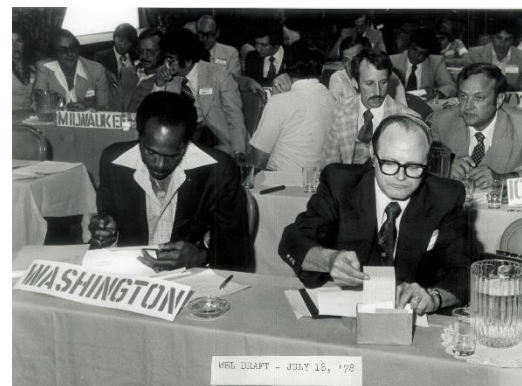


DAYTON ROCKETTES

History of

The Dayton Rockettes were a franchise in the Women's Basketball League (WBL) in the inaugural season, 1978-1979. They originally were the unnamed Washington franchise whose owner was Lloyd Featheroff. On July 18, 1978, in New York City's Essex House the Washington franchise drafted 8th of the 8 teams present. It looks like Larry Jones (left) of the league office did the selecting. Like the other teams they selected 5 graduating seniors and 5 free agents. (see Washington's Draft list)



Graduating Seniors

- | | | | |
|-------------------|------|---------|---------------|
| 1. June Brewer | 6'2" | Center | Ohio State |
| 2. Tina Price | 5'9" | Guard | Georgia |
| 3. Donna Forester | 5'9" | Forward | Clemson |
| 4. Vivian Greene | 5'5" | Guard | Norfolk State |
| 5. Felicia Payne | 5'8" | Guard | Dubuque |

Free Agents

- | | | | |
|---------------------|-------|---------|----------------------|
| 1. Sheila Patterson | 6'4" | Center | Federal City College |
| 2. Denise Craig | 6'0" | Forward | Shaw Univ. |
| 3. Linda Stoick | 5'9" | Guard | Michigan State |
| 4. Angela Scott | 6'0" | Forward | Maryland |
| 5. Sue Rama | 5'11" | Guard | Longwood (Va) |

Yet Washington's franchise (to be named the Wiz) was unable to establish suitable playing sites for the season, so the team had to be moved. As early as July 26, 1978, articles were appearing in the Dayton papers mentioning the possibility of a relocation. Alex Clowson, former owner of Pewter Mugs restaurants of Columbus, Oh. met with WBL president Bill Byrne. Clowson would consider Dayton's Hara Arena (7,100 capacity) as a home court.



While Clowson was friends and partial business partners with George Steinbrenner he would not speculate as to Steinbrenner's involvement with the new league.

A Dayton Daily News article showcased 6'4" draftee Sheila Patterson, who was a graduate of Colonel White High School, and lived in Dayton, Ohio. Even though she was drafted by the Washington team, because of her going to Federal City College in the D.C. area, she was going to end up in her hometown. A hometown that gave her the nickname, "Too Tall."

While there was speculation about the team coming in late July, WBL Commissioner said the confirmation would probably take place about August 10 to 15th. The eight-team league would have teams in Boston, Chicago, Iowa, Milwaukee, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, and Washington. It was possible for Dayton and St. Louis to join the league the first year. At this point it seemed there were two franchises – a Washington one and a Dayton one.



On Oct. 6, 1978 Dayton's franchise was officially awarded to Clowson, Fred "Curly" Morrison (a former Ohio State, Chicago Bears, & Cleveland Browns football player) and Bob van Heyde. Another partial owner, according to the Dayton Times, would have been Cleveland's, George Steinbrenner.

Very quickly the Dayton press wanted to know if they would be allowed in the locker room after the games. The plan for the whole league, according to WBL spokesman Tim Koelbe, was a ban on all reporters and a special room set up for interviews. (This request was in light of a 1977 lawsuit by Sports Illustrated reporters Melissa Ludtke & Kathy Andria against major league baseball and commissioner Bowie Kuhn)

Hara Arena was only able to confirm 15 dates, per arena manager Dave Fisher. The other two home dates could be at the University of Dayton. Yet Joe Eaglowski, the U.D. arena manager, said he only spoke for two minutes with a league rep about allowing the Dayton team to play there. The other possible location would be Hobart Arena in Troy, Ohio.

Commissioner Byrne said that try-outs for the unnamed Dayton team would take place in Dayton, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Richmond (Ind), and Indianapolis. As of October 7th, the 34-game schedule for Dayton was listed in the Dayton Daily News.

No official team name announcement could be found, but the Dayton team was to be known as the Rockettes. This name was appropriate with the history of the aeronautical Wright Brothers in the Dayton area. There was also an Air Force association. This combined with the Rockettes of Radio City Music Hall fame would give both the historical side and the feminine side.

The newly named Rockettes would be holding tryouts at Hara Arena on Saturday Oct. 20 and Sunday Oct. 21 from 10 to 4 pm.

Before the tryouts the team announced their team colors – Kelly Green and Silver. They also were going to announce their new owners. Yet communications were weak at the start, especially because first round free agent choice, 6'4" Sheila Patterson, had not been contacted. She had a job in Washington D.C., and they wanted her to come back home to Dayton, yet no one had spoken with her.

No coach had been named, but Bessie Stockard, a coach from Washington D.C. was being considered, because she was close to Sheila Patterson.

The Rockettes offices were in Hara Arena, as they took over the old offices of the Dayton Gems & Dayton Owls hockey teams. With only two days before the try-outs, Dayton had no staff and no phone lines. Tim Koelbe, from the WBL Columbus office, was the only person leading the team and doing the work. Tim would eventually be considered the general manager of the team.

On October 19th in a stunning move a team with no players, no official staff, and maybe no owner traded for a player. Suzanne Wera, a 5'8" guard from Olivet College in Michigan and the 4th round free agent choice of the New Jersey Gems was traded to Dayton. Dayton gave up a 1979 2nd rd. draft pick.

A press conference to introduce the new owner was cancelled, because there was no one to introduce. Tim had invited 14 free agents to attend try-out camp.

Ownership would probably be announced after the beginning of training camp on November 1.

The Dayton Daily News gave a good summation of where the Dayton franchise stood on October 20th:

Tim Koelbe, 27, former sportswriter, singer, clothing salesman, airlines trainee and public relations director for a professional softball league, was to throw out a few basketballs at Hara Arena this morning to see who could pick them up and dribble.



The tryouts would be conducted by either Tim or Linda Mann, formerly of Central State University. Linda, and a 6'10" unnamed man, were the two candidates being considered as coaches.

With the lack of publicity, and lack of a real front office, only nine players showed up for drills to be run by Linda Mann.

DeAnne (probably Diane) Caudle of Atlanta, Joy Holman a 5'2" guard out of Benedict College, Patti Bucklew of Slippery Rock University, Deborah Sherer of Urbana. Deborah, a 5'11" forward was the first free agent draft pick of the Minnesota Fillies and was cut after a one-week camp.

Three locals were: Shelly Johnson of Colonel White H.S., Sandy Johnson of Dunbar H.S., and Terri Tabor of Wayne H.S.

Two who were underaged, which was not discovered until later were: Kimberly Belton of Dunbar H.S., and Monteen Jones of Stivers-Patterson.

The Rockettes announced their ticket prices: Reserved seats \$3 & \$4, and General Admission \$1 and \$2. Yet two days later the prices were changed to only \$4 (sidelines) & \$2 (end zones), no \$3 tickets. Kids under 14 were for \$1

On October 25th the Rockettes general manager, Tim Koelbe, signed contracts with Patti Bucklew and Deborah Sherer.

A season ticket campaign began with a 25% discount for season tickets. \$51 got you 17 games of the \$4 tickets. The season ticket goal, which was universal across the WBL, was around 3,000. They could get through the season with 2,000, but it would be a financial struggle.

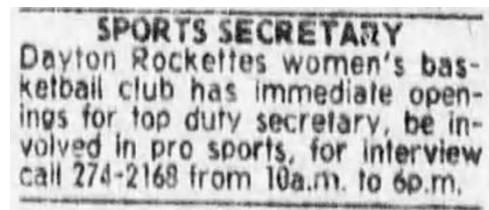
The Rockettes were already starting out with a marketing black-eye, and it had nothing to do with them. The previous Hara Arena tenant, the Dayton Gems Hockey Team, left the area with a lot of unpaid bills. This made the local vendors leery of cutting deals with the Rockettes.

The team was scheduled to play four or five pre-season games, but none in the Dayton area. One game was to be scheduled for Grand Rapids, Michigan against either the Chicago team or the Milwaukee team.

On November 1, the Dayton Daily News reported that Linda Mann, a coach with many local connections, would be the first head coach of the Rockettes. Linda would be giving up her position as women's athletic director at Central State University. Yet she would continue

teaching and running the women's program there, while coaching the Rockettes. Tim Koelbe liked the way she ran the October tryouts, and he knew she was a finalist for the Minnesota Fillies job. Yet she feared the Fillies job would be as an assistant and not the head job.

On the same day the Rockettes showed their seriousness to a strong future when they advertised for a "top duty" secretary.



There was also another listing for a commissioned sales person (preferably a woman) to work with an "Established Growing Company."

With training camp beginning on Wednesday November 1, the Rockettes had 13 players working out. After the two-hour practice, coach Linda Mann hurried back to Central State Univ. to coach her volleyball team. In the Hara Arena office Tim Koelbe was working on the phone to add to the 14 season tickets that had been sold. (A total that matched the Houston Angels)

An interview with local star Sheila Patterson mentioned her lack of a signed contract, but she was planning to sign and stay. Sheila felt the first day of camp was difficult, especially the pushup station. She saw that Coach Mann wanted them to be fully fit and ready to play, but Sheila's couldn't wait for the opener on December 15th.

The other training camp attendees were: Patti Bucklew, Debbie Sherer, Joy Holman, Diane Caudle, Connie Franklin (East Tennessee), Michelle McKenzie (Federal City), Barbara Hughes (Eastern Michigan), Shelly Johnson (Col. White H.S. – no college), Angela Scott (#4 pick Free Agents), Vivian Greene (#4 pick Graduating Seniors), Denise Craig (#2 pick Graduating Seniors), and Felicia Payne (#5 pick Graduating Seniors). Three other players were expected to participate, and the team would be trimmed to 12 by Wednesday the 8th.

The first meeting between Head Coach Linda Mann and the future Dayton Rockettes was disarming for the players. Linda showed up with two black eyes, giving the players an indication of her toughness. Yet they quickly learned of her car accident the previous week. So, it was no surprise to the players when they learned that toughness and defense were going to be the Dayton trademark.

In a sport and a league that didn't have a lot of publicity it was often a crap shoot with the players. The original draft of college graduates and free agents produced a foundation for the team. Of the first 40 college graduates drafted – 23 played in the league at some point. Of the 40 players who had graduated in the past – 19 played in some capacity.

