

New York Liberty Win WNBA Championship

More Could Be On the Horizon

(AP) Breanna Stewart joined the New York Liberty two years ago with one goal in mind: to bring the long-suffering franchise its first championship.

WNBA Finals MVP Jonquel Jones soon joined her and the pair helped the Liberty accomplish their mission, a year after they suffered a disappointing loss in the Finals to Las Vegas.

“The wait was so, so, so worth it,” Stewart said. “We talked about it two years ago when it was free agency, and we wanted to come together. You look back and me, JJ, (Courtney Vandersloot), we all came together to win a championship. Last year we lost in the Finals. But look at us, now we’re here.”

Now with the core group mostly intact, winning more championships might be in the future for Stewart and the Liberty after Sunday’s 67-62 overtime victory against the Minnesota Lynx in the deciding Game 5 of the WNBA Finals.

She had won two titles before with Seattle, but this was special for her as the only player born in the state of New York on the roster.

“This is more personal because I’m from New York. I’m from upstate,” she said. “I came here for a reason, and that’s to win a championship.”



The New York Liberty hold up the championship trophy after defeating the Minnesota Lynx in Game 5 of the WNBA basketball final series, Sunday, Oct. 20, 2024, in New York (AP Photo/Pamela Smith)

With Stewart, Jones, Sabrina Ionescu and other key players signed for next year, there’s no reason to think the Liberty couldn’t repeat.

“I think it’s been fun. Hey, let’s not stop at one, though. Let’s go for two,” Liberty coach Sandy Brondello said. “It’s hard to win because this league is so good. You need a little bit of luck on your side, but you also need talent. You also need talent, the right talent to put together.”

It won’t be easy. The league will look different with the addition of Golden State as a 13th team. They’ll also be squads like Minnesota, Las Vegas and others hungry to knock them off. In the past 20 years, only the Aces have repeated as champions, winning in 2022 and 2023.

This series was a fitting conclusion to a record-breaking season for the league. All five games came down to the last few possessions and have included two overtime

games and a last-second shot, which have led to record ratings.

The five games produced a record attendance for a WNBA Finals. Many of those New York fans, dying for a championship in a city known for winning titles in other sports, will celebrate at a parade later this week. It most likely will be in the Canyon of Heroes in downtown Manhattan — right across the bridge from Barclays Center where the Liberty play.

Then it’s on to the offseason with the first order of business for the league and players being whether either side will opt out of the current collective bargaining agreement. They have until Nov. 1 to do it.

For now, the Liberty can enjoy their first-ever title. They had been this far five times before, losing each time, including last season’s defeat. Some of the great Liberty players of the past like Teresa Weatherspoon and Sue Wicks, who came up short in their time of winning a championship, were in the sellout crowd Sunday to see the team win.

“I told her I hope you enjoy this because this is for you,” Vandersloot said she told Weatherspoon. “You laid the foundation and, you know, sometimes it doesn’t show right away. ... I hope she feels appreciated because, you know, she kind of started this and now the city has won and that can never be taken away.”

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