

SPORTS

Comets Remain WNBA's Only Champion

By MICHAEL A. LUTZ
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HOUSTON (AP) - The Houston Comets found a rallying cry for their third WNBA title: three for 10.

The Comets completed a tragedy-marred season Sunday with a 59-47 victory over the New York Liberty, giving Houston its third straight WNBA championship.

The victory in Game 3, which came after a buzzer-beating loss on a 52-foot 3-pointer by the Liberty, was dedicated to guard Kim Perrot, who wore No. 10 and died Aug. 19 after a seven-month battle with cancer.

"These players of ours, they stayed tough. They won it after the most heart-breaking loss I've ever

been involved in," Comets coach Van Chancellor said, referring to Saturday's defeat.

"This has proven to be one of the great teams in the history of sports. And this trophy is for Kim, whose heart and determination will never be forgotten."

Nor will they forget the season filled with emotion. Cooper lost her mother to cancer before losing her best friend, Perrot. All-Star teammate Sheryl Swoopes got a divorce before the season began.

"I think it's especially sweet with everything that this team has gone through, emotionally, mentally, all the personal things that we have all gone through, all the sacrifices we have had to make," Swoopes said. "Obviously, Kim not being here,

that was very emotional."

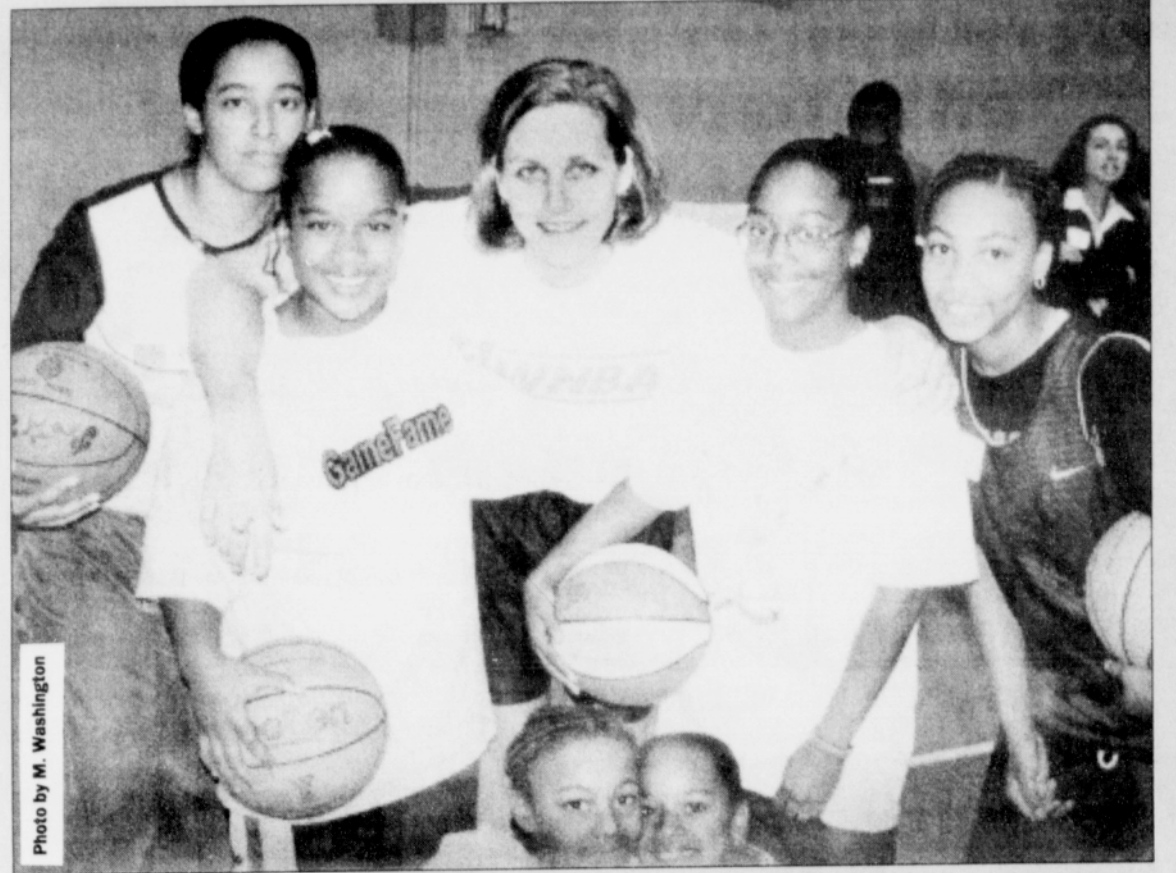
Everything finally came together in the closing seconds of Sunday's championship game.