Therefore, when a trade took place between teams involving unknown players its wisdom had to be questioned. On November 4th the Milwaukee Does traded guard Donna Losier (an unknown) and a 1979 2nd rd. draft pick to Dayton for their 1979 1st rd. draft pick. Donna never played in the league.

The Rockettes made some inroads into the local community when Mark Greco of radio station WING (1410 and the future home of ESPN) was going to have a discussion on women's pro basketball in Dayton.

On November 9th the Rockettes finally revealed their owner. His name was Louis Deitelbaum. His introductory news conference had to be pushed back 2 hours, when he missed his plane from Chicago to Dayton. As a Chicago native he was excited over the Dayton prospects. He emphasized that past issues, like the lack of a coach and staff, were not under his watch.



Mr. Deitelbaum owned an insurance company and Dayton was not the first team he was interested in purchasing. Seven or eight months earlier he had seen a business ad and wanted to get into the league. His first attempt was to buy the Chicago franchise, but that fell through. Around the middle of October, he was contacted about the Dayton franchise. After two days he decided it was a go and got the funding together. He wanted to get more local people involved, but he would still retain the controlling interest. He wanted to be sure General Manager Koelbe and Coach Mann could do their jobs.

The Rockettes also added an assistant coach to the staff and his name was Paul Haney. Haney was a coach at Brookville and West Carrollton High schools.

On the 23rd of November the Rockettes got their most important player, Sheila Patterson, under contract. While her salary numbers were not available, it was stated there was no signing bonus. At Federal City College Sheila averaged 20.1 points and 20.9 rebounds. This included highs of 48 points and 37 rebounds. A part of Sheila's sacrifice to come to Dayton was she had to leave her job with the Office of Technology Assessment of the U.S. Congress.

Through November the Rockettes had sold 187 season ticket packages. (The Angels stayed at 14) The team currently had 11 players under contract, which was one under the league limit. A player not named in the previous list was Vonnie Tomich of Illinois State.

The Rockettes began to put ads in the papers and get players like Sheila Patterson onto the local talk shows. Also, in December, on the 28th, the team would be part of a YWCA basketball clinic.

On December 1st Tim Koelbe again told the media about the damage that the Gems hockey team had done to the city's vendors to support a new team. The Rockettes had also cancelled their plans for games in Ft. Wayne, Ind. and Grand Rapids, Mi. At this point they were looking for any kind of pickup team to play.

As for game prep, the team secured Red Struthers to be the crew chief of the local officials. Also, they would have rotating high school cheerleaders, though they heard the Houston team would have an all-male cheerleader squad. Koelbe also confirmed that 5'9" guard Tina Price from the University of Georgia would be joining the team. Tina was the #2 Graduating Senior picked by the Washington team.



Between November 19 and December 14, the Rockettes front office put some money into advertising. The original ad (left) showed where they were, but also they had an idea in mind. The finished product (right) allowed the people of Dayton to know the new owner was for real and so was the team.



On December 13th the Dayton Rockettes gave up a 1979 3rd rd. draft pick to the Milwaukee Does for Brenda Pitts. Brenda was a 5'9" guard who played at Alabama and averaged 11 ppg and was the team's MVP.

With just two days before their home opener, on the 15th, the Rockettes said they had sold over 600 tickets for the game. They knew if people checked out the team they'd be back, so they were hoping for a lot of walk-ins. Negotiations were also taking place for radio broadcasts of the away games, but no stations were being announced at the time.

In a side light to the Rockettes home opener was the fact that it would be a home coming for the opposing coach. The Angels' head coach Don Knodel was from Hamilton, Ohio, a Dayton suburb, and graduated from Miami of Ohio in 1953.

A bold newspaper headline on the 13th said: *Dayton Rockettes are The New Game in Town*. This was great publicity, but with very little substance as the writer was speaking about all the athletic events in the area over the holidays.



Patterson



Scott



Craig

For an upstart experiment, a women's pro basketball league, the Dayton Daily News had a wonderful spread the day before the game. The article had pictures of the 11 players and the coach. The article summarized the players schools, stats, and achievements. It projected the starting lineup and showed the league could be a success based on 7,824 who came out to the first game in Milwaukee. This would be the 5th highest attended game in WBL history.

The Rockettes did their best to generate interest by posting several newspaper ads.



Tomich

McKenzie

Bucklew

Sherer

Greene



Payne



Franklin



Holman

On Friday the 15th the papers also had a clipping about the Chicago Hustle beating the New York Stars 137-107 in front of 2,192 Chicago fans at Alumni Hall. Rita Easterling's 22 points and 20 assists added to the fact that the women's pro games were going to high scoring, fast moving, and worth attending.

The day of the game articles highlighted the need for a win to give the home folks a positive feeling to take home and share with others. With the Rockettes hosting the Houston Angels every game's attendance figure was vital toward perceived success.

At 7:35 on December 15, 1978, the Rockettes should have become a part of Women's Professional Basketball history. 2,041 came to Hara Arena to watch and be a part of this history. The newspapers said that only 1,412 were paid and they believed only about 1,000 people were there. In the WBL this nit-picking at attendance figures would be a regular occurrence throughout the league. Front office numbers versus actual numbers versus newspaper positive or negative reinforcement.

Linda Mann became the 2nd female head coach to lead a professional team. Candace Klinzig was the first with Milwaukee on December 9th. Of course, the fact that Coach Klinzig was fired after one game on December 13th, this made Coach Mann one of only two female coaches in the league. (Julia Yeater of Minnesota was the other.)



The game probably didn't begin on time, because Hara Arena (or the Rockettes) forgot to get the 24-second shot clocks. Someone at the scorer's table had to use a stopwatch and the P.A. system to inform the teams of the time.

Angela Scott fired up their first shot, but Vivian Greene made their first basket. Dayton took a 20-16 1st quarter lead as fans were thrilled with the guard play of Vonnie Tomich and Vivian Greene. At one point the Rockettes increased the lead to 13 points, before the Angels fought back to make the score 46-40 at the half. The Rockettes presumed star, Sheila Patterson, was held scoreless in the first half.

Dayton held onto their lead at the end of three quarters, 65-62. They increased their lead to 73-66 when their season's hopes might have come to an end. Sheila Patterson tripped and had to be carried off the floor. At the time Sheila had 15 points (all in the 2nd half) and 18 rebounds, with an amazing 11 offensive rebounds. With board work like this it didn't matter how often Vivian Greene misfired (10-28), because Patterson was there to grab the rebound.

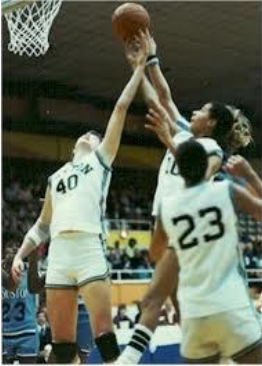
With Patterson out of the game, at the 8:30 mark, the Angels went on a 24-9 streak to end the game. Their 90-82 victory made them the East Division leader at 1-0.

Dayton Rockettes																Team Games
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	
Bucklew, Patti	40		2	4	0	0	1	2	3	1	6	0	2	0	4	
Craig, Denise	10		2	14	8	11	4	7	11	4	4	1	8	3	12	
Franklin, Connie	25		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	
Greene, Vivian	24		10	28	0	0	1	1	2	3	2	2	4	0	20	
Holman, Joy	3		1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	
McKenzie, Michelle	20		1	5	0	0	1	2	3	1	2	1	1	0	2	
Patterson, Sheila	31		6	14	3	7	11	7	18	0	3	0	6	1	15	
Pitts, Brenda	14		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	
Scott, Angela	23		4	7	1	3	1	7	8	1	1	1	7	2	9	
Sherer, Debbie	33		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	
Tomich, Vonnie	5		6	12	6	10	0	2	2	3	5	2	7	0	18	
Adjustment		240														
Totals		0	32	85	18	31	19	28	47	13	26	7	38	6	82	
			FG%	37.6%	FT%	58.1%	Team Rebs		9							

Houston Angels																Team Games
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	
Bubrig, Patty	33		3	8	2	2	1	0	1	1	3		7	0	8	
Brockhage, Bobbi	50	Did Not Travel														
Candler, Belinda	24		10	13	10	16	9	13	22	1	2		6	0	30	
Chapman, Vicky	22		4	7	3	6	2	1	3	1	1		3	0	11	
Dobson, Gail	25		1	2	2	2	0	2	2	0	4		0	0	4	
Holleyman, Glenda	20		2	5	1	2	1	3	4	0	2		4	1	5	
Johnson, Pat	45		5	9	2	5	1	3	4	2	1		5	1	12	
Jones, Belinda	23		3	14	5	5	1	3	4	6	2		7	0	11	
Kenlaw, Jessie	40		1	6	0	0	2	2	4	0	5		4	0	2	
Mayo, Paula	10		3	5	1	3	1	4	5	1	2		1	1	7	
Mosley, Dolly	14		1	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	0		2	0	2	
Washington, Cynthia	15		0	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	0		2	0	0	
Adjustment		240	-1												-2	
Totals		240	32	73	26	41	20	31	51	12	22	0	41	3	90	
			FG%	43.8%	FT%	63.4%	Team Rebs									

Vivian Greene was two different players as she shot 10-15 in the first half (20 pts, 67%) and 0-13 in the second half (0 pts, 0%).

Notice Belinda Candler's 20-20, 30 points and 22 rebounds. But she wasn't the first 20-20. Rita Easterling, the day before, had 22 points and 20 assists. In that same game New York's Althea Gwyn almost had a 20-20, as she had 30 points and 19 rebounds.



The final statistics had no minutes played for any player. It also had the Angels with 41 turnovers, but only seven steals for Dayton. Of course, this was better than the Angels who had zero steals, despite 38 Dayton turnovers.

Hopefully 79 turnovers in the WBL's 3rd game wasn't indicative of the quality of the play. This record number of turnovers would be broken on February 8, 1979, when the New Jersey Gems (46) and Chicago Hustle (40) combined for 86 turnovers.

Coach Mann said she learned a lot about this game, especially with how much hand checking and physical play was going to be allowed. There were 48 fouls called in the game (Dayton 26) and because of Houston's help-defense Coach Mann thought the Angels were playing a zone (illegal in WBL). She also learned the pace of the game was going to require constant substitutions to keep people fresh. Houston's coach Don Knodel made sure he played all 11 of his players.



At some point of the game Vicky Chapman tried to block a shot, was knocked to the floor, and had to go to the hospital with a possible concussion.

The fans witnessed how hard these ladies played and how serious they were about their craft.

An interesting point about the first game, for each team, was the fact that this was the first time they ever played four 12-minute quarters. Plus, with a man-to-man being the only defense allowed, there was no room for rest.

