



SEATTLE STORM

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SEATTLE STORM EARNS 79-72 VICTORY OVER FIRST-PLACE LOS ANGELES SPARKS

Crystal Langhorne Scores Team-High 16 Points; Seattle's Record Stands at 10-15

SEATTLE – In its first game back from the Olympic break, the Seattle Storm defeated the league-leading Los Angeles Sparks 79-72 on Friday at KeyArena. The Storm improves to 10-15 – which equals its win total from last season – and is now alone in the eighth and final playoff spot with nine games remaining. The Sparks drop to 21-4, still the best record in the WNBA.

Crystal Langhorne led the Storm with 16 points Friday night, going 6-of-9 from the field and also pulling down 10 rebounds for her first double-double of the season. **Jewell Loyd** and **Sue Bird** scored 15 points apiece, and the starting guards dished out seven and six assists, respectively. Loyd recorded a season-high five steals, while Bird set a new season high for three-pointers, hitting five of her seven attempts from deep.

The Storm was victorious despite leading scorer **Breanna Stewart**, the three-time Rookie of the Month, going 2-for-13 from the field for five points. **Nneka Ogumike** scored a game-high 28 points for the Sparks, but former MVP **Candace Parker** was held to just seven points after dropping 34 against Seattle in the season opener.

With the season series between the teams now even, Seattle will host L.A. once more on Sept. 11.

Ogumike scored two baskets right away, but those were the only Sparks points of the opening five minutes, as Seattle held an 11-4 advantage. Bird was 3-for-3 from three-point range in the first quarter, helping the Storm extend its lead to as many as 11 and earn a 22-13 edge at the end of the period.

Both teams struggled from the field to open the second, scoring just one basket apiece in the first 3:30 of the quarter. L.A. then went on a 10-0 run to cut its deficit to 26-25 with two minutes to go in the first half. That was mostly without Ogumike, who picked up her fourth foul midway through the second quarter and went to the bench. The Storm led 31-28 at the break despite shooting 37.9 percent in the first half, including Stewart going 0-for-5.

Seattle started the second half on a 12-2 run, increasing the lead to double digits again on Stewart's first basket of the night. Bird, who entered the game shooting a career-high 44.1 percent from deep, hit another trey during the dominant stretch in the third quarter. The Storm also benefitted from threes by reserves **Noelle Quinn** and **Kaleena Mosqueda-Lewis**, taking a 55-44 lead into the final quarter.

Quinn continued the hot shooting in the fourth, hitting a pair of jumpers for Seattle's first two baskets of the frame. The score was 66-53 after a Loyd steal-and-layup with about six minutes remaining, and Stewart put the game out of reach with a jumper that made it a 12-point game in the final two minutes.

The Storm will be back in action on Sunday at the defending champion Minnesota Lynx. Tipoff is scheduled for 4 p.m. PT on ESPN2.

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