



SEATTLE STORM

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SEATTLE STORM BEATS WASHINGTON MYSTICS 81-76 TO CLOSE OUT SUCCESSFUL ROAD TRIP

Storm Now Has Tiebreaker Against Washington; Seattle's Record Stands at 14-17

WASHINGTON – The Seattle Storm picked up its third straight win on Friday, defeating the Washington Mystics 81-76 at the Verizon Center to earn a crucial victory in its quest for a postseason berth. Seattle (14-17) remains in the seventh playoff spot with three games remaining, and having won two of three against Washington (12-18), the Storm now owns the head-to-head tiebreaker.

In a back-and-forth contest from start to finish, Seattle led 70-61 after **Ramu Tokashiki** scored seven straight points to start the final quarter. Washington pulled within a point midway through the quarter, and it remained a one-possession game down the stretch as the teams traded baskets. **Jewell Loyd** pushed Seattle's lead to 79-76 on a midrange jumper with 2:05 to go, and neither team scored again until Loyd's pair of free throws in the final seconds. **Taylor Hill** had a chance to tie for the Mystics, but her three-pointer rimmed out.

Seattle won three out of four games on a successful road trip, improving to 5-2 since the Olympic break.

Sue Bird and **Breanna Stewart** paced the Storm with 17 points apiece, as both finished 3-of-5 from behind the three-point line. Bird dished out nine assists and had a season-high seven rebounds, while Stewart grabbed 10 boards for her 11th double-double. **Alysha Clark** added 14 points on 6-of-8 shooting, and Tokashiki scored 13 to help Seattle's reserves outscore the highest-scoring bench in the league.

The Mystics had shot 60.8 percent and scored a franchise-record 118 points in their previous game, yet Seattle held them to just 38.4 percent on Friday. **Emma Meesseman** scored a team-high 15 points. The Storm shot 54.5 percent, but 15 turnovers compared to just five for Washington kept the hosts within striking distance.

Seattle made six straight baskets to begin the first quarter, three of which came from Clark. The Storm led 13-4 in the opening minutes before an 8-0 run by the Mystics, including three-pointers on back-to-back possessions. Turnovers plagued the Storm after its hot start, allowing Washington to climb back into the contest. The game was tied at 20 apiece until a Loyd three-pointer made it 23-30 at the end of the frame.

Washington took its first lead of the night a minute into the second quarter, part of another 8-0 run to start the period until Clark ended it with her fourth bucket. Back-to-back baskets by **Crystal Langhorne** tied the game once again at 30 apiece. Bird scored or assisted on all of the final nine points of the half for Seattle, finishing the opening 20 minutes with 10 points and five assists as the Storm led 41-39 at the break.

The Mystics took control early in the second half, using a 12-0 spurt to go in front 53-43 midway through the third quarter. Seattle responded with a run of its own, as Bird continued to find teammates for easy looks. After the Mystics increased their lead to nine, Stewart and Tokashiki led a dominant close to the quarter for the Storm, a 14-3 run that resulted in a 63-61 edge.

The Storm will now return home for a Sunday matchup with the second-place Los Angeles Sparks.