By the game's end the players who thought they were ready for a 48-minute game found themselves struggling. This was part of the thought process for Vivian Greene, who was 0-13 in the 2nd half.

Also, for the first game, there was a complaint against the Hara Arena Public Address announcer, who thought it was necessary to say, "Aren't these beautiful young ladies playing a beautiful game?"

At the end of the week the Rockettes put Sheila Patterson on the Injured Reserve List with the hope that with some rest she would be back in a week to 10 days.

After their disappointing first game loss at home the Rockettes travelled to Milwaukee on the 17th. 1,561 came out to the Milwaukee Arena. The (0-1) Does had a big drop in attendance from the 7,824 who saw their home opener a week before. They also had a new coach, George Nicodemus, because Coach Candace Klinzig was fired after one game.

Dayton fell behind 19-9, but they closed that to 27-22 after one quarter. The Rockettes took a brief lead at 36-35, but a Joanie Smith three-point play gave the Does a lead they would never give up. The Does raised their lead to 55-44 at the half. They continued to put a hurt on Dayton as the lead expanded to 80-63. In most games teams would relax and coast through the end of the game. But that was not Coach Nicodemus' style. The Does put together a 37-30 final quarter for a decisive 117-93 victory.

Dayton Rockettes															Team Game #		
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat	
Bucklew, Patti	40	27	4	7	3	5		9	9	0	6	2	1	1	11	0.778	
Craig, Denise	10	32	7	14	2	2		9	9	0	6	2	5	1	16	0.688	
Franklin, Connie	25	16	2	2	2	3		4	4	1	1	1	3		6	0.625	
Greene, Vivian	24	22	6	16	4	5		5	5	1	1	3	2		16	1.091	
Holman, Joy	3	17	1	4	1	2		0	0	0	0		3		3	0.000	
McKenzie, Michelle	20	31	2	11	0	0		6	6	0	2		1		4	0.290	
Patterson, Sheila	31	Knee Injury - Out for Season															
Payne, Felicia	21	16	3	9	2	5		4	4	1	4	1	3	1	8	0.750	
Pitts, Brenda	14	7	1	4	2	2		0	0	0	1	1	1	1	4	0.571	
Scott, Angela	23	33	3	10	2	2		6	6	4	5	1	2		8	0.636	
Sherer, Deb	33	10	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	4		2		2	0.000		
Tomich, Vonnie	5	29	7	17	1	2	3	3	3	4	1	7		15	0.621		
Adjustment							22	-22									
Totals		240	37	95	19	30	22	24	46	10	34	12	30	4	93	0.588	
			FG%	38.9%	FT%	63.3%	Team Rebs		17								

Milwaukee Does																Team Game #	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat	
Booker, Gerry	24	40	7	14	2	7		9	9	5	3	3	2	1	16	0.900	
Conlin, Terry	44	1	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	1		1			-1.000	
DeBoer, Kathy	13	26	3	10	3	4		5	5	7	2		1		9	1.038	
Dennis, Brenda	10	39	6	13	3	5		7	7	4	4	4	3	1	15	0.795	
Ellis, Cindy	25	21	2	6	5	8		2	2	2	4	2		1	9	0.810	
Fuller, Jan	28	20	3	4	2	4		3	3	1	2				8	0.650	
Gehrke, Lynda	33	16	6	10	4	7		8	8	1	3	4	4		16	1.625	
Hostert, Barb	6	3	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	1		0	-0.333	
Keeley, Marguerite	31	24	2	7	3	4		9	9	1	2	2	5		7	0.625	
Lundberg, Cindy	32	12	0	1	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	1		0	-0.083	
Smith, Joanie	1	36	11	19	15	16	4	4	4	5	1	4		37	1.278		
Zweig, Doris	15	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			0	0.000		
Adjustment							17	-17									
Totals		240	40	85	37	55	17	30	47	25	26	16	22	3	117	0.867	
			FG%	47.1%	FT%	67.3%	Team Rebs		22								

The Rockettes record dropped to 0-2.

Even though 0-2 was bad, the news that Sheila Patterson would be out one to eight months with cartilage and ligament damage was worse. In fact, the prognosis looked more likely to be eight months.

On December 22, the number of female head coaches in the WBL dropped to one, when Dayton fired coach Linda Mann. With a league that was just getting traction the biggest headlines around the country usually involved negative news. A Dayton Daily News front page header had a picture of Coach Mann and *Rockettes (Ms) Fired*.

According to General Manager Tim Koelbe, she was being too chummy with the players and not hard enough on them. Coach Mann believed she needed to know her players in order to push the right buttons. She was told she'd have full rein, but Koelbe felt he needed to stay in control.

To owner Deitelbaum and Koelbe the team should have been 1-1, even with the loss of their star player. Mann's contract expired upon termination, so she was paid for just the two months she was involved. Fortunately, she never gave up her Central State coaching position.

The team hired a 23-year-old assistant coach from the Milwaukee Does, Tom Griffey. His background was with the Milwaukee Does and Marquette legend Al McGuire's Basketball Camps. After applying for the Does job he was still around after the Does first coach, Charlotte Adams, walked away from the team after three days. Griffey was also around after Coach Klinzing was relieved after one game. Griffey thought he was next in line when the Does hired Junior College coach George Nicodemus. When Tim Koelbe inquired about interest in being a head coach, Tom felt he was ready to take over.

At age 23 Tom would become the youngest person to coach a professional team in history. Yet this was only if you considered the WBL to be on par with the NFL, Major League Baseball, National Basketball Association, or the National Hockey League. The youngest coaches before this were both player/coaches – Dave DeBusshere, 24 years old of the Detroit Pistons (NBA) or Lou Boudreau, 24 years old of the Cleveland Indians. (MLB)

The Rockettes' first practice with their new coach was Thursday December 21. Coach Griffey was trying to change the defense, so he acknowledged things were going to be disorganized for a short time. Meanwhile Tim Koelbe was trying to negotiate with June Brewer of Ohio State to come back to the U.S. The 6'2" center was the number one pick of the team back in July. Koelbe felt they could get her into a Dayton uniform by January.



Coach Griffey had five days to acquaint himself with the team before their next game, in New Jersey. There was going to be no Christmas break for the Rockettes as they went to the Dunn Sports Complex for a game on Saturday the 23rd.

The Gems had opened the year against the Chicago Hustle on the 17th with a 123-120 home loss in front of 1,924. The exciting contest did not translate into return attendees as only 816 came out for the Saturday contest.

Dayton took an early 26-22 lead, which later became 51-50 in the Gems favor at the half. For Vivian Green she had another 20-point first half. New Jersey's lead increased to 76-68 after three quarters. The Gems, who were coached by the father and son combination of George Kennedy and Don Kennedy, raised their record to 1-1 after their 101-94 victory.

Dayton Rockettes																Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	
Bucklew, Patti	40		4	6	2	2		1	1		6				10	
Craig, Denise	10		6	20	1	1		15	15		6				13	
Franklin, Connie	25		1	3	0	0		2	2		1				2	
Greene, Vivian	24		14	34	3	6		5	5		3				31	
Holman, Joy	3		0	1	0	0		0	0		0				0	
McKenzie, Michelle	20		5	12	0	0		8	8		6				10	
Payne, Felicia	21		2	4	0	0		6	6		2				4	
Pitts, Brenda	14		1	1	2	3		1	1		1				4	
Scott, Angela	23		4	21	5	13		20	20		6				13	
Sherer, Deborah	33	Name not in Newspaper														
Tomich, Vonnie	5		2	6	3	4		1	1		3				7	
Adjustment		240														
Totals		240	39	108	16	29	0	59	59	0	34	0	0	0	94	
			FG%	36.1%	FT%	55.2%		Team Rebs	14							

New Jersey Gems																Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	
Bistromowitz, Jo-Ellen	3		3	4	5	11		5	5		4				11	
Burdick, Randi	21		1	7	3	4		2	2		0				5	
Canning, Peggy	12		0	1	0	0		0	0		1				0	
Hayek, Mary Jean	19	Name not in Newspaper														
Johnson, Tanya	22		1	6	0	0		9	9		1				2	
Martin, Sue	13		8	13	2	2		10	10		2				18	
Mason, Debbie	11		1	6	3	4		2	2		1				5	
Roelich, Debra	15		0	2	0	0		0	0		5				0	
Solano, Kathy	20		2	7	4	6		2	2		2				8	
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		9	19	9	13		9	9		4				27	
Tatterson, Gail	33		10	14	5	6		12	12		5				25	
Adjustment		240														
Totals		240	35	79	31	46	0	51	51	0	25	0	0	0	101	
			FG%	44.3%	FT%	67.4%		Team Rebs	17							

Dayton was again led by Vivian Greene's 31 on 14-34 shooting. Angela Scott came through with 13 points but had a more impressive 20 rebounds before she fouled out. Denise Craig added 13 points and 15 rebounds, before she fouled out. Patti Bucklew had 10 points, before she fouled out and Michelle McKenzie had 10 points, before she fouled out.

Does anyone see a pattern here? Four players fouled out and 34 fouls were called leading to 31-46 from the line for the Gems. New Jersey had nobody foul out and 25 fouls which led to Dayton hitting only 16 of 29.

The Gems were led by Wanda Szeremeta's 27 points and nine rebounds, while Gail Tatterson had 25 points and 12 rebounds. Sue Martin came through with 18 points and 10 rebounds.

But even in defeat the Rockettes were putting together their player rotations. Four days later, on the 27th, those same Gems came to Dayton to play at Hara Arena. The encouraging attendance of 2,000+ for the first game dropped to 574 for this Wednesday game.

Yet one of those 574 attending was 6'2" June Brewer. This was her chance to see if playing pro ball was something she wanted to be a part of. (June said "No" to the WBL.)

On Wednesday the Rockettes came out strong and had a 31-22 first quarter lead with Angela Scott scoring 11 points. They raised this to 61-47 at the half. The difference stayed right around here as the Rockettes picked up their first win with a 113-99 victory. The victory was sweet to Tim Koelbe who was sipping champagne while being interviewed after the game.

Vivian Greene had an efficient 32 on 12-26 from the field. Angela Scott added 31 on 12-of 24 from the field and nine rebounds. Denise Craig's 24 points and 14 rebounds showed others the Rockettes had something to work with.

The Gems were led by Sue Martin's 23 points and nine rebounds, along with Tatterson's 22 points and nine rebounds.

