olympics. He won 4 gold medals total in his life. I literally have more pictures of him hanging up in my office at home than he has in his own office. It's incredible. I also talked to him about being an individual athlete. He was telling me about being a speed skater. It may have been me on top of that podium, but I didn't get there by myself. I had coaches and teammates that drove me in practice and that has been one of the great lessons I've learned. Some of these incredible champions..it isn't just about them. They raise the level of their game

because they can't do it alone. This is a long way to get to my question. Is that why you give back? Is that one of the lessons you learned about teamwork? Something that you apply when reaching out to children in Kenya or Saudi Arabia or Ethiopia and on and on and on?

Ruth: I think it's just realizing that so many people whether it was their time, advice, resources, money, coaching impacted my life in a meaningful way. I was grateful for all the people have done for me and realizing that I have an opportunity to do the same in someone else's life. I try to live my life (inaudible) gratitude and looking around there is plenty of opportunity to good and a lot of it has to do with giving your time and intentionally connecting with people. My travels allow me to connect with people around the world that I didn't ever anticipate growing up on the farm in Indiana, but I'm grateful my mom raised me with this open minded view, embracing new experiences. They have taught me a lot and impacted my life in many ways.

Morgan: You've mentioned your mom and the importance of her in your life a bunch. It's clear to me that you take that as a model of what a strong woman can do for girls that are growing up and looking for role models. Is that a correct assessment? You're the psychology major.

Ruth: I think it's also being self aware and being transparent. We all struggle with confidence and especially young girls. When I'm traveling and I see women struggle the way I saw my mom struggle and you also see the strength in them that I saw in my mom. Or I see little girls struggling with their body image or their confidence and they are trying to fit in and figure out who they are and their identity. I think it's self awareness in what I went through in my life and trying to relate to them on their level.

Morgan: As great as you were on the court, every world class athlete be in Michael Jordan or Kareem or one day Steph Curry. We are seeing Kobe come to the end of his career. There comes a point where you have to hang them up. When did you realize that it's time to transition and take the next step in my life?

Ruth: I think the latter part of my career, my Achilles was slowing me down. I realized that I could probably play a few more years, but I couldn't play at the level I wanted to compete at and I also knew I wanted to go back to school and start this next chapter in my life. I'm grateful. There is nothing that I had left to accomplish so I'm very fortunate to that degree. I think it made it easier for me to move on.

Morgan: The next part of the conversation I wanted to move towards was your career as a US Department of State sports on envoy. We were counting and there were at least 5 occasions where you went out on US taxpayer expense to represent US culture and values through the lens of sport. A lot of the work you've done has been in Africa. What are the countries we said you've been to?

Ruth: Both Congos, Saudi Arabia...

Morgan: Wow, women's sports in Saudi Arabia.

Ruth: Yea, that was incredible. Morocco, Barcelona, a little tour part of the southern part of Africa with Botswana, Mozambique, and South Africa.

Morgan: You just did a one-day program in Ethiopia, which you did out of the kindness of your heart.

Ruth: That is the great thing about my involvement with the US Department of State. I do travel with other organizations and because I believe so much in the programming and what they are doing, I try to reach out when I'm on the road and say hey, I'm going to be in Ethiopia. Do you have a program whether it be women's empowerment or basketball that I could spend a day or two to help out.

Morgan: We love having you come for a lot of the reasons you've been talking about. When someone like you can stand up in front of these girls and pull out a gold medal and say you can do this. It's very easy to get boys to kick a soccer ball around on whatever corner of the planet you are on, but one thing we found is even in Brazil girls don't play soccer anywhere near the percentage that we do here in the States. Promoting women's participation in sports is fantastic for building self-esteem and helping them learn all the values that boys have been learning for forever.

Ruth: A lot of these are cultures or societies where it's not normal, where it's not equity whether it's education first and foremost but then the opportunity in sports. I think for them to physically see a female athlete. For me to be there to encourage them where they might not get that encouragement at home. Somebody has to be a catalyst or spark in their lives. I think the State Department does a good job building programs to open people's world view and how they see girls and women in sport.

