

# CALIFORNIA DREAMS

## History of

The California Dreams were a team in the Women's Basketball League (**WBL**) in the 1979-80 season.

One week after the conclusion of year one in the WBL, on May 8, 1979, a press conference was held to announce the California entry into the WBL. As a foreshadowing of how the Los Angeles area felt about women's sports, this announcement was found in a Chapel Hill, NC newspaper. No Los Angeles recognition could be found.

Four days before the 2<sup>nd</sup> WBL Draft the name of the California team was revealed as the Dreams. The Los Angeles papers wrote they felt the name was appropriate, because surviving the season would take a big Dream

The team's ownership consisted of three Chicago attorneys – Larry Kozlicki, Terry Isselhard, and Jerry Schenk – also an investment specialist, a dentist and a CPA. Another part owner was Bob Joseph, a sports attorney from the Chicago area who represented a few of the Chicago Bears. Bob worked with the Hustle handling player appearances and endorsements. Mr. Joseph's plans were to move his family to California and become the full time general manager.

As of the draft the team had not named a coach, but they had 5 male candidates lined up, including a former Los Angeles Laker. Their plan was to play in both Long Beach and Anaheim. Therefore they set up their offices in Anaheim.

The Dreams believed the Anaheim Convention Center would hold six dates for them. Unfortunately, the Convention Center manager said that was not true. There were no dates being held and in fact there was only one date available in either January or February.

With ticket prices in the \$5 to \$6 range, management hoped to draw 3,000 to 3,200 a game. Yet they realized it would take a good marketing plan to get there. The expenses didn't faze the front office, because they believed their numerous owners made them the strongest team financially in the league. The owners had already approved a budget for the next three years.

The Dreams were the second team to pay the \$100,000 franchise price. A Dayton Daily News article of May 4 confirmed the Dayton franchise rights had been sold to a Washington group and the players contracts were sold to the California franchise.

The Dreams purchase included an All-Star Vonnie Tomich and starters Patti Bucklew and Angela Scott. Another starter and former All-Star, Denise Craig, was traded to the New York Stars for a California local named Mara Melbourne and Maria Gross. The Dreams were also negotiating with the Houston Angels for the rights to Ann Meyers, who had made a name for herself at UCLA.

The Dreams were placed in the Western Division along with Houston Angels (1978-79 WBL Champions), and 3 other expansion teams the Dallas Diamonds, the San Francisco Pioneers, and the New Orleans Pride.

Just before the draft the Dreams solidified their serious commitment to women's basketball by hiring Cathy Rush for a managerial position. In the annals of Women's Basketball Cathy Rush was a legend as the coach of the Immaculata Mighty Macs. Her teams won three consecutive AIAW (the women's equivalent of the NCAA, because the NCAA would not recognize women's sports) basketball titles.

On June 12<sup>th</sup> the 2<sup>nd</sup> Women's Professional Basketball Draft was held in the Oval Room of the Roosevelt Hotel in New York City. The *only* recognition in the Los Angeles was a small clipping –

### **DREAMS DRAFT CINDY BROGDON**

The California Dreams of Los Angeles selected 6-1 Cindy Brogdon of Tennessee as the No. 2 pick in the Women's Professional Basketball draft Tuesday.

What the Los Angeles newspapers failed to report were the other Dream picks:

1 <sup>st</sup>	Cindy Brogdon	5'10"	Univ. of Tennessee	(#2)
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Stacey Rhoades	5'10"	Cheyney State	(#17)
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Jane Ellen Cook	5'9"	Louisiana Tech	(#32)
4 <sup>th</sup>	Pam Shirley	5'7"	Utah State	(#47)
5 <sup>th</sup>	Traded to New Jersey for ???			
6 <sup>th</sup>	Carol Turney	5'8"	Univ. of Victoria	(#75)
7 <sup>th</sup>	Carol Moreland	6'4"	New Mexico State	(#88)
8 <sup>th</sup>	Robbie Beyer	6'0"	Cal State Pomona	(#102)
9 <sup>th</sup>	Tami Butler	5'7"	Univ. Mississippi for Women	(#116)
10 <sup>th</sup>	Nancy Hardy	5'8"	Carson-Newman	(#129)
Supplement - Julie Tialavea		5'9"	Cal. State – Long Beach	(#130)

After the draft, in early July, the Dreams received notification from a former Dayton player, Sheila Patterson, that she wanted to be released from her contract. In Dayton's first game of the season Sheila had 15 points and 18 rebounds, but then injured her knee. She was unable to play the rest of the season. Patterson's attorney, Tom Stoner of Pittsburgh, sent letters to the WBL office, and to Dreams General Manager Bob Joseph about Sheila's desire. Mr. Stoner believed the contract should be voided because of irregular payments and lack of medical care by the staff physician. Several teams had expressed an interest in her, but her asking price was \$50,000.