Dayton Rockettes																Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	
Bucklew, Patti	40		1	2	0	0		2	2		3				2	
Craig, Denise	10		10	18	4	5		14	14		5				24	
Franklin, Connie	25		0	0	0	0		2	2		2				0	
Greene, Vivian	24		12	26	8	9		5	5		5				32	
Holman, Joy	3		0	1	2	2		2	2		1				2	
McKenzie, Michelle	20		5	10	0	3		11	11		2				10	
Payne, Felicia	21		1	2	2	4		9	9		4				4	
Pitts, Brenda	14		0	4	0	0		1	1		0				0	
Scott, Angela	23		12	24	7	8		9	9		5				31	
Sherer, Deborah	33	Name not in Newspaper														
Tomich, Vonnice	5		4	11	0	0		1	1		2				8	
Adjustment		240														
Totals		240	45	98	23	31	0	56	56	0	29	0	0	0	113	
			FG%	45.9%	FT%	74.2%	Team Rebs									

New Jersey Gems																Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	
Bistromowitz, Jo-Ellen	3		1	5	2	5		1	1		6				4	
Burdick, Randi	21		6	14	2	5		3	3		4				14	
Canning, Peggy	12	Name not in Newspaper														
Hayek, Mary Jean	19	Name not in Newspaper														
Johnson, Tanya	22		0	1	0	0		2	2		2				0	
Martin, Sue	13		7	15	9	12		9	9		3				23	
Mason, Debbie	11		1	3	6	6		3	3		0				8	
Roelich, Denra	15		4	8	0	0		2	2		5				8	
Solano, Kathy	20		2	6	1	2		1	1		1				5	
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		7	20	1	5		8	8		1				15	
Tatterson, Gail	33		8	14	6	7		9	9		5				22	
Adjustment		240														
Totals		240	36	86	27	42	0	38	38	0	27	0	0	0	99	
			FG%	41.9%	FT%	64.3%	Team Rebs									

After this first victory, the players were giving the credit to their new coach.

Vivian Greene, the game's leading scorer with 32 points, said, "The coaching change changed the team totally... totally. The most important thing is enthusiasm. He gets involved. Everybody looks up to him. He gives us the momentum.

"I've been coached by women before, but with a man, well... A man seems to keep his house in order. He won't spoil his girls. Tom controls the show and that's what we've been needing," Greene said.

Other players spoke about positive ideas and practical demonstrations of how to do things. He also expected a full effort in both practice and in the game.

The Rockettes next game was against another division rival, the New York Stars who also started 0-2. Statistically, Vivian Greene was averaging 24.7 ppg, which was 4th in the league. Denise Craig and Angela Scott were 4th & 5th in rebounding with 12.2 and 10.7. The Stars' Althea Gwyn was the leading rebounder with 16.5.

The Friday the 29th game at Hara Arena, only attracted 720, but the Rockettes came through with another victory, 113-106.

In a very similar game to the New Jersey victory, Dayton took a 31-23 first quarter lead, with Denise Craig scoring 14 points. The Rockettes increased their lead to 17 in the 2nd quarter, but this was reduced to 55-53 because of poor substituting per Coach Griffey. During his half-time talk he told the team to forget the 2nd quarter and get back to playing their game.

In the 3rd quarter Patti Bucklew, who was scoreless in the 2nd quarter, had 13 in the 3rd quarter. Dayton added just one more point to stay ahead 84-81. In the 4th quarter Bucklew started well but fouled out with 8:44 remaining. It was at this point that Angela Scott took over and scored 12 points. At the final horn the Rockettes raised their record to 2-3 with a 113-106 victory.



Dayton Rockettes															Team Games
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Bucklew, Patti	40		9	13	6	9		4	4		6				24
Craig, Denise	10		11	15	4	6		16	16		5				26
Franklin, Connie	25	Name not in Newspaper													
Greene, Vivian	24		9	25	2	5		4	4		5				20
Holman, Joy	3	Name not in Newspaper													
McKenzie, Michelle	20		2	8	3	4		3	3		2				7
Payne, Felicia	21		0	2	0	0		1	1		2				0
Pitts, Brenda	14		1	2	1	2		0	0		0				3
Scott, Angela	23		9	21	9	11		13	13		5				27
Tomich, Vonnice	5		3	14	0	0		5	5		2				6
Adjustment		240													
Totals		240	44	100	25	37	0	46	46	0	27	0	0	0	113
			FG%	44.0%	FT%	67.6%	Team Rebs		10						

New York Stars															Team Games
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Arturi, Lynn	23		1	2	0	0		0	0		2				2
Bailey, Darlene	11		0	4	2	5		1	1		1				2
Fletcher, Carmen	30		2	4	5	6		4	4		3				9
Geils, Donna	21		5	14	6	6		5	5		3				16
Gross, Maria	12		0	0	0	0		0	0						0
Gwyn, Althea	31		9	13	2	2		11	11		6				20
Melbourne, Mara	24		10	20	2	5		7	7		4				22
Novarr, Harriet	15		1	3	2	2		2	2		1				4
Thomas, Janice	10		5	18	0	0		0	0		6				10
Young, Faye	22		2	8	6	7		7	7		1				10
Young, Kaye	20		4	7	3	3		6	6		4				11
Adjustment		240													
Totals		240	39	93	28	36	0	43	43	0	31	0	0	0	106
			FG%	41.9%	FT%	77.8%	Team Rebs		11						

Dayton had four players with over 20 points each, a WBL historical rarity. Angela Scott's 27 points and 13 rebounds topped Denise Craig's 26, along with 16 rebounds. Patti Bucklew added 24 and Vivian Greene added 20 points.

For the New York Stars, under the guidance of Coach Alan Cissorky, they had six players with double figures. Mara Melbourne led the way with 22, while Althea Gwyn had 20 points and 11 rebounds before she fouled out. Another player who fouled out, and played a significant role for the Stars was Janice Thomas.

With their victory on December 29th the Rockettes moved into 2nd place in the Eastern Division. Their 2-3 record was better than New Jersey's 1-2 or New York's 0-3, but not as good as Houston's 4-1 record.

Eastern Division

Houston	4	1	.800	94.2	83.6
New Jersey	2	2	.500	101.3	101.7
Dayton	2	3	.400	99.1	102.6
New York	0	3	.000	100.0	116.3

Midwestern Division

Iowa	4	0	1.000 ¹	103.0	93.8
Chicago	5	1	.833	115.5	103.0
Minnesota	1	4	.200	79.8	91.0
Milwaukee	1	5	.167	92.0	95.2

¹ This would become 3-1 after a 12/29 protest was upheld and they eventually lost

Scoring Leaders

Chapman (Minn)	29.0
Greene (Dayt)	23.8
Waddy-Ross (Chi)	22.8
Szeremeta (NJ)	22.5
Gwyn (NY)	22.0

Rebound Leaders

Gwyn (NY)	14.7
Craig (Dayt)	13.0
Uhl (Iowa)	12.2
Tatterson (NJ)	12.0
Booker (Milw)	11.7

Assist Leaders

Easterling (Chi)	12.7
Tucker (Iowa)	8.0
Wilson,D (Minn)	5.4
Tomich (Dayt)	5.2
Dennis (Milw)	5.0

On the 29th the Rockettes also waived Deborah Sherer, who played in two games totaling 16 minutes and scoring two points.

Dayton's impact in the league was recognized as Denise Craig was named WBL Player of the Week for the week of 12/24 to 12/30/78. Denise shot 21 of 30 for 50 points and she pulled down 30 rebounds.

January 4, 1979, would be a big test for the improved Dayton Rockettes. They were about to be tested by the powerful Chicago Hustle, in Chicago. For the Hustle they would be playing without the engine that ran their fast break. Rita Easterling was suffering from a shoulder injury.

This Thursday game attracted 1,291 into Alumni Hall. And the first quarter must have been a shock for the attendees as the team that was averaging over 111 per game came out and put up 13. Dayton's 31-13 first quarter lead, fueled by Patti Bucklew's 10 pts, would be their largest lead of the game.

When the Rockettes were whistled for four or five quick fouls to begin the 2nd quarter it made holding the lead harder. The Hustle fought back to make it Dayton 53, Chicago 43 at the half. Dayton added to their lead to make it 78-67 after three quarters.

In the 4th quarter the Hustle whittled away the lead until with 4:11 left the Hustle got within one, 92-91. The Rockettes put together a basket by Craig, a defensive stop, and another basket by Angela Scott to give Dayton a 96-91 lead. Another defensive stop and another Craig baseline jumper made the score 98-91. The final of 102-95 raised the Rockettes to .500 for the season at 3-3.

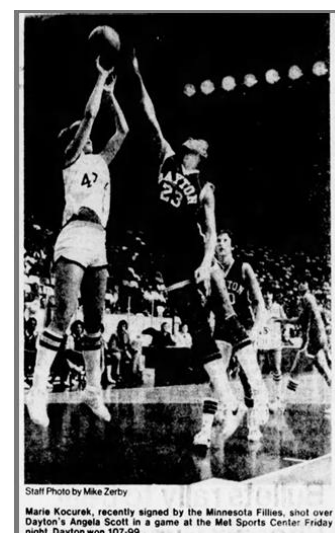
Dayton Rockettes																Team Game #
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Bucklew, Patti	40	38	11	14	3	6	5	6	11	0	3	2	2	1	25	0.947
Craig, Denise	10	31	6	13	0	0	1	9	10	0	6	2	4	0	12	0.645
Franklin, Connie	25	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0.500
Greene, Vivian	24	46	11	31	4	4	0	0	0	7	2	3	7	0	26	0.783
Holman, Joy	5	Name not in Box Score														
McKenzie, Michelle	20	20	1	5	2	2	1	4	5	0	3	0	0	0	4	0.450
Payne, Felicia	21	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	0	0	0	1.000
Pitts, Brenda	14	8	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	3	0	0	-0.250
Scott, Angela	23	44	6	17	6	7	7	13	20	3	2	3	4	0	18	0.977
Tomich, Vonnie	5	45	5	14	7	10	0	0	0	3	3	2	10	0	17	0.333
Totals		240	40	94	22	29	14	33	47	15	22	14	30	1	102	0.679
			FG%	42.6%	FT%	75.9%	Team Rebs		7							

Chicago Hustle																Team Game #
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Digitale, Sue	21	36	8	15	0	0	6	5	11	1	1	4	1	1	16	0.889
Duckworth, Tesa	44	26	5	11	3	4	1	1	2	1	3	1	2	1	13	0.615
Easterling, Rita	15	DNP - Injured														
Fincher, Janie	10	39	12	27	2	3	1	5	6	8	4	2	7	0	26	1.103
Galloway, Liz	31	41	4	7	2	9	2	5	7	6	4	8	5	1	10	0.780
Logan, Karen	4	28	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	4	3	1	9	2	0	0.000
Peppler, Mary Jo	8	14	1	4	1	4	0	2	2	3	2	2	1	0	3	0.857
Rainey, Sandra	23	Name not in Box Score														
Stachon, Toni	14	28	3	7	4	5	0	3	3	4	2	0	2	0	10	0.679
Waddy-Rossow, Debby	25	28	8	11	1	2	1	5	6	0	5	1	4	0	17	0.714
Totals		240	41	87	13	27	11	26	37	27	24	19	31	5	95	0.725
			FG%	47.1%	FT%	48.1%	Team Rebs		3							

Dayton's player usage was becoming very consistent as Vivian Green had 26 points and seven assists, Patti Bucklew had 25 points and 11 rebounds, Angela Scott had another 20-rebound game, along with her 18 points. Denise Craig had a quiet 12 points and 10 rebounds, before she fouled out.

