

Basketball

Lynx capture fourth title with win over Sparks in Game 5

By **JON KRAWCZYNSKI**
Associated Press



MINNEAPOLIS — Sylvia Fowles had 17 points and broke her own WNBA Finals record by grabbing 20 rebounds to lead the Minnesota Lynx to their fourth championship in seven years with an 85-76 victory over the Los Angeles Sparks in Game 5 on Wednesday night.

Maya Moore had 18 points and 10 rebounds and hit a huge runner with 26 seconds to play, Lindsay Whalen had 17 points and eight assists and Seimone Augustus added 14 points, six assists and six boards to help the Lynx move into a tie with the Houston Comets for most titles in league history.

"I think every time you do this, it gets a little more special because it's a little harder," Whalen said. "And more meaningful because you know it's not easy. It's not something we try to take for granted ever."

Candace Parker had 19 points, 15 rebounds and five assists for the Sparks, who were looking to become the first repeat champions in 15

years. Chelsea Gray had 15 points and eight assists, but Nneka Ogumike fouled out with 5:29 to play and finished with 11 points. Los Angeles turned it over 17 times.

With a team that had the makings of a new dynasty bearing down on it, the Lynx responded to reassert their own. They have been in the finals in six of the last seven years and now find themselves in the company of Cynthia Cooper, Sheryl Swoopes and the Comets that dominated the league's early days.

"They wanted to take their place next to the Houston Comets," coach Cheryl Reeve said. "So they did it."

The game the Lynx rule now is bigger, faster and deeper and the proud core of Moore, Rebekkah Brunson, Augustus and Whalen have had to earn everything



Renee Jones Schneider/StarTribune via AP

The Minnesota Lynx celebrate after winning the WNBA finals against the Los Angeles Sparks at Williams Arena, Wednesday in Minneapolis.

they've accomplished. They led by 12 in the third quarter, but Los Angeles pushed right back, trimming the deficit to four at the start of the fourth.

Reeve has always regretted not getting Fowles more involved late in Game 5 a year ago, and they made sure to force-feed their MVP this time around to close the door. After Parker's 3 cut Minnesota's lead to 68-64, Fowles corralled a loose ball and finger-rolled it in just ahead of the shot clock

buzzer for a 70-64 lead.

The Lynx looked to have things in control when Augustus's jumper gave them a 79-67 lead that lasted until Jantel Lavender's layup with 90 seconds to go. But Riquana Williams hit two free throws and Sims had two steals for layups, one of which she converted for a three-point play to pull Los Angeles within 79-76 with 35 seconds to go.

"We're not a team and I'm not a person to make

excuses," Sparks coach Brian Agler said. "We just didn't do what we needed to do to keep her off the glass."

But Moore responded with a tough pull-up in the lane and Fowles, who was also named MVP of the series, hit a couple of foul shots to ice it.

A rivalry this tight just had to come down to a Game 5, and Minnesota forced it with an 80-69 victory Sunday in Los Angeles. The Sparks and Lynx went five games last year before Los Angeles won on a last-second put-back from Ogumike. The previous 12 meetings between these two teams, starting with Game 1 of last year's finals, had a cumulative score of 908-908.

It has been the kind of tense, back-and-forth play between two star-filled rosters that the league has sorely needed. Household names like Moore, Parker, Ogumike and Whalen have gone at each other to the bitter end in two straight series. Magic Johnson has been courtside watching his Sparks while Jimmy Butler and Karl-Anthony Towns

watched the Lynx playoff run before going to China with the Timberwolves.

"It's brought attention to a lot of things," Parker said. "The new playoff format has been good for our league. It's been good for the fans. It seems like the WNBA wanted five games, and they got it."

A capacity crowd packed Williams Arena, turning one of the oldest basketball arenas in the country into a rollicking women's hoops mecca, reminiscent of Whalen's days here as a star for the University of Minnesota Golden Gophers. The old "Barn" is filled with obstructed views — seats behind support posts and under awnings that make seeing the court difficult.

They were all filled on Wednesday night, and even if they had to crane their necks for the right view, they saw a game as long on turnovers as it was tension. The Lynx turned it over 18 times, but were able to overcome that with 22 points off of the Sparks' mistakes.