From the free-throw line, Cooper raised her hands, showing the index finger with her right hand and a fist with the other - a referee's signal for No. 10.

Tears welled in the players' eyes, and the sellout crowd of 16,285 began chanting "three for Kim, three for Kim."

"This championship was the hard one because of everything going on," forward Janeth Arcain said. "It's been a very emotional season watching Kim fight her battle. We won this championship for her, and we know she was watching us."

Katy Steding Visits the Newly Formed Girls Midnight Basketball League



Portland's New WNBA Head Coach pays a surprise visit to Blazer's Boys and Girls Club to discuss the importance of women's athletics and to congratulate the participants of the newly formed Girls Midnight Basketball League.

Katy Steding, Portland WNBA Community Liaison distributed awards to participants/volunteers of the newly formed league. Both were accompanied by the V. P. of Business Operations of the WNBA, Sandi Bittler.



Brandon Stays with T'wolves for \$58M

By ARNIE STAPLETON
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MINNEAPOLIS (AP) - Now that he knows what it's like to be courted as a free agent, Terrell Brandon wants to experience the thrill of finally playing for a contender.

"There really wasn't another team that I could say really interested me as much as Minnesota," the two-time All-Star point guard said Tuesday after signing a six-year, \$59 million deal to stay with the Timberwolves.

Brandon arrived from Milwaukee last March as part of the three-team trade that sent disgruntled point guard Stephon Marbury to New Jersey.

Brandon refused to sign an ex-

tension last spring, saying he wanted to test free agency for the first time in an eight-year NBA career that included six seasons in Cleveland.

"It was nice," Brandon said of flirtations with other teams, including the Toronto Raptors. "And I think people really didn't understand where I was coming from, just having the opportunity to go through it once in my career. Just being free. I had never been one before."

Still, Brandon said his intentions all along were to stay put.

"I don't think it got very serious with other teams; phone calls here and there and possible sign-and-trades, it came up a lot," he said. "As far as putting it in writing, my agent knew I wanted to be

here."

Bill Duffy, Brandon's agent, said his client wanted dearly to pick his place to play for the first time since choosing to attend Oregon in 1988, even though few teams could afford his asking price.

"He played the first eight years of his career without being able to determine that," Duffy said. "Now, the marketplace changed. It wasn't like there were 12 clubs that could have paid him whatever. So, it would have been on a sign-and-trade basis. We could have manipulated his destination, but he chose to be here."

Duffy said Brandon valued his short-term exposure to coach Flip Saunders, owner Glen Taylor and vice president of basketball operations Kevin McHale.

"I think he trusts them and he knows Kevin McHale is all about winning championships and that's what Terrell wants to do," Duffy said. "He's had a lot of individual success. Now he has the financial security and the only thing left is to reach the top."

Holmgren Faces New Challenge in Seattle

By CHRIS PALOCHKO
SPORTS TICKET

JERSEY CITY, New Jersey (Ticker) - When Mike Holmgren left Green Bay for Seattle in January, he did not just leave behind one of the most storied franchises in sports. He also left behind one of the best quarterbacks of this decade.

Holmgren was named coach and general manager of the Seahawks on January 8. That followed one of the most impressive coaching stints in league history with the Packers from 1992-98.

In Green Bay, Holmgren posted a 75-37 record, a 9-5 postseason mark, and two Super Bowl appearances, including a 35-21 victory over the New England Patriots in Super Bowl XXXI.

However, that record was with three-time NFL MVP and future Hall of Famer Brett Favre at his

disposal to run the West Coast offense. Holmgren can say goodbye to Favre and say hello to unknown Jon Kitna, who has started all of six games in his career, with five of those starts coming last season.

Like Favre, Kitna has also won a Most Valuable Player award in his career. But that was in NFL Europe as MVP of the World Bowl in 1997 while playing for the Barcelona Dragons. The quarterback returned from that stint in Europe and remained on the bench for the Seahawks before finally getting his chance last season.

In nine career games, Kitna has completed 129-of-217 passes for 1,548 yards with eight touchdowns and 10 interceptions.

Even with the little experience Kitna possesses, Holmgren, who is known as a quarterback guru, was still impressed enough to name him the starter heading into this season

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