In early August the WBL put together the league's schedule. The Dreams 36 game schedule showed 15 games at the Long Beach Arena and three in the Anaheim Convention Center. The home opener would be November 20 against the expansion San Francisco Pioneers in Long Beach. The Dreams would also play three exhibition games against their interstate rival, the San Francisco Pioneers.

A newspaper ad was placed stating that the Dreams would hold a Free Agent tryout camp at 10 am on August 11-12 at Los Caballeros Racquet and Sports Club. Yet all evidence, or lack of it, would lead us to believe this camp never took place. In all of California, not one newspaper mentioned a tryout camp.

So, while the team was trying to players on the floor, General Manager Bob Joseph was beginning to put together his front office teams. It consisted of:

Bob Joseph, General Manager  
Ed Munson, Asst. GM & Director of Public Relations  
Cathy Rush, Director of Special Projects  
Liz Fisher, Administrative Assistant  
Patsy Fort, Trainer and  
Dr. Kerry Wyche, Team Physician

On August 9, 1979 Mary Scharff, a 5'9" guard from Immaculata College was signed as a free agent. A week later Joan Uhl, 5'10" Center-Forward from Fullerton (Ca.) was coming home. Ms. Uhl was obtained from the Iowa Cornets for a 1980 4<sup>th</sup> Rd Draft pick and the rights to June Brewer. June was a 6'2" center from Ohio State who had been the #1 Draft pick of the Washington Wiz, who became the Dayton Rockettes.

The search for players finally culminated in a tryout camp held the weekend of August 25. Some of the owners at the tryouts were Larry Kozlicki and Jerry Schenk. Kozlicki was a former player at Northwestern and was now the team's president.

A big August 28<sup>th</sup> article in the Los Angeles Times gave some insight to some players trying out. In a nutshell:

Lauren Foster, drove from Chicago to tryout.  
Karen Kolakowski, 25, from Belmont Shore – the Times had her picture in the paper  
Brenda Sapp, 27, always wanted to play pro ball  
Lynne Stith, 23, from Garden Grove  
Gail Fitzgerald, 6'3" center of Long Beach & Montclair State  
Cindy Jewell, played at University of Pacific.  
Joan Uhl, from Buena Park  
Joyann Willis, 29, from American River JC, was the oldest player trying out  
Monica Dodd, 17, from Washington High School in Los Angeles was the youngest and at 4'11" was also the shortest.  
Ruth Smith, a 6'4" center was also a former Washington HS grad and a current Cal State Los Angeles player who was therefore ineligible.  
Mara Melbourne, formerly with the New York Stars, was excused from the try-out – so she could get married.

The Dreams #5 Draft pick Carol Moreland attended tryout camp, but didn't participate, because she had one year of eligibility remaining.

One thing the article highlighted was how badly these players wanted to be accepted:

None of the women mentioned money as their motive. The WBL pay scale doesn't approach the NBA. More like the WPA.

But nobody could tell that by watching them compete for positions on the 11-woman roster that will open the season November 16th in Chicago.

They ran hard, they perspired, they elbowed for rebounds, they dived and clawed and wrestled for loose balls, they got burn marks on their knees and elbows and when they got tired, they stood with their hands on their hips, just like the men do.

After tryout camp had concluded Dreams' Head Coach Mel Sims, whose being named as Coach was never released, released the 18 names who would be attending the October 1<sup>st</sup> training camp.

#### First Year WBL players (8)

Patti Bucklew – Dayton center	Connie Franklin – Dayton forward
Joy Holman – Dayton guard	Michelle McKenzie - Dayton
Angela Scott – Dayton forward	Vonnie Tomich – WBL All-Star guard with Dayton
Mara Melbourne - New York Star forward	Joah Uhl - Iowa Cornet forward.