Brunson had 13 points and eight rebounds.

Soccer

MLS playoffs taking shape in the East. West? Not so much

By **ANNE M. PETERSON**
Associated Press

There's just one more playoff spot left to claim in Major League Soccer's Eastern Conference, while the West remains rather wild.

Toronto reigns above the entire league at 19-5-8 (65 points) this season. The Reds claimed the Supporters' Shield last weekend with a 4-2 victory over the New York Red Bulls.

Toronto has already secured the top seed in the East, along with home-field advantage throughout the playoffs.

"From a traditional standpoint we are proud to win the

trophy, proud to win it for fans who have been through a lot over the years," coach Greg Vanney said. "We also know that we have one big one still in front of us and that is the biggest one."

That biggest one? The MLS Cup. Toronto fell in the league's championship game last season to the Seattle Sounders.

The Reds are about to get a big boost in that quest for the Cup. Sebastian Giovinco, who has missed the team's last four games with a quadriceps injury, is expected to be back for the team's next game on Oct. 15 against Montreal.

The other teams that

have clinched playoff spots in the East are NYCFC, the Chicago Fire and the Columbus Crew. Atlanta became the first expansion club since the Sounders in 2009 to earn a playoff spot.

The Red Bulls are above the line in the standings with three matches remaining, ahead of the seventh-place Montreal Impact, who join three other teams clustered at 39 points and a mathematical chance of making the playoffs.

DC United has been eliminated in the East. In the West, both the Colorado Rapids and LA Galaxy are already out of the postseason, but the rest of the conference

is still up for grabs, with only Vancouver clinching a spot.

The Whitecaps snapped Sporting Kansas City's 24-match unbeaten streak at home with a 1-0 victory on Saturday to clinch the spot.

"We have a team with grit and character that this city can really get behind and be proud of, and we're going to need everyone behind us to make this season something special," Whitecaps President Bob Lenarduzzi said.

The Portland Timbers missed a chance to clinch last week with a 2-1 loss to the Earthquakes in San Jose. Now they're knotted with rival Seattle and Sporting KC for second place as teams

jostle for position down the stretch.

In a scheduling twist, both the Timbers and the Sounders have their final two games at home.

"It's massive. I think if you look at the schedule at the start of the season, seeing two home games toward the end of the season, we'll take that," Portland defender Liam Ridgewell said.

Sporting is in an interesting position because they have four matches left in the season — but three of those games are on the road.

Overall in the West, playoff position is still a long way from being decided. Of the teams still in the race,

the situation looks bleakest for the expansion Minnesota United, who would need help to make it with three games left.

COACHING HOT SEAT: There have already been an MLS-record five head coaches dismissed this season: New England's Jay Heaps, Colorado's Pablo Mastroeni, San Jose's Dominic Kinnear, Salt Lake's Jeff Cassar and the Galaxy's Curt Onalfo.

The list may get longer when the season winds to a close. There are persistent rumors about Montreal's Mauro Biello, but the Impact remain in play for a playoff spot.

SCOREBOARD

Local slate

PREP FOOTBALL
Thursday
Prairie City vs. Arlington (at Condon), 7 p.m.
Friday
Mountain View at Pendleton, 7 p.m.
Hermiston at Ridgeview, 7 p.m.
Ontario at Mac-Hi, 7 p.m.
Riverside at Umatilla, 7 p.m.
Vale at Irrigon, 7 p.m.
Weston-McEwen at Stanfield, 7 p.m.
Powder Valley at Echo, 7 p.m.
PREP VOLLEYBALL
Thursday
Pendleton at La Grande, 6 p.m.
Riverside at Irrigon, 6 p.m.
Culver at Weston-McEwen, 5:30 p.m.
Heppner at Pilot Rock, 5 p.m.
Helix at Cove, 5 p.m.
Nixyaawii at Powder Valley, 5 p.m.
Friday
Nyssa at Stanfield, 1 p.m.
Union at Stanfield, Noon
Powder Valley at Echo, 4 p.m.
Sherman at Condon/Wheeler, 4 p.m.
Saturday
Heppner vs. St. Paul (at Sherman), 10 a.m.
Nixyaawii at Wallowa, 11 a.m.
Irrigon at Stanfield, Noon
Weston-McEwen vs. St. Paul (at Sherman), Noon
Echo at Joseph, 1 p.m.
Helix at Wallowa, 1 p.m.
Ione at Mitchell/Spray, 1 p.m.
Ontario at Mac-Hi, 1:30 p.m.
Helix at Joseph, 3 p.m.
Weston-McEwen vs. Kennedy (at Sherman), 4 p.m.