Chicago, who suffered their first-of-only three home losses for the year, were led by Janie Fincher's 26 points and eight assists. Debby Waddy-Rossow came through with 17, and Sue Digitale had 16.

The Rockettes had a game the next day in Minnesota on Friday the 5th. Minnesota was off to a rough start of 1-4. With the other female coaches having been already fired for losing one game (Milwaukee) and two games (Dayton) people had to wonder how long Minnesota's coach Julia Yeater would last.



The Friday crowd of 1,987 at the Metropolitan Sports Center were there to cheer on their Fillies. The Fillies held the surging Rockettes to a 23-23 tie. Minnesota then took control, with a 31-28 2nd quarter to make the score 54-51 at the half. Vivian Greene had 20 points, which was close to her game average.

Dayton came out of the locker room and took over with a 24-17 advantage to go into the 4th quarter leading 75-71. Dayton's 107-99 victory gave them a four-game winning streak and a 4-3 record. Their confidence grew stronger as they had their next three games at home.

Dayton Rockettes																Team Ge		
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts			
Bucklew, Patti	40		7	14	2	2		14	14		4					16		
Craig, Denise	10		4	8	3	4		14	14		5					11		
Franklin, Connie	25		Name not in Newspaper															
Greene, Vivian	24		16	32	8	9		9	9		4					40		
Holman, Joy	3		Name not in Newspaper															
McKenzie, Michelle	20		2	4	0	0		1	1		3					4		
Payne, Felicia	21		0	0	0	0		2	2		0					0		
Pitts, Brenda	14		1	1	0	1		0	0		2					2		
Scott, Angela	23		5	12	3	4		8	8		3					13		
Tomich, Vonnie	5	8	14	5	5	3	3	3	2						21			
Adjustment		240								3								
Totals		240	43	85	21	25	0	51	51	6	23	0	0	0	107			
			FG%	50.6%	FT%	84.0%	Team Rebs											

Minnesota Fillies																Team G			
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts				
Chapman, Brenda	15	Name Not in Newspapers	12	30	6	7		7	7	3	2					30			
Cooper, Accronetta	33																		
DeLorme, Scooter	32		2	5	7	12		7	7		5								11
Engle, Cheryl	24																		
Jackson, Peggy	12		1	1	1	2		5	5		0								3
Kocurek, Marie	42		7	11	3	4		5	5		5								17
Koopman, Carol	25		4	12	1	4		7	7	3	2								9
Michaelson, Maren	21																		
Morrish, Mary	53	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	3	0	0				
Sjoquist, Lynnette	55	13	2	3	0	0	2	2	4	1	3	0	0	0	4				
Wilson, Donna	11		8	16	3	7		6	6	4	2				19				
Wilson, Laurie	13	17	3	5	0	0	0	3	3	2	1	0	3	0	6				
Adjustment		208																	
Totals		240	39	83	21	36	2	43	45	13	20	0	6	0	99				
			FG%	47.0%	FT%	58.3%	Team Rebs												

Vivian Greene had a 40-point game on 16-32 from the field and 8-9 from the line. She also had nine rebounds. Her 40 made her one of only 14 who ever hit 40 points or higher in league history. Her 40 was the 2nd posted in the league and came up three short of Minnesota's Brenda Chapman, who had 43 against the Houston Angels on December 17, 1978.

Vonnie Tomich added 21, while Patti Bucklew had 16 along with 14 rebounds. Denise Craig also had 14 rebounds and a modest 11 points

As for Minnesota, the league's leading scorer, Brenda Chapman had 30 on 12 of 30 shots, along with seven rebounds. Donna Wilson was the next highest with 19 points.

Winning changes the minds and attitudes of many people. For the Rockettes a full-page Dayton Daily News spread had pictures of the team as they travelled by plane, then four other pictures of Coach Griffey and the team. A large article accompanied it with references to how Tom Griffey gets involved in all aspects of the game. This includes practicing with the team and being part of the group. Yet with an Al McGuire-like humble, but strong, attitude the players were learning what to expect.



The joke with the team was that when Denise Craig was on the bench, she became the head coach and she let Tom be her assistant. Tom was pleased that he at least got to call the time outs. The individual personalities were posted, whether as team jester – Denise Craig, or the team's human garbage disposal -Vonnie Tomich everyone was enjoying each other.



A Muncie, Indiana article highlighted that Vonnie wasn't sure about pro ball after graduating from Illinois State. Yet after a try-out with the Milwaukee Does, she got the bug and wanted to play. Dayton convinced her to come south. The members of her family were pleased with her current hoop success, but her proud father was prouder of her painting abilities.



Dayton now had more than a week to prepare for their division rival, the Houston Angels. On the 5th, Houston had a three-game winning streak and Dayton had won four in a row. Houston beat the Stars on the 11th, so on Sunday January 14th each team was putting their four-game winning streaks on the line.

Did the Rockettes front office do extra advertising for this game? Did the city of Dayton want to back a winner? Was this going to be the Rockettes most important game of the year?

According to the Houston Angels assistant coach, Greg Williams, he remembered this as a "Guaranteed Win Night." This was the first time he had been exposed to this marketing concept. If the team failed to win, then everyone got a voucher to return to another game for free. (No obvious newspaper ads promoting this could be found from the 7th to the 14th, but a 2/28 article on Patti Bucklew confirmed this.)

On Sunday January 14th the Houston Angels, sporting a 6-1 record, were hosted by the 4-3 Rockettes. Only two games separated these two teams.

The Rockettes had a chance to take advantage of some unfortunate Angel problems. Houston had trouble getting to Dayton. Bad weather, snow delays, and extended layovers caused the Angels to come in physically drained.

The flight from Houston to Chicago was canceled because of snow. So, the team sat for four hours in the Houston airport. They flew to Atlanta and arrived at 12:30 am. They slept for a few hours at an airport hotel. But very few people slept because the next flight was going to be at 6:30 am. The 6:30 flight had them landing in Dayton at 9:30 am. This wouldn't have been too bad for an 8:00 pm game, but today's game was set to tip-off at 2:15 pm. So, with only a few hours' "sleep" they went out to play Dayton.

This game meant a lot to Dayton. With a victory Dayton would be 5-3 and Houston would be 6-2.

The team's largest crowd of 2,478 came out to Hara Arena. The newspapers thought it was important to be as accurate as possible. Therefore, it was vital to report that of the 2,478, only 1,876 were paid. The Arena manager said that 2,678 tickets had been distributed, of which the Rockettes gave away 1,000 of those.

Houston jumped out to a 12-2 lead, but Dayton fought back for a 24-24 stalemate after one quarter. Houston then took control with a 21-16 2nd quarter and a 45-40 half time lead. Despite the difficult travel Houston increased their lead to 68-58. But as the quarter ended Vivian Greene hit one of her long distant (35 foot) bombs. The bomb and the 68-60 score inspired the Rockettes.

Even though the Rockettes trailed by eight there was something special about a good crowd and a team that refused to give up. With 38 seconds left the Rockettes held an 89-85 lead, which became 89-87 with twenty seconds left.



Angela Scott had a chance to ice the game when she had three chances to make two free throws. Unfortunately, she missed all three, which was not unusual for the team as they made only 3 of 9 in the 4th quarter. Houston grabbed the lifeline and tied the score at 89. The Rockettes were unable to get off a shot in the last seven seconds.

This was the first overtime game for each team. Dayton was able to get ahead 101-99 with 25 seconds left. The Angels worked the ball to Vicky Chapman who drove to the basket and was fouled as she scored. She made

her free throw which gave Houston a 102-101 victory.

This loss was unfair to the Dayton players as the scorer's table's incompetence played a major role. During the game with 5:24 remaining in the 4th quarter Paula Mayo (who wore #10) picked up her 6th foul. As she dejectedly started walking off the court the scorer's table told Paula she only had three fouls. The fans knew it was six, the coaches knew it was six, but the officials had her for three. Where did the actual fouls disappear to?



In the overtime when Karen Auhlenbacher (who wore #11) picked up her third foul and was told she was out of the game, the missing fouls reappeared. So according to the stats Paula Mayo had 8 fouls. (Which was 2 more than the legal limit). Who knows how many points or rebounds she contributed after she should have been sitting?

Dayton Rockettes																Team Games		
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts			
Bucklew, Patti	40		3	7	3	4		5	5		6				9			
Craig, Denise	10		4	18	0	0		14	14		6				8			
Franklin, Connie	25		Name Not in Newspapers															
Greene, Vivian	24		11	33	2	2		5	5		4				24			
Holman, Joy	3		0	0	0	0		0	0		0				0			
McKenzie, Michelle	20		3	10	2	4		2	2		3				8			
Payne, Felicia	21		0	2	2	5		3	3		1				2			
Pitts, Brenda	14		0	0	0	0		0	0		1				0			
Scott, Angela	23		9	14	3	9		7	7		5				21			
Tomich, Vonnice	5		12	21	5	5		5	5		4				29			
Adjustment		265																
Totals		265	42	105	17	29	0	41	41	0	30	0	0	0	101			
			FG%	40.0%	FT%	58.6%	Team Rebs		14									

Houston Angels																Team Games
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	
Auhlenbacher, Karen	11	Did Not Travel	6	15	10	11		3	3		6					22
Bubrig, Patty	33		0	0	0	0		2	2		1					0
Candler, Belinda	24		10	18	7	9		13	13		4					27
Chapman, Vicky	22		7	17	6	10		12	12		4					20
Dobson, Gail	25															
Holleyman, Glenda	20		0	0	3	5		2	2		0					3
Johnson, Pat	45		2	4	0	0		1	1		2					4
Jones, Belinda	23		4	9	0	0		3	3		5					8
Kenlaw, Jessie	40		1	1	0	0		6	6		2					2
Mayo, Paula	10	6	11	2	6	4	4	5	14							
Mosley, Dolly	14	Did Not Travel														
Washington, Cynthia	15		0	3	2	2		0	0		0					2
Adjustment		265														
Totals		265	36	78	30	43	0	46	46	0	29	0	0	0	102	
			FG%	46.2%	FT%	69.8%	Team Rebs		19							

The Rockettes were led by Vonnice Tomich's 29. Vivian Greene had 24 on 11 of 33 from the field, while Angela Scott had 21 with seven rebounds. Denise Craig kept up her board work with 14 but could only score eight. Both Patti Bucklew and Denise Craig fouled out. Yet the game was probably lost at the free throw line where the Rockettes hit only 17 of 29 (59%) versus Houston's 30 of 43 (70%).

