



**I**t was just nine months ago when Linda Weston was roaming the aisles of Office Depot shopping for pencils.

"It's pretty amazing to think about how far we've come, given that we had so little time and so few resources," assesses Weston, the general manager of the Portland Power, one of eight women's professional basketball teams that recently completed the American Basketball League's inaugural season.

"Amazing" may be an understatement, especially when you recall team marketing director Janeen Olsen's remark in our Oct. 18 cover story: "We've had two and a half months to pull this all together. When we began, we didn't have shoes. We didn't have uniforms. We had nowhere to train. We didn't have basketballs."

The first season has now come and gone, and from Weston's vantage point it has been a triumph, particularly in light of the numerous challenges. Despite its last-place record, the Power topped

the league in total ticket sales, surpassing its goal of \$600,000 by more than \$135,000. On average, 4,167 fans turned out for each of the Power's 20 home games at Memorial Coliseum—the ABL's second-best attendance record. More than 8,700 fans were on hand for the Oct. 19 opening game, and Weston is aiming for at least a couple of sellouts for the 10,900-seat stadium next season.

**W**hile Power and ABL management must focus on the business component to keep the league afloat, others of us can indulge in the more romantic elements of this maiden season—a historic endeavor fueled by the belief that women in sport are significant.

One of the ABL's professed goals is, in fact, to provide "young women and girls with positive role models."

To that end the Power has been a smashing success. All one had to do for confirmation was survey the faces of the hundreds of little girls and teenagers—not to men-

**POWER =**

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**EMPOWERMENT**

*The first season of the first national women's basketball league is a triumph for fans and for women's sports—even if a certain team placed last*