PREP BOYS SOCCER
Thursday
Mac-Hi at The Dalles, 4 p.m.
Friday
Umatilla at Nyssa, 3 p.m.
Saturday
Ontario at Mac-Hi, 2 p.m.
Riverside at Irrigon, 3 p.m.
PREP GIRLS SOCCER
Thursday
Irrigon at Mac-Hi, 4:30 p.m.
La Grande at Pendleton, 6 p.m.
Friday
Umatilla at Nyssa, 5 p.m.
Saturday
Ontario at Mac-Hi, Noon
Riverside at Irrigon, 1 p.m.
PREP CROSS COUNTRY
Thursday
Heppner, Helix, Weston-McEwen, Stanfield at Mustang Invitational (Heppner), 4 p.m.
Saturday
Hermiston, Pendleton, Stanfield at Richland (WA) Invite, TBD
Mac-Hi, Umatilla at La Grande Invite, TBD
COLLEGE VOLLEYBALL
Friday
Spokane at Blue Mountain, 6 p.m.
Oregon Tech at Eastern Oregon, 7 p.m.
Saturday
Southern Oregon at Eastern Oregon, 1 p.m.
COLLEGE WOMEN'S SOCCER
Friday
Blue Mountain at North Idaho, 2 p.m.
Eastern Oregon at Southern Oregon, 4:30 p.m.
Saturday
Blue Mountain at Spokane, Noon

Eastern Oregon at Oregon Tech, Noon
COLLEGE MEN'S SOCCER
Friday
Blue Mountain at North Idaho, 4:15 p.m.
Eastern Oregon at Southern Oregon, 7 p.m.
Saturday
Eastern Oregon at Oregon Tech, 2 p.m.
Blue Mountain at Spokane, 2:15 p.m.
COLLEGE FOOTBALL
Saturday
MSU-Northern at Eastern Oregon, 6 p.m.
Baseball
MLB
Postseason Schedule
WILD CARD
AL: New York 8, Minnesota 4
NL: Arizona 11, Colorado 8
DIVISION SERIES
(Best-of-5; x=if necessary)
American League
Boston vs. Houston
Thursday, Oct. 5: Boston at Houston, 1:08 p.m. (FS1 or MLB)
Friday, Oct. 6: Boston at Houston, 11:05 a.m. (FS1 or MLB)
Sunday, Oct. 8: Houston at Boston, TBD (FS1 or MLB)
x-Monday, Oct. 9: Houston at Boston, TBD (FS1 or MLB)
x-Wednesday, Oct. 11: Boston at Houston, TBD (FS1 or MLB)
New York vs. Cleveland
Thursday, Oct. 5: New York at Cleveland, 4:38 p.m. (FS1 or MLB)
Friday, Oct. 6: New York at Cleveland, 2:08 p.m. (FS1 or MLB)
Sunday, Oct. 8: Cleveland at New York, TBD (FS1 or MLB)
x-Monday, Oct. 9: Cleveland at New York, TBD (FS1 or MLB)
x-Wednesday, Oct. 11: New York at Cleveland, TBD (FS1 or MLB)