#### Draft Picks (3)

Jane Ellen Cook (#2)	Pam Shirley (#4)	Julie Tialavea (#10)
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#### Free Agents (7)

Debbie DeJarnette	Gale Fitzgerald
Karen Lucas Kolakowski	Mary Ann McLaughlin
Mary Scharff – Immaculata College	Lynne Stith
Karen Rudolph - Laguana Hills & Univ. of Missouri	

On September 7, the Dreams signed Nancy Dunkle, a three-time All-American at Cal State Fullerton, who played on the 1975 Pan American team and was also a premier member of the 1976 Olympic team. Nancy and Head Coach Mel Sims were both associated with Cal State Fullerton. On August 1 of 1979, Nancy had signed a contract with the New Orleans Pride, but she really wanted to be in California. So she asked for a trade. The Pride received a 1981 2<sup>nd</sup> Rd Draft pick for her.

Around the same time of the Dunkle signing the Dreams and the Pride pulled off another trade. This time it was the Dreams' first round choice Cindy Brogdon, a 5'10" shooting guard from the Univ. of Tennessee who wanted to play closer to home. Cindy was traded to New Orleans for a 1980 1<sup>st</sup> Round Draft pick. This transaction would only be completed if Brogdon signed a contract.

With training camp beginning on October 1<sup>st</sup>, the California papers were quite silent with information. Other than some Ann Meyers news about her Indiana Pacers tryout, there was no obvious California Dreams or WBL information between September 8<sup>th</sup> and October 28<sup>th</sup>. A 50-day blackout for a new venture that needed recognition.

The 50 days of silence was broken with an advertisement about the Lakers & Dreams teaming up for a basketball doubleheader at the Fabulous Forum. Each team would be facing their northern rivals as the Lakers played the Golden State Warriors and the Dream faced the Pioneers.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> of October the Dreams lost to the San Francisco Pioneers, 90-82 at the Forum. Jane Ellen Cook scored 16 points and Stacey Rhoades had 14 points, with 9 rebounds and 5 steals.

A week later the Dreams met the Pioneers at Cal State Fullerton in front of 400 fans. Fullerton was familiar territory for Coach Mel Sims and Nancy Dunkle, as they destroyed the Pioneers 108-81. California shot 59% from the field.

As the team got ready for the regular season on November 16, they made a trade with the St. Louis Streak. The Dreams traded All-Star guard Vonnie Tomich for a 1980 7<sup>th</sup> Rd draft pick and a 1981 2<sup>nd</sup> Rd draft pick.

In order to save on travel expenses both the Dreams and the Pioneers had their schedules packed with both long home stands and long road trips. For the Dreams seven of their first eight games were on the road.

On November 16<sup>th</sup> California flew to Chicago to face the Hustle, a 1979 WBL playoff team. The Hustle were hoping for a sellout at Alumni Hall to open the season, so the first reported attendance was 4,919. This was later revised to 3,708. The Dreams took the Hustle to overtime, but eventually lost 118-113. California was led by Stacy Rhoades 28 pts and Nancy Dunkle's 26. This game must have been taped by WGN of Chicago, because for several days there were several different California stations that made this game part of the TV programs.

Two days later, on Sunday the 18<sup>th</sup>, California went to the Five Seasons Center in Cedar Rapids, Iowa to play another 1979 playoff team, the Iowa Cornets. As opposed to their previous close game the Cornets laid a pasting of 124-86 on the Dreams. Stacey Rhoades led the team with 14 points, 8 rebounds, and a technical.

After a rough start against two of the stronger WBL teams, the Dreams came back to play a familiar opponent on the 20<sup>th</sup>. The Pioneers came to the Long Beach Arena for the first regular season meeting, but the fourth game between these two teams.

With no evidence of publicity, the Dreams' home opener drew 928 fans to the Long Beach Arena, as the Dreams fell to the Pioneers, 98-91. The 928 fans would be the highest attendance for the Dreams in 1979-80. Nancy Dunkle scored 23 pts and Stacey Rhoades added 19 pts, while Anita Ortega poured in 41 for the Pioneers. Of California's first eight games, this would be the only home game.

A five-game road trip began on November 24<sup>th</sup> against the Houston Angels. This game was not only against another playoff team, but the WBL Champions. The Dreams brought their 0-3 record to Houston to meet the 1-0 Angels at Hofheinz Pavilion. A good crowd for Houston of 2,103 saw the Angels beat the Dreams, 108-84. Stacey Rhoades had 17 pts and 16 rebounds.

