



SEATTLE STORM

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SEATTLE STORM FALLS IN SEASON OPENER AT LOS ANGELES, 96-66

Breanna Stewart Scores 23 Points in WNBA Debut

LOS ANGELES – Despite 23 points from No. 1 draft pick Breanna Stewart in her WNBA debut, the Seattle Storm lost 96-66 to the Los Angeles Sparks on Sunday at STAPLES Center in its first game of the 2016 season.

Led by forward Candace Parker, who finished with 34 points, the Sparks were in control throughout Sunday's game thanks to a dominant first half. They scored the first eight points of the game and led 25-16 after the first quarter despite seven points from Stewart. L.A. went on a 23-5 run to close out the second quarter, taking a 51-26 edge into the locker room.

Stewart and Parker went back and forth in the third period, with the Seattle rookie scoring 13 of her 23 points to help close the gap. After scoring just 26 in the first half, the Storm put up 25 in the third quarter to pull within 14 heading into the fourth. Stewart finished an efficient 9-of-13 from the field, and the University of Connecticut product also recorded six rebounds, three assists and two steals. The 6-4 forward was one basket shy of the record for field goals made by a rookie.

The Sparks increased their lead as the fourth quarter went on, due in part to Seattle's nine turnovers in the period. L.A. used full-court pressure for much of Sunday's contest, and the Storm finished with 24 turnovers compared to just 10 for the Sparks.

In addition to Parker's game-high 34 points, forward Nneka Ogumike and guard Kristi Toliver were also in double figures for L.A. with 13 and 14 points, respectively. Reigning Rookie of the Year Jewell Loyd had a stellar game for Seattle, notching 20 points on 6-of-14 shooting with five assists.

Stewart wasn't the only player to make her Storm debut on Sunday. Veteran guard Monica Wright, who was acquired midseason in 2015 but sat out due to injury, came off the bench and scored two points in seven minutes of action.

After returning to Seattle, the Storm will head out for another road game on Friday against the Phoenix Mercury. In its home opener, the Storm hosts the defending champion Minnesota Lynx at 4 p.m. on Sunday, May 22.

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