For the visiting Angels, Belinda Candler continued her love affair with Hara Arena as she had 27 points in this game, which was close to her 30 from her first game in December. She also pulled down 13 rebounds. Karen Auhlenbacher, who missed the first Hara Arena game because of a teaching assignment, came through with 22, including 10 of 11 from the line. Of course, Karen was given six fouls, of which three weren't really hers. Vicky Chapman added 20 points and 12 rebounds. Paula Mayo only had 14 points and four rebounds, so allowing her to remain in the game may not have been as beneficial as believed.

Houston left Dayton with their winning streak extended to five games and their 7-1 record was three games superior to Dayton's 4-4 record. This was probably the make-or-break game of the season for Dayton. A 5-3 record and trailing their conference leader by one game would have meant so much. How would things for the Rockettes have been different with a healthy Sheila Patterson and a big victory over the Angels to create just a one game difference?

Unfortunately for Dayton, this game should never have been this close. Yet because the Rockettes lost in overtime to the best team, instead of thinking positively of themselves and continuing strongly their mindset could only be measured by their next several games.

The Rockettes had another six days to recover and get back on the horse. Their next two home games were against teams they had already beaten New York & Chicago.

On January 18th a small Dayton Daily News clipping speculated that Sheila Patterson might be able to return to the team in March. As of January, she was beginning her weightlifting rehabilitation.

In an unusual side note that needed to be presented, the Dayton Daily News on the 19th stated that tryouts for the Dayton Rockettes would be taking place on January 28th at Amelia High School in the Cincinnati area. They were doing this, because the team was only carrying 10 players and needed more bench strength.

In another revelatory piece the Daily News also stated that owner Louis Deitelbaum was already looking to sell the team. One of the original speculated owners, Fred "Curly" Morrison of Columbus might be back in the picture. An Ohio person at least meant the team would stay in Dayton.

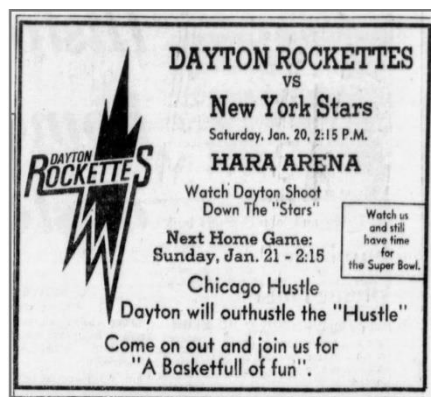
The Journal Herald gave the stats for each team in this early season match-up.

<u>Dayton</u>			<u>New York</u>		
C	Patti Bucklew	12.6	Althea Gwyn	23.1	16.1 rpg
F	Denise Craig	15.3	Mara Melbourne	15.5	
F	Angela Scott	17.5	Faye Young	9.0	
G	Vivian Greene	26.1	Janice Thomas	13.0	
G	Vonnie Tomich	15.1	Maria Gross	7.7	

With a good week of practice on Saturday January 20, the Rockettes welcomed the (4-5) New York Stars. The Stars were also a team like Dayton that began the year 0-3, but began to put things together.

After a fantastic crowd of 2,478 the week before, who witnessed an epic overtime performance, this game only attracted 397. This went against the league hopes that said once people saw the product they would return. This Saturday game's attendance would be an indicator of the struggle all the teams in the league would face.

The first quarter score was unknown, but New York had a 56-49 half time lead. The score after three quarters was also unknown. Yet with 1:50 left in the game the Rockettes had a seven-point lead and couldn't hold it. They had the ball with 11 seconds left, but a turnover ended the game and sent it to overtime. The regulation score was probably 97-97, but this was also unknown.





New York prevailed in overtime, 112-107. For the 2nd game in a week the Rockettes lost an overtime game. And again, the free throw discrepancy played a big role. The Stars were 28 of 42 (67%) versus Dayton's 11 of 20 (55%). Dayton was obviously putting up good numbers from the field, but weak free throw shooting was killing them.

This made their record 4-5, which could easily have been 6-3 with the right breaks. The Rockettes were led by Angela Scott's 30 points and 16 rebounds. Vivian Greene had 22 points. Dayton had six players with double figures, including Denise Craig who had 14 which went with her 19 rebounds. Michelle McKenzie had 13 before she fouled out.

Dayton Rockettes																Team Ge			
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts				
Bucklew, Patti	40		5	12	2	2		5	5		4					12			
Craig, Denise	10		7	18	0	0			19	19						5	14		
Franklin, Connie	25		Name Not in Newspapers																
Greene, Vivian	24		11	31	0	2		8	8		4					22			
Holman, Joy	3		1	3	0	0		0	0		1					2			
McKenzie, Michelle	20		6	15	1	3		9	9	6						13			
Payne, Felicia	21		0	2	0	0		0	0		0					0			
Pitts, Brenda	14		1	3	1	2		1	1		1					3			
Scott, Angela	23		13	20	4	5		16	16		3					30			
Tomich, Vonnice	5		4	8	3	6		1		1						5	11		
Adjustment		265																	
Totals		265	48	112	11	20	1	58	59	0	29	0	0	0	107				
			FG%	42.9%	FT%	55.0%	Team Rebs												

New York Stars																Team Ge		
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts			
Arturi, Lynn	23	Name Not in Newspapers							0							0		
Bailey, Darlene	11		5	9	1	2		8	8							4	11	
Fletcher, Carmen	30		1	4	2	4		5	5							2	4	
Geils, Donna	21	Injured - Ankle																
Gross, Maria	12		2	5	0	0		2	2							3	4	
Gwyn, Althea	31		5	16	11	15		15	15							3	21	
Howard, Barbara	13	Name Not in Newspapers																
Melbourne, Mara	24		9	17	6	8		7	7							3	24	
Novarr, Harriet	15	Name Not in Newspapers							0								0	
Thomas, Janice	10		11	23	4	7	8	8	3	26								
Young, Faye	22		2	6	2	2	4	4	0	6								
Young, Kaye	20		7	16	2	4	6	6	2	16								
Adjustment		265																
Totals		265	42	96	28	42	0	55	55	0	20	0	0	0	112			
			FG%	43.8%	FT%	66.7%	Team Rebs											

The Stars evened their record at 5-5, and their star players were beginning to emerge and establish their dominance. The leading scorer was 5'3" Janice Thomas who had 26 points and eight rebounds. Mara Melbourne added 24 points, while 6'2" Althea Gwyn had 21 points and 15 rebounds, though she had to sit out some of the 3rd and 4th quarters with a bruised leg.

A record of 4-5, with two of those losses in overtime, could lead in one of two directions. You either knew you were a good team going through a difficult time, or you didn't believe in yourself, and you see obstacles you don't think you can overcome. With another home game Dayton was at a crossroads. Their next game was the next day, Sunday the 21st. The strong Chicago team they had beaten when the Hustle were 5-1 had fallen to 7-4.

This Super Bowl Sunday game only drew 302. Those who came out to Hara Arena wanted to see the fastest show in the league, the Hustle, take on Dayton. Chicago lived up to its reputation by putting up 34 in the first quarter. Yet they did give up 29 to Dayton.

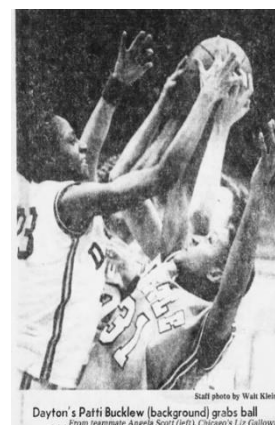
With Dayton trailing 36-31 and 9:55 on the clock Coach Griffey pulled Vivian Greene out of the game, even though she was 5-10 from the field for 10 points. Griffey and assistant coach Haney, who made the suggestion, felt the team was relying too much on Greene. This dependence was wearing her down and after an overtime game the day before she needed rest. Brenda Pitts took over and scored six points as her replacement in the 2nd quarter. Patti Bucklew also added nine points in that period. With greater ball distribution Dayton outscored Chicago 29-17 in the 2nd quarter to take a 58-51 lead.



Coach Griffey continued limiting Greene's minutes and when she returned with 7:38 left the Rockettes were ahead 66-58. When she returned there was a marked change in her approach to the game. Even Chicago coach Doug Bruno said she was more patient in taking her shots.

Yet it was her running mate Vonnie Tomich who was taking charge in the 3rd quarter. Tomich had nine points at the half made 5 of 7 with two free throws in the 3rd quarter for 12 of Dayton's 25 points. The Rockettes felt like they were in control with an 83-71 lead going into the 4th quarter.

In the 4th quarter Greene and Michelle McKenzie each put up eight points as the Rockettes outscored Chicago 29-17 for a 112-88 victory.



Dayton stopped their two-game losing streak and showed they were a team to be taken seriously. Their 5-5 record on the 21st meant they were tied with New York, and the Gems were close behind at 4-7. Only the Angels didn't cooperate as they were 8-1 at this time.

Dayton, using basically a seven-player rotation, had seven of their nine players with double figures. Vonnie Tomich had 25 points, eight assists, and six personal fouls. Vivian Green had 24 points, while Patti Bucklew had 16. Denise Craig and Angela Scott kept up their tremendous board work with 18 and 10 respectively. The free throw difference switched in Dayton's favor as they hit 24 of 34 (71%) versus Chicago's 12 of 18 (67%).

Chicago, who played without Rita Easterling in their earlier loss, didn't fare any better with her. While Rita had 15 points and 11 assists, she also had 12 turnovers. The leading scorer was Debby Waddy-Rossow with 17. The previous game's high scorer Janie Fincher was held to just eight points.