For the 4<sup>th</sup> time in five games the Dreams were playing a home opener. The expansion Diamonds did heavy promotions and drew 2,477 to the Dallas Convention Center. The Dallas crowd included Cowboys linebacker Thomas "Hollywood" Henderson and tennis great Martina Navratilova. They left the game together with 3:40 remaining in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter. To the delight of the 2,477 the Dreams lost, 116-100. The Dreams record dropped to 0-5. Stacey Rhoades led the team with 25 points, while Nancy Dunkle had 23 points & 13 rebounds before fouling out.

Two days later, on Thursday November 29<sup>th</sup>, the Dreams were part of another home opener as they travelled to St. Louis and Kiel Auditorium. In a match-up of equally poor teams the 0-5 Dreams and the 0-3 Streak fought for their first victory. When the buzzer sounded California had more points than the Streak, but was 90-87 really the final score?

According to the St. Louis Dispatch the actual final score was unknown, because the Official Scorer and the Official Timer did not know what they were doing when the game started. They were not familiar with the basketball rules or how points are designated in the scorebook.

In many cases baskets were recorded late, or maybe not at all. It would be hard to imagine the 975 attending the game not yelling for an accurate update on the scoreboard, but over time maybe they too lost track of the real score.

Officially the final score was listed as 90-87. The Streak fell to 0-4 as they played without their future superstar Liz Silcott. When Liz rectified her problems with the team and began playing she would lead the Streak to a 14-5 record.

Game four of this road trip brought the Dreams to New York City and Madison Square Garden. The now confident Dreams played the powerful Stars even through 48 minutes to a 106-106 tie. The 600 people in the 19,500 main arena saw the Stars take control and outscore the Dreams 13-2 for a 119-108 victory. The Stars were the last playoff team the Dreams had to face in their first seven games. Even though they were now 1-6, they had taken two playoff teams to overtimes. With the right breaks they could have been 3-4.

The final game of the five-game road trip ended in Milwaukee. This was another game between comparable teams as the 1-6 Dreams and the 0-4 Does faced off. The Dreams worked hard, but continued their losing ways with a 97-91 defeat. Nancy Dunkle had 24 points and 19 rebounds, while Stacey Rhoades scored 19 points with 11 rebounds. So, with 7 of their first 8 games on the road, a 1-7 record was not unexpected.

On December 14<sup>th</sup> the expansion Philadelphia Fox, who were experiencing great financial difficulties and were in the midst of a six game road trip came to California and Long Beach Arena. The Dreams had their 3<sup>rd</sup> largest crowd of the year, 331, attend this game. The Dreams doubled their win total with an 84-70 drubbing of the Fox. Mary Scharff had her 5<sup>th</sup> game in a row with double digit points as she led the team with 18 points. The 70 points by the Fox was their worst scoring output of the year. The Dreams raised their record to 2-7 and the Fox lost their 5<sup>th</sup> in a row to drop to 2-6.

The next day the Dreams travelled to the other side of Los Angeles as they played their 1<sup>st</sup> of 3 games at the Anaheim Convention Center. Their opponent was another expansion team, the 4-5 New Orleans Pride. The new location did not help attendance as only 238 people came to watch the Dreams lose to the Pride 96-85. The Dreams had four players with double figures, but none higher than 15. The Dreams were now 2-8 and averaging 29 turnovers a game.

On Wednesday December 19<sup>th</sup>, Dreams' Head Coach Mel Sims resigned. He cited personal reasons and how full-time travel was making things impossible. He was replaced by Artie Blouin, who had experience coaching in both South Africa and New York.

With the shake-up in the coaching staff the Dreams now had to face the future WBL Champion New York Stars who were riding a 5 game winning streak. A small crowd of 117 came out to watch the Stars whip the Dreams, 110-91. The Dreams had four players with double figures and Stacey Rhoades led the way with 16.

While the Dreams were licking their wounds on December 20<sup>th</sup> two of their fellow expansion teams, the Philadelphia Fox and the Washington Metros, were shut down by the league office. Each team never had a solid owner and the league had been running the organizations looking for owners.

With the cancellation of these two teams, several activities took place. The first was a dispersal draft of the players. The draft order was based on team records as of December 20<sup>th</sup>. Even though California was the worst team, 2-9 .182, the first pick was awarded to the Milwaukee Does, 3-10 .231. California had the 2<sup>nd</sup> pick and they chose Linda Matthews, a 5'8" guard off of the Philadelphia Fox. Ms. Matthews was the Fox leading scorer at 17.6 ppg.