Morgan: One thing when I started my fellowship year on sports diplomacy was I thought we were going to need to do more proving that exposure to women like yourself help these girls set themselves on a good trajectory, a productive trajectory. There is a ton of research out there that backs this up. That supports what the State Department does and countless NGOs, a number that you are involved with, do. For that I'm biased, I think that is why it's a great investment of our time. It's pennies on the dollar, the return we get on sending folks like you out.

Ruth: Look at the sustainable development goals. The majority of them are around women and young girls. Here in the US, there are a lot of studies about the correlation between C-suite. 70% of C-suite women played sports and 52% played in college. That is a really high correlation. There are great lessons to be learned through sport.

Morgan: Tell me a little about Saudi Arabia and your time there. That must have been out of this world.

Ruth: It was so incredible to go. I've heard through media and read a little bit, but to be on the ground meeting these young girls who literally have to play a place that is secluded because of their cultures view on women. To see that they didn't feel discouraged by that, where there is a will there is a way and these young girls have a passion for sport. It was exciting to spend time with them and learn how sport is ingrained in their culture which is not like the rest of the world.

Morgan: Do you find that rewarding personally?

Ruth: I think it's really helpful. When I travel for the State Department its not only to be an influence on what we believe here in the US, but to learn about these other countries. What I gain so much from that trip, was really learning these girl's stories and try to come back and share that in a very respectful, transparent, authentic way. I think that is a great thing about these programs as well. It's not just we're the US, we're here because we know how to do something better. It's a joint collaboration of trying to bring something that is meaningful to them as well.

Morgan: While I have you on a roll here, tell me a little bit about what you think the State Department does well with their sport diplomacy programs.

Ruth: I love that we bring a lot of the athletes here. I had the opportunity to travel to countries, but they get to experience what sport is like here in the US. That is invaluable too. I can talk about what it's like to play in the WNBA, but for them to come and go to a WNBA or NBA game, to witness what that experience is like, to get knowledge from other coaches and teachers, I think that is really impactful.

Morgan: Have you talked to any of our sports visitor's groups that we've had come through?

Ruth: Yea, through the NBA we usually host them during our All Star weekend. What an incredible..if you are a basketball fan that is the weekend you want to come and experience what we do on the NBA side and our NBA family which is the WNBA and D League.

Morgan: You were an All Star this year too. I don't want to embarrass you again, but they brought you out on the court during one of the breaks too.

Ruth: It was the 20th anniversary for the WNBA. Just a celebration. The NBA truly is a family and they celebrate what the WNBA does and who we are and what we stand for. I'm honored to be on the court to be a representation of that.

Morgan: As a sports envoy that has gone out for us, where there any positive lessons learned, things that you like to see at every program along the way, things that we need to continue to do?

Ruth: I love that every trip is different. When I was in the Congo we spoke at a debate or English club. To see and to understand some of the different programs. Or there is a street ball tournament with graffiti artists and sport comes together. The women's empowerment groups and meeting in Saudi Arabia with some of the most incredible women from different fields and walks to life. For me, it's always an educational and cultural experience. I love learning the different programs that are out there.

Morgan: What could we do better? Don't pull any punches. You won't hurt my feelings.

Ruth: I think a small example would be in Saudi Arabia of something you don't know because it's not a reality.

Morgan: I'm sure it's real easy to find a burka that would fit a 6'5" women in Saudi Arabia.

Ruth: It was hilarious. I definitely found one. Honestly, it was such an interesting experience. To be really immersed, to understand that this is reality, and talk to women about it and their view about it. We went at a time where the king just opened up physical education for girls. You could see how they are moving towards a path of progression. It's not as quick as the rest of the world would want. I would want it as a female to happen overnight but that is not a reality.

Morgan: One thing I think it real important in these programs, and you've just hit on this, it's not just about the kids in Saudi Arabia. You, Ruth Riley, are selected at least twice for this program. Once by your sport. It's not like I cold called you or found you on Twitter. The NBA ponied you up as an example of what they want to represent the WNBA and the NBA and the sport of basketball abroad. You make that cut and the second cut you have to make is on behalf of your country. We have to decide that you meet

the State Department threshold that you represent the American culture and values abroad. We are investing in you, the sport envoys. You go to Saudi, Congo, Morocco. When you come back to the States, right now you are a student at the MBA program at Notre Dame. Are you using some of your experiences when dealing with your cohorts?