Dayton Rockettes																Team Game #	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat	
Bucklew, Patti	40	34	7	12	2	4	2	2	4	1	5	2	3	2	16	0.618	
Craig, Denise	10	40	3	8	5	6	6	12	18	1	4	3	3	2	11	0.775	
Franklin, Connie	25	Name not in Box Score															
Greene, Vivian	24	31	9	22	6	6	1	3	4	3	2	5	4	0	24	1.129	
Holman, Joy	3	2	2	4	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	4	3.500	
McKenzie, Michelle	20	23	4	12	2	2	1	4	5	2	1	4	2	0	10	0.913	
Payne, Felicia	21	Name not in Box Score															
Pitts, Brenda	14	26	4	11	2	3	0	1	1	2	1	4	4	1	10	0.577	
Scott, Angela	23	46	5	13	2	5	8	2	10	3	2	6	5	0	12	0.630	
Tomich, Vonnice	5	38	10	22	5	8	0	4	4	8	6	1	5	0	25	1.079	
Totals		240	44	104	24	34	19	28	47	20	22	27	26	5	112	0.833	
			FG%	42.3%	FT%	70.6%	Team Rebs										

Chicago Hustle															Team Game #	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Digitale, Sue	21	38	5	11	1	1	0	7	7	4	6	1	6	3	11	0.553
Duckworth, Tesa	44	24	6	13	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	2	2	0	12	0.542
Easterling, Rita	15	39	5	13	5	6	0	3	3	11	5	2	12	0	15	0.769
Fincher, Janie	10	20	4	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	5	0	8	0.200
Galloway, Liz	31	37	6	10	2	3	0	7	7	2	4	3	7	0	14	0.568
Logan, Karen	4	35	4	6	0	2	1	1	2	1	2	0	9	1	8	0.086
Peppler, Mary Jo	8	9	1	3	1	2	1	4	5	0	3	0	1	1	3	0.778
Rainey, Sandra	23	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000
Stachon, Toni	14	7	0	1	0	0	0	2	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	1.000
Waddy-Rossow, Debby	25	30	7	14	3	4	1	7	8	0	3	0	3	0	17	0.733
Totals		240	38	80	12	18	3	32	35	20	28	10	45	5	88	0.533
			FG%	47.5%	FT%	66.7%	Team Rebs									

The team's success on the court was not being seen off the court. Reps from the league office were checking on where Dayton stood with their financial obligations. It seemed owner Louis Deitelbaum was not present enough to help the team. Deitelbaum said he wanted to be a part of the team, but he was also trying to find a new owner.

General Manager Tim Koelbe's front office consisted of Mike Valentine, a salesperson, and Toni Wolfe, an administrative assistant. Commissioner Byrne promised that things would get better for the Rockettes.

As for Mike Valentine – he would become the owner of the New Mexico Energizer of the Ladies Professional Basketball Association in late 1980. His team would host the 1981 WBL All-Star Game in Albuquerque in an effort to be included in the WBL. His rise from sales in Dayton to owner in New Mexico might be an indicator of the fragility of women's pro basketball in its early years.

The Dayton Rockettes, who were 5-5, but easily could have been 7-3, went to meet their thorn in the side, the Houston Angels. On Friday January 26th the Rockettes invaded the Astro Arena to try and snap the seven-game winning streak of Houston.

1,290 came out to watch the Rockettes take a 28-22 first quarter lead, behind the 12 points put up by Denise Craig. Yet the constant subbing by Houston and the bench results turned into a 30-18 Angel blitz. Subs Glenda Holleyman and Pat Johnson led the way with three baskets each

and a shot and steal by Jessie Kenlaw. The Angels' 52-46 lead became 71-62 after three quarters.

In the previous game the Rockettes overcame an Angel eight-point 4th quarter advantage to take the game to overtime. But there was a difference between a big crowd spurring you on at home and the quiet arenas on the road. Houston put a 34-19 hit on Dayton to take a 105-81 win.

Houston jumped up to 10-1, while Dayton slid back to 5-6. Just two weeks ago what could have been a one game deficit had become a real five game deficit.

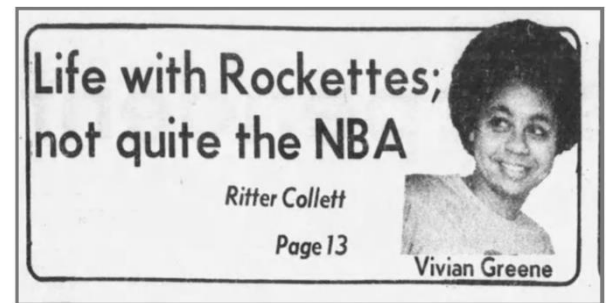
The rebounding and scoring duo of Denise Craig and Angela Scott had 16 and 14 boards respectively, while scoring 18 and 22. Vivian Greene came through with 19, but only Vonnie Tomich with nine came close to double figures.

Dayton Rockettes															Team Game #	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Bucklew, Patti	40	22	2	6	0	0		1	1	1	4	1	2		4	0.273
Craig, Denise	10	44	8	15	2	4		16	16	3	4	2	5		18	0.841
Franklin, Connie	25	7	1	4	2	4		2	2	0	0	1	1		4	0.857
Greene, Vivian	24	39	7	24	5	6		3	3	1	4	4	4		19	0.615
Holman, Joy	3	8	1	3	0	0		1	1	0	1		3		2	0.000
McKenzie, Michelle	20	18	0	5	0	0		3	3	0	2	2			0	0.278
Payne, Felicia	21	8	0	2	0	0		1	1	1	3				0	0.375
Pitts, Brenda	14	12	1	2	1	5		3	3	0	1		2		3	0.333
Scott, Angela	23	45	7	16	8	14		14	14	0	3		2		22	0.756
Tomich, Vonnie	5	37	3	13	3	4		4	4	3	3	2	6		9	0.405
Totals		240	30	90	21	37	0	48	48	9	25	12	25	0	81	0.558
			FG%	33.3%	FT%	56.8%	Team Rebs									

Houston Angels															Team Game #	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Auhlenbacher, Karen	11	34	8	13	3	4		4	4	2	4	1	5		19	0.676
Bubrig, Patty	33	20	1	5	0	0		1	1	0	1	3	1	1	2	0.250
Candler, Belinda	24	31	6	11	3	7		12	12	0	0	3	4	1	15	0.839
Chapman, Vicky	22	21	4	9	1	2		3	3	4	3	1	6		9	0.714
Dobson, Gail	25	6	3	3	2	2		4	4	0	1		3	1	8	1.500
Holleyman, Glenda	20	18	3	5	2	3		3	3	3	1	1	3		8	0.833
Johnson, Pat	45	22	4	9	2	2	1	6	7	3	3		1	1	10	1.000
Jones, Belinda	23	28	1	5	3	4		3	3	4	2		3		5	0.464
Kenlaw, Jessie	40	17	5	11	3	6	3	12	15	0	5	1		1	13	1.706
Mayo, Paula	10	26	1	5	2	5		10	10	5	3	1	1	6	4	0.923
Mosley, Dolly	14	4	0	1	0	0		1	1	0	1				0	0.250
Washington, Cynthia	15	13	3	8	6	6		2	2	3	2	3	1		12	1.692
Totals		240	39	85	27	41	4	61	65	24	26	14	28	11	105	0.850
			FG%	45.9%	FT%	65.9%	Team Rebs									

Houston spread their points out over 11 players with Karen Aulenbacher leading the way with 19, Belinda Candler with 15 points and 12 rebounds, along with Jessie Kenlaw's 13 points and 15 rebounds in only 17 minutes.

A large Journal Herald article on January 31st highlighted the life of a pro player. The article was titled: *Life in WBL isn't NBA* focused on the lives of Vivian Greene and Vonnie Tomich. All 12 players share apartments in the same Northland Village complex. (Because they offered the players six-month leases) The recognition and adulation and endorsements were not there yet and the players recognize how delicate the situation is. If the crowds don't pick up their livelihood could stop quickly. The players were still trying to figure out if there was a "social" life in Dayton.



The players' salaries, which they were not allowed to reveal, wasn't great, but it allowed them to pay for the necessities to survive. Off-season jobs would be needed. Vivian Greene, who was six hours from getting her teaching-certificate weighed the options and knew pro basketball was for her.

This Dayton story became national news in the Lancaster, Ohio Eagle, the Montgomery (Alabama) Advertiser, the Shreveport (Louisiana) Times, and the Newark (Ohio) Advocate for examples.

In what seemed like a Dayton newspaper battle the Daily News countered with an article of their own about the WBL as a whole on February 2nd. In general, the WBL owners were not complaining about lack of funds. In fact, the league was going to expand the schedule to 50 games in 1979-80. Yet attendance was something that needed to be addressed. All the

owners were in it for a three-year run, but they knew adjustments needed to be made. The length of the game was one issue – it should be cut to four 10-minute quarters. This way they were different than the men's game.

In other cities there was an acceptance by the Chicago Bulls towards the Hustle as the Bulls had some Hustle players interviewed on their radio station. The Hustle games were currently being broadcast over WWMM-FM and had been on several WGN-TV broadcasts.

But as an example of how front office reps were supposed to speak about the future was given by Dick McDowell of the Houston Angels, who said:

Houston claims an average attendance of 1,500 – 1,800, and public relations director Dick McDowell says he anticipates crowds of 3000-plus the rest of the year.

"We've developed a great deal of interest among girls', as well as boys', teams," said McDowell. "We're finding coaches of 10-12 year old kids like to have them watch because it's better to learn from our game."

"We'll have radio next year, and I won't be surprised if we have TV. We're definitely on the upswing now."

With Houston out of the way it was back to Dayton to regroup and practice. The next road game against New York wouldn't be until Friday February 2nd. This would be a battle for 2nd place. New Jersey had fallen on hard times and were 4-9 at this time, so it was going to be the 6-6 New York Stars hosting the 5-6 Rockettes. A Dayton victory would put them into 2nd.



Rockettes Coach Tom Griffey discussing strategy, or fans?

This was the perfect opportunity for Dayton, because the Stars had fired Alan Cissorky on January 26th. This was even after a 101-96 overtime victory over the Milwaukee Does. Coach Cissorky had a winning 6-5 record when he was dismissed.

In the first of many player/coach interim opportunities in the league's history, guard Donna Geils, who would later become the Commissioner of the WNBA from 2005-2011, coached the Stars.

The team played well under Donna, but lost to the Houston Angels 82-72. Donna went back to the hardwood as the Stars brought in an acknowledged AAU success named LaVozier Lamar.

On Friday February 2nd, in the Mulcahy Center of Iona College, 742 fans came out to watch. In the first quarter Dayton took a commanding 25-20 lead, which shrunk to 51-50 at the half. The Stars came out of the locker room and took the lead 80-77. Dayton scrapped, but couldn't overcome the dominant performance of Althea Gwyn, as they lost 104-102. Their third close loss in five games. The Rockettes fell to 5-7, while the Stars rose to 7-6.