The other league wide adjustment was a re-vamping of the schedule. In many cases to accommodate travel expenses teams near each other would now play more often, as opposed to a balanced schedule.

After a week off for Christmas, the Dreams returned and travelled to San Francisco. Even with a new coaching philosophy the results stayed the same as the Dreams lost 99-93, in front of 1,118 at the Civic Auditorium. The Dreams were led by Mary Sharff's 19 points and 9 assists. Stacey Rhoades contributed 16 points and 15 rebounds. California's record dropped to 2-10, which placed them behind the 3-10 Dallas Diamonds in the Western Division.

The game on the 27<sup>th</sup> against the Pioneers was the only game for the Dreams between December 21<sup>st</sup> and January 7<sup>th</sup>.

On January 8, 1980 the Chicago Hustle made their only trip to California. The two teams met at the Long Beach Arena where only 212 came out for this game. The 2-10 Dreams defeated the 9-8 Hustle, 89-84. Nancy Dunkle led the way with 25 points. Stacey Rhoades was held to just 6 points, but she had 13 rebounds to help the cause. The victory gave Coach Artie Blouin his first WBL win.

With the folding of the Philadelphia Fox and Washington Metros there were many schedule adjustments. The New York Stars and the New Jersey Gems played each other seven times during this season. Teams like Houston, Dallas, and New Orleans found themselves playing each other quite often. For the California Dreams and the San Francisco Pioneers this meant another match-up.

After the Hustle, the next day (1/9/80) the Dreams went up to San Francisco and lost 88-72 to drop their record to 3-11. Jane Ellen Cook scored 21, while Nancy Dunkle added 13 points. On January 10<sup>th</sup>, a decent sized ad appeared in the Los Angeles Times announcing that Southern California star Ann Meyers (who attended UCLA) would be coming to the area in a week. It was stated:

A Gem Among Gems  
Returns to the Southland  
With New Jersey.

The game would be at the Long Beach Arena on the 15<sup>th</sup>.

Another ad appeared three days later about the next Dreams game. But this advertisement was about two pro games for only \$10. The same ticket got a person into the Forum for a Lakers/Knicks game, and later the same ticket got you into the Dreams/Gems game.

Another ad appeared for the Ann Meyers led Gems against the Dreams. This ad highlighted an Entertainment Celebrities Basketball Shootout with California Angels star Rod Carew, Olympian high jumper Dwight Stones, and UCLA star Lynn Shackelford, along with 7 other names.

Despite the effort to attract a crowd the newspapers could only place a small clipping in the papers telling people about Ann Meyers appearance at 7:30 at the Long Beach Arena. At that point of the season Ann Meyers was 5<sup>th</sup> in the WBL in scoring average with 24.0 ppg.

With former UCLA star Ann Meyers in the house the Dreams had their 2<sup>nd</sup> largest crowd of the year. 601 came out to watch the 3-11 Dreams beat the 9-10 Gems, 99-94. The newest Dream, Linda Matthews, led the way with 16, while Mary Scharff and Jane Ellen Cook evenly split 30 points. For Ann Meyers contributed with nine steals and 16 points on 6 of 21 shooting.

Two days later, on Thursday the 17<sup>th</sup>, the St. Louis Streak invaded the Long Beach Arena and the crowd fell back to 123. The league's leading scorer, Liz Silcott scored 37 points to add to her 33.4 ppg average. In what appeared to be a back and forth game the Dreams were down by 4 in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter, up by 3 at half time, down by 2 after 3 quarters, and were tied eight times in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, but eventually lost 100-97. Six California players scored in double figures, topped by Nancy Dunkle's 21 pts.

The 4-12 Dreams hosted the 5-13 Dallas Diamonds at the Long Beach Arena on Wednesday the 23<sup>rd</sup>. This time the Dreams drew their 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest attended game, 100. At least the Dreams trounced the Diamonds for a 105-84 victory. Six players hit double figures with Stacey Rhoades scoring 20 and pulling down 10 rebounds. Mary Scharff was next with 18.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> the Dreams put together their first 2-game winning streak with their 103-101 victory over the Pioneers at the Long Beach Arena. This would be the 7<sup>th</sup> game between these two teams (including pre-season.) A crowd of 229 joined the two teams.