Ruth: Absolutely. Anytime you experience something new and your paradigm of the world is expanding, a lot of what my passion is is global health and women's empowerment. The more that I can understand the issues that women deal with in different countries around the world or young girls, the better I can match up business solutions or some of the innovation that I'm learning in business school. This is a solution to a problem that I saw.

Morgan: What were you doing in Ethiopia a couple months ago?

Ruth: Ethiopia was truly amazing because it had the most girls I've ever seen play basketball in one sitting in Africa, in the continent that I've been to. It was incredible to see this gym full of girls playing and how excited they were. I traveled around, an extended road trip through the northern parts of Ethiopia. Talk about getting a feel for the culture. Spending 10 hours a day driving through mountains and villages you really get to see and experience it.

Morgan: You were there with school?

Ruth: No, with a joint program. I went to Uganda with my grad school earlier this year on a project that we did.

Morgan: What were you working on?

Ruth: We studied the supply chain distribution of morphine. Uganda is one of the leaders throughout the continent for hospice care. Interesting to track that from the National Medical Center to some of the villages.

Morgan: That's right..I'm mixing the two. You weren't able to work with the Embassy in Uganda..

Ruth: We did do a basketball clinic.

Morgan: Wow..geeze. It's great..that is incredible value to the State Department. You were there anyway and for you to be able to donate your time. These aren't just US forced it down your throat programs. We don't call them that..we call them people to people exchanges. It's every bit as much as you getting this first-hand experience and bringing it back and applying it. It sounds like you are doing a bang up job, as is everything else in your life. Thank you for that.

Ruth: It's my pleasure.

Morgan: As we're wrapping things up here, I know you have a flight back to school. You are going to graduate in May? Are you going to walk at graduation?

Ruth: We have a grad school graduation so I'll walk with my grad school classmates.

Morgan: It's a great graduation ceremony. I was there in '04 for my little brother. It's a really neat weekend. You get to do it again. What's next for you? What are you looking forward to do in the future?

Ruth: That's what I'm trying to navigate. Whether I stay within the basketball business side or the non-profit humanitarian, women's empowerment, global health space.

Morgan: How does someone like you make decisions like that? You have so much going for you and you have so many options in front of you. How do you decide this is the path my life is going to take?

Ruth: I'll let you know in a couple months? It's not easy when your passion extends over a variety of things. I think I'm at the point in my life where I'm going to have to narrow my focus a bit which is going to be hard, but I think it will be more impactful in the areas that I choose.

Morgan: Do you miss basketball at all? Do you miss playing?

Ruth: I don't. There is always a pickup game to be had. That part is easy and I've been around Notre Dame women's basketball program is doing really well. I feel like I'll always be connected to the game.

Morgan: Yea, well. I'd hate be playing pick-up and here comes Ruth Riley.

Ruth: We'll be on the same team.

Morgan: Did you ever play in the bookstore tournament?

Ruth: No because I can't..they won't let me play this year. You have to be out 5 years after playing professionally. There should be a grandfather clause. It's not like I'm a young undergrad here.

Morgan: Is there anything else you'd like to say before we sign off?

Ruth: No, it's been a pleasure. As I said before, I'm very patriotic and to have the opportunity to really see what our Ambassadors do and what our Embassies do around the world..I'm sure they don't get thanked enough. It's a sacrifice. They are moving every couple of years. Picking up and moving their families and doing it all to build relationships and bridges. It's an honor to be a small part of that.

Morgan: Talking about sports and Embassies, when we are watching the Super Bowl or the World Series on tv they always mention the troops overseas that are serving our country. They never mention the diplomats that are.

Ruth: You guys should be. I think that most people..it's not on the top of their mind, but definitely are doing amazing work.

Morgan: Thank you--I was fishing for that. Ruth Riley, thank you very much for your time in two different offices here at the NBA Headquarters.

Ruth: Thank you.

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