National League
Chicago vs. Washington
Friday, Oct. 6: Chicago at Washington, 4:31 p.m. (TBS)
Saturday, Oct. 7: Chicago at Washington, 2:38 p.m. (TBS)
Monday, Oct. 9: Washington at Chicago, TBD (TBS)
x-Tuesday, Oct. 10: Washington at Chicago, TBD (TBS)
x-Thursday, Oct. 12: Chicago at Washington, TBD (TBS)
Arizona vs. Los Angeles
Friday, Oct. 6: Arizona at Los Angeles, 7:31 p.m. (TBS)
Saturday, Oct. 7: Arizona at Los Angeles, 6:08 p.m. (TBS)
Monday, Oct. 9: Los Angeles at Arizona, TBD (TBS)
x-Tuesday, Oct. 10: Los Angeles at Arizona, TBD (TBS)
x-Thursday, Oct. 12: Arizona at Los Angeles, TBD (TBS)
Football
NFL
Thursday's Games
New England at Tampa Bay, 5:25 p.m.
Sunday's Games
Arizona at Philadelphia, 10 a.m.
Carolina at Detroit, 10 a.m.
San Francisco at Indianapolis, 10 a.m.
Jacksonville at Pittsburgh, 10 a.m.
Buffalo at Cincinnati, 10 a.m.
N.Y. Jets at Cleveland, 10 a.m.
Tennessee at Miami, 10 a.m.

L.A. Chargers at N.Y. Giants, 10 a.m.
Baltimore at Oakland, 1:05 p.m.
Seattle at L.A. Rams, 1:05 p.m.
Green Bay at Dallas, 1:25 p.m.
Kansas City at Houston, 5:30 p.m.
Monday's Games
Minnesota at Chicago, 5:30 p.m.
NCAA
Top 25 Schedule
Thursday
No. 17 Louisville at No. 24 NC State, 5 p.m. (ESPN)
Saturday
No. 1 Alabama at Texas A&M, 4:15 p.m. (ESPN)
No. 2 Clemson vs. Wake Forest, 9 a.m. (ESPN2)
No. 3 Oklahoma vs. Iowa State, 9 a.m. (FOX)
No. 4 Penn State at Northwestern, 9 a.m. (ABC)
No. 5 Georgia at Vanderbilt, 9 a.m. (ESPN)
No. 6 Washington vs. California, 7:45 p.m. (ESPN)
No. 7 Michigan vs. Michigan State, 4:30 p.m. (ABC)
No. 8 TCU vs. No. 23 West Virginia, 12:30 p.m. (FS1)
No. 9 Wisconsin at Nebraska, 5 p.m. (FOX)
No. 10 Ohio State vs. Maryland, 1 p.m. (FOX)
No. 11 Washington State at Oregon, 5 p.m. (FOX)
No. 12 Auburn vs. Mississippi, 9 a.m.
No. 13 Miami at Florida State, 12:30 p.m. (ESPN)
No. 14 USC vs. Oregon State, 1 p.m. (PAC12)
No. 16 Virginia Tech at Boston College, 4:15 p.m. (ESPN2)
No. 19 San Diego State at UNLV, 7:45 p.m. (ESPN2)
No. 20 Utah vs. Stanford, 7:15 p.m. (FS1)

No. 21 Florida vs. LSU, 12:30 p.m. (CBS)
No. 21 Notre Dame at North Carolina, 12:30 p.m. (ABC)
No. 25 UCF at Cincinnati, 5 p.m. (ESPNU)
Basketball
NBA
Preseason Schedule
Wednesday's Games
L.A. Clippers 98, Toronto 84
Atlanta 109, Cleveland 93
Charlotte 108, Detroit 106
Memphis 110, Philadelphia 89
Indiana 104, Milwaukee 86
Dallas 118, Chicago 71
Utah 117, Haifa Maccabi 78
Denver 122, L.A. Lakers 104
Minnesota vs. Golden State, late a.m. (FOX)
Dallas at Orlando, 4 p.m.
Miami at Brooklyn, 4:30 p.m.
Shanghai Sharks at Houston, 5 p.m.
Toronto at Portland, 7 p.m.
NHL
Wednesday's Games
Toronto 7, Winnipeg 2
St. Louis 5, Pittsburgh 4, OT
Edmonton 3, Calgary 0
Philadelphia 5, San Jose 3
Thursday's Games
Nashville at Boston, 4 p.m.
Montreal at Buffalo, 4 p.m.
Colorado at N.Y. Rangers, 4 p.m.
Washington at Ottawa, 4:30 p.m.
Minnesota at Detroit, 4:30 p.m.
Pittsburgh at Chicago, 5:30 p.m.
Arizona at Anaheim, 7 p.m.
Philadelphia at Los Angeles, 7 p.m.

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