For the Dreams Linda Matthews had 24 points, 8 assists, and 5 steals, while Stacey Rhoades had 18 points and 12 rebounds. The Pioneers, Musiette McKinney, added 40 points, which was a league rarity, as only 14 different players would do this in league history. The Dreams raised their record to 6-12, with Coach Artie Blouin evening his lifetime record to 4-4.

With the change of the WBL schedule this was the last of a California home stay. Between December 4<sup>th</sup> (after returning from Milwaukee) and January 26<sup>th</sup> the Dreams never left California. Their two away games were in San Francisco. After their next game in New Orleans on January 27<sup>th</sup>, the Dreams would play their next 5 games back in California. So that between December 4 and February 16<sup>th</sup> the only time the Dreams were out of California was to New Orleans.

The 6-12 Dreams took their two-game winning streak to Louisiana for a game that was originally scheduled for Ruston, La., but ended up back in New Orleans at Tulane University. In an evenly matched game, the Dreams didn't lose until the last shot of the game. Nancy Dunkle had 20 points and Stacey Rhoades had 17 points with 10 rebounds. The 100-98 loss made them 6-13 for the year.

Before the next scheduled Dreams game on February 4<sup>th</sup> there was the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual WBL All-Star game held in Chicago. The Dreams reps were Nancy Dunkle and Jane Ellen Cook. The Los



Angeles papers made no mention about this game taking place. 2,473 went to Alumni Hall to watch the West Squad defeat the East, 115-112. Cook scored 8 points and Dunkle added 2.

The next five game home stand began with the 6-13 Dreams hosting the struggling 10-9 Houston Angels at Long Beach Arena. The Angels had lost 7 of their last 10 games. The WBL's worst recorded crowd in league history, 90, watched the Dreams lose, 105-99. Nancy Dunkle led the way with 20 points and four others had double figures.

With a record of 4-6, after taking over for Mel Sims, Coach Artie Blouin was fired. He was replaced by center Nancy Dunkle. Nancy would be the first official player/coach who wasn't an emergency fill-in.

On Thursday February 7<sup>th</sup> the Dreams and Pioneers met for their 5<sup>th</sup> regular season game as the Pioneers came down to Long Beach Arena. A crowd of 200 helped the Dreams gain their 7<sup>th</sup> victory of the season with a 93-82 victory, behind 20 points from Joan Uhl. Player/coach Dunkle also contributed 17 points and 12 rebounds while directing the team. The Pioneers who began the season with a powerful 10-3 record now walked away from Long Beach with a 14-12 record.

The newspapers noted that officially Nancy Dunkle and Mary Scharff would be classified as co-coaches for the Dreams.

Two days later the 7-14 Dreams hosted the 16-7 Iowa Cornets at Long Beach Arena. A typical crowd of 210 watched the two teams battle into overtime at 105 apiece. The hometown Dreams prevailed with a 115-112 victory, for their 2<sup>nd</sup> two-game winning streak. Linda Matthews had 37 points, Stacey Rhoades had 24, and Mary Scharff added 21 points.

On February 11<sup>th</sup> another horrible crowd of 123 came out to the Long Beach Arena and saw the 8-14 Dreams fall to the 15-10 New Orleans Pride, 113-100. The Dreams fell behind quickly 37-18 in the first quarter and never recovered. Player/Coach Nancy Dunkle had 21 points, while Linda Matthews added 19.

To date the Dreams had played 13 home games and attracted a total of 3,502 fans. 3,000 was the number the owners were hoping to average each game. If you took out the 928 in the home opener, you had 2,574 which created an average of 215 fans per game.

An average crowd of 211 came out to Long Beach Arena and watched the 8-15 Dreams beat the 7-21 Dallas Diamonds, 100-94. Linda Matthews led the team with 23 points and Patti Bucklew added 20. This was the last of the home stand where 9 of 10 games were at home from January 15 to February 13<sup>th</sup>. The team went 6-4 during this stretch.

The team travelled on Sunday February 17<sup>th</sup> to New Jersey to begin a four game road trip. 2,010 came out to the Jadwin Gym and saw the Gems raise their record to 14-13 with a 95-79 victory over the Dreams who fell to 9-16. Stacey Rhoades led the way with 28 points and 18 rebounds. The co-coaches Dunkle and Sharff split 8 points between them.

Two days later the Dreams ventured to Minnesota to play the Fillies. The Dreams scored only 74 as they lost by 40, 114-74. The 31 Dreams turnovers didn't help the cause. Stacey Rhoades 21 points and 10 rebounds made her one of only three California players with double figures.

On February 21<sup>st</sup> the Dreams next stop was St. Louis to take on the Liz Silcott-less St. Louis Streak. The Dreams 102-92 victory in front of 1,465 Kiel Auditorium fans was the 2<sup>nd</sup> loss in a row for the Streak. Without Liz Silcott, who had been suspended and later traded, the Streak would end the season with an 11-game losing streak.

The Dreams raised their record to 10-17, with six players who scored in double figures. Jane Ellen Cook had 18, and Michelle McKenzie and Stacey Rhoades had 17 points each.

With the distorted new schedule California made another trip, on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, to San Francisco to face the Pioneers. This would be regular season game six, and game nine when you add in the three pre-season games. The Dreams came through with an 88-80 victory to raise their record to 11-17. Stacey Rhoades took control with 29 points and four others had double figures.

A Los Angeles Times article claimed that General Manager Bob Joseph was cancelling the upcoming home game on Wednesday the 27<sup>th</sup> against the Philadelphia Fillies (actually the Minnesota Fillies). Co-owner Larry Kozlicki, who was a lawyer based in Chicago, was not informed of this decision, so he terminated Bob Joseph immediately.

The players on the Dreams were also not informed about the cancelling of any future games, because they were looking forward to taking on the Fillies again to avenge their 40-point loss. It was the intent of Larry Kozlicki to finish out the team's schedule for the year.

A Los Angeles Times article gave some more insight as Bob Joseph explained:

"The basis of the whole thing is money," Joseph said. "The girls have been threatening a boycott for the last three weeks. The franchise owes \$100,000 in debts, of which \$15,000 is salaries. Nobody, including me, has been paid in six weeks."

With the change in the WBL schedule, the next game for the Dreams was to be against the 8-20 Milwaukee Does on Friday February 29<sup>th</sup>. It was to be played at Cal State – Fullerton, the former playing site of Coach Nancy Dunkle. But this game was also cancelled, because the players refused to play unless they were paid. Their last paycheck was January 15<sup>th</sup>. This was the 2<sup>nd</sup> Dream game to be cancelled.

The Dreams future schedule had them playing two more home games at the Anaheim Convention Center on Sunday March 1<sup>st</sup> against the New Orleans Pride and Tuesday March 3<sup>rd</sup> was against the Houston Angels.

On March 2<sup>nd</sup>, only 5 days after the original game cancellation, the Board of Governors of the WBL revoked the Chicago-based ownership of the California Dreams. Their plan was to find new owners to keep the team and finish out the season. The Tuesday (3/4/80) game against Houston was still up in the air at this point. The players met with President Byrne and reported their grievances.

The conclusion about the next game against Houston resulted in another cancellation. At the same time the Houston Angels who were under new ownership purchased the contract of Linda Matthews from the California Dreams. Linda had a rough year as she was a part of the now defunct Philadelphia Fox, and the now defunct California Dreams.

The California Dream officially ended their 1979-80 existence with an 11-17 record. There was no dispersal draft of the California players. Coach Nancy Dunkle ended her time with the Dreams with a 5-3 record.

After the Matthews transfer to Houston, the following players were signed as free agents:

Nancy Dunkle with San Francisco. She played 4 games, averaged 29 mins, 14.5 ppg on 62.5% shooting. She played a significant role in the success of the Pioneers' playoff run.

Patti Bucklew went to New York. She played in 2 regular season games and all 6 playoff games averaging less than 4 ppg.

Stacey Rhoades went to New York. She played 3 regular season games averaging 10 ppg and played in all 6 playoff games averaging 6.2 ppg.

The Los Angeles Times had no information about the team folding or player activity. Their coverage of the team was a strong contributing factor to the incredibly poor attendance figures.

The Dreams ended up playing 14 home and 14 road games. They attracted 3,713 home fans to average 265. On the road they were seen by 24,377 for an average of 1,741.

## **So Concludes the Story of the CALIFORNIA DREAMS**

**Or Is it? The Washington Wiz, who became the Dayton Rockettes, who became the California Dreams – would become the Nebraska Wranglers, with Larry Kozlicki as its owner.**