Dayton Rockettes															Team Games
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Bucklew, Patti	40		8	10	0	1		9	9		5				16
Craig, Denise	10		10	20	2	2		12	12		5				22
Franklin, Connie	25	Name Not in Newspapers													
Greene, Vivian	24		10	23	0	0		3	3		5				20
Holman, Joy	3		1	1	0	0		0	0		1				2
McKenzie, Michelle	20		2	7	0	0		5	5		3				4
Payne, Felicia	21		0	1	0	0		0	0		0				0
Pitts, Brenda	14		2	4	0	0		3	3		0				4
Scott, Angela	23		5	13	2	2		7	7		3				12
Tomich, Vonnice	5		7	14	8	13		2	2		5				22
Adjustment		240													
Totals		240	45	93	12	18	0	41	41	0	27	0	0	0	102
			FG%	48.4%	FT%	66.7%	Team Rebs		12						

New York Stars															Team Games
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Arturi, Lynn	23		1	7	0	0		1	1		3				2
Bailey, Darlene	11		0	0	0	0		0	0		1				0
Fletcher, Carmen	30		2	7	2	5		4	4		1				6
Geils, Donna	21	Injured - Ankle													
Gross, Maria	12		4	4	0	0		0	0		1				8
Gwyn, Althea	31		17	28	4	5	15	13	28		2				38
Howe, Connie	25	Name Not in Newspapers													
Melbourne, Mara	24		6	12	1	2		13	13		5				13
Novarr, Harriet	15	Name Not in Newspapers													
Thomas, Janice	10		6	13	3	5		3	3		2				15
Young, Faye	22		5	11	3	5		4	4		3				13
Young, Kaye	20		2	15	5	8		5	5		2				9
Adjustment		240													
Totals		240	43	97	18	30	15	43	58	0	20	0	0	0	104
			FG%	44.3%	FT%	60.0%	Team Rebs		10						

Denise Craig led the Dayton scorers with 22 points and 12 rebounds. Vonnie Tomich added 22 points, while Vivian Greene had 20.

New York, which had a 58-41 rebound advantage, were led by one of the most dominant WBL games in history. Althea Gwyn came through with 38 points and 28 rebounds. The 28 rebounds established a record that was never broken, but was tied two other times. Janice Thomas' 15 points and Mara Melbourne's 13 points and 13 rebounds seemed miniscule compared to Althea's numbers.

Coach Lamar was off to a great start, a victory.

Since their close home opener loss to begin the legacy of the WBL, the Milwaukee Does had been struggling. After firing Candace Klinzig, after one game she was replaced by George Nicodemus who didn't fare much better as he accumulated a 2-8 record. He was then replaced by General Manager Gene DeLisle, who was 0-3 to bring the team total to 2-12.

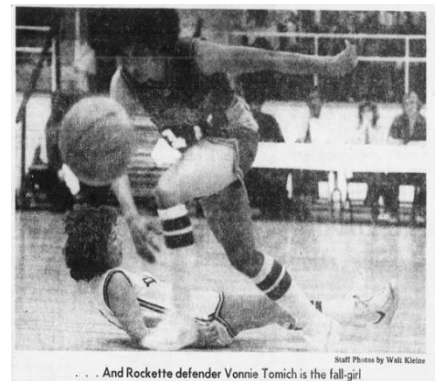


The (2-12) Does came to Hara Arena on Sunday February 4, to play the (5-7) Rockettes. Milwaukee took an early 24-10 lead. But Dayton fought back to make it 28-21 after one quarter. By the half the lead was down to three at 44-41. The 3rd quarter saw the Does go ahead five times, the Rockettes had the lead six times, and the score was tied four times. Dayton led 66-65 going into the 4th quarter.

After Milwaukee hit the first shot of the quarter, they built up an 85-75 lead with 5:42 left. The Rockettes came back and with less than a minute they forced a Does turnover and Vivian Greene hit a shot and was fouled. With the score 91-90 and two chances to make one, Greene missed both free throws. The Rockettes forced a 10 second violation and got the ball back. But a missed shot and a Milwaukee basket finally led to a 95-92 Milwaukee victory. The 1,009 present left shaking their heads over the number of close games the Rockettes were losing. Four of their last six were overtime or in the three-point range.



The Dayton's lack of a bench was causing the starters to play a lot of minutes. Three players played 48 minutes and a fourth played 44. Vonnie Tomich had 30 points, while both Vivian Greene and Denise Craig had 22 points each. Denise pulled down 16 rebounds, while Angela Scott pulled down 12 to go with her 12 points. Patti Bucklew fouled out of her 6th game for the season. Yet the Rockettes couldn't blame this loss on the foul line as they shot 30 of 44 (68%) to the Does 13 of 21 (62%).



Dayton Rockettes															Team Game #	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Bucklew, Patti	40	24	1	4	0	0		4	4	0	6	0			2	0.250
Craig, Denise	10	44	8	17	6	8		16	16	1	3	1			22	0.932
Franklin, Connie	25	Name not in Newspaper														
Greene, Vivian	24	48	7	25	8	12		5	5	7	3	0			22	0.854
Holman, Joy	3	Name not in Newspaper														
McKenzie, Michelle	20	22	0	3	1	2		3	3	1	5	1			1	0.318
Payne, Felicia	21	6	1	1	0	0		0	0	1	2	0			2	0.667
Pitts, Brenda	14	Name not in Newspaper														
Scott, Angela	23	48	4	12	5	7		12	12	0	1	2		3	13	0.563
Tomich, Vonnie	5	48	10	16	10	15		1	1	1	3	2			30	0.729
Adjustment							10	-10					22			
Totals		240	31	78	30	44	10	31	41	11	23	6	22	3	92	0.579
			FG%	39.7%	FT%	68.2%	Team Rebs		16							

Milwaukee Does																Team Game #	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat	
Booker, Gerry	24	38	6	11	1	2		13	13	1	3	3			13	0.816	
DeBoer, Kathy	13	13	2	5	0	0		1	1	1	1	0			4	0.538	
Decker, Patti	44	Name not in Newspaper															
Dennis, Brenda	10	35	9	16	3	4		2	2	5	6	2			21	1.000	
Ellis, Cindy	25	14	3	6	0	1		2	2	1	3	0			6	0.714	
Fuller, Jan	28	Name not in Newspaper															
Gehrke, Lynda	33	32	5	9	0	0		3	3	0	4	2			10	0.469	
Hostert, Barb	6	1	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0			0	0.000	
Keeley, Marguerite	31	27	4	10	2	2		4	4	0	3	2			10	0.593	
Prevost, Deb	32	44	7	20	1	3		6	6	6	6	2			15	0.795	
Smith, Joanie	1	36	5	13	6	9		4	4	5	5	1			16	0.861	
Zweig, Doris	15	Name not in Newspaper															
Adjustment							8	-8					24				
Totals		240	41	90	13	21	8	27	35	19	31	12	24	0	95	0.650	
			FG%	45.6%	FT%	61.9%	Team Rebs		15								

Coach Griffey was trying not to express his frustration out loud as the losses were causing chinks in the Dayton armor. The lack of discipline that was present with Coach Mann was now resurfacing with the losses. The problem wasn't disrespect, it was when running an offense, people were not passing the ball, and they were firing up shots at the wrong times.

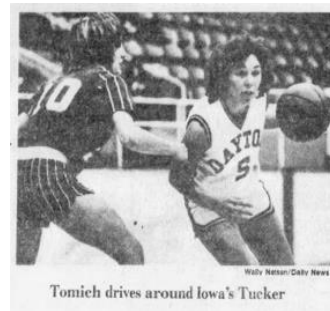
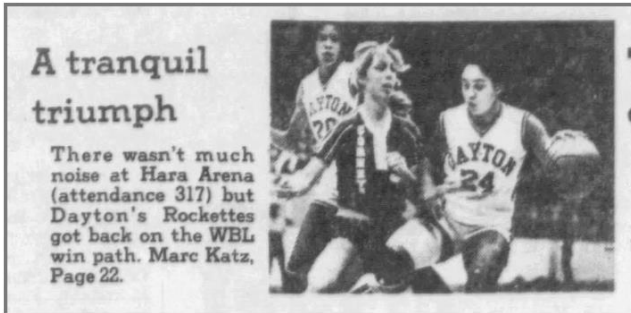
When one player had a hot hand, such as Tomich who shot 5 of 7 in the first half and only 5 of 9 in the 2nd half, they should have been getting the ball. Instead, Vivian Green, who was 7-25, was defaulting back to her college days when the team expected her to carry the load.

A February 6th Dayton Daily News article's headline stated: *Puzzled Rockettes Can't Explain Nosedive*. The players knew that something was wrong with the team, but either they weren't sure what it was or they didn't want to say.

We should be winning," agrees high-scoring guard Vivian Green, she of the 25-foot shots. "But the atmosphere is very clustered with problems. Everybody has feelings, but they keep them to themselves. It's been closed (kept inside), but you can feel it in the air."

For the Does who were struggling to get victories, this was their first one under interim coach Gene DeLisle. This was also the team's 2nd victory against the Rockettes. So, the Does were 1-12 against the rest of the league and 2-0 against Dayton. The Does had six players with double figures, with Brenda Dennis' 21 leading the way. Joanie Smith, who had 37 in the previous game was held to 16.

By game 14 the Rockettes were scheduled to meet the only team they hadn't played, the Iowa Cornets.



When the Cornets ventured into Hara Arena on Tuesday February 6th they didn't have to worry about crowd intimidation. Only 317 joined the Rockettes in trying to beat the Cornets. Yet not all 317 were Dayton fans, as friends and family of Iowa's guard Robin Tucker travelled the 70 miles from Grandview, Ohio to Dayton.

The two teams battled to a standoff at 23. The Cornet's 31-25 2nd quarter gave them a 54-48 lead. The Cornets provided the half-time entertainment at Hara as the ball handling wizard, Tanya Crevier, performed for the crowd. Her Pete Maravich like skills had been honed over years of practice and she would share these "tricks" with people for the next 50 years.

Yet the Rockettes similar 31-25 quarter only meant the score was tied at 79 after three quarters. Of course, because the Rockettes actually trailed by 12 midways in the 3rd quarter meant they used up a lot of energy to achieve their tie score.

The Rockettes took an 89-85 lead, but Iowa fought back and carried a 107-102 lead into the final minute of the game. The late game challenges that Dayton had recently experienced helped them attack the Cornets with confidence. Within 30 seconds Tomich made one of two free throws and Vivian Greene drove the lane to get the team within 107-105 with 30 seconds left. A stolen inbounds pass and another Greene layup tied the score. Iowa couldn't score, so Dayton was about to play its 3rd overtime game in 23 days.

The overtime was all Dayton as they outscored Iowa 13-6, for a 120-113 victory. The Rockettes had five players with 20+ points – Bucklew 27, Tomich 26, Scott & Greene 21's, and Michelle McKenzie with 20.

Standout rebounder Denise Craig was unable to play as she was home because of the death of her father.

(Picture: Michelle McKenzie & Pattie Bucklew)



Dayton Rockettes															Team Games
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Bucklew, Patti	40		13	18	1	3		14	14		5				27
Craig, Denise	10	DNP - Death in Family													
Franklin, Connie	25		0	1	0	0		1	1		1				0
Greene, Vivian	24		7	28	7	10		8	8		5				21
Holman, Joy	3		0	1	1	2		0	0		0				1
McKenzie, Michelle	20		6	16	8	15		12	12		4				20
Payne, Felicia	21		1	6	0	2		3	3		1				2
Pitts, Brenda	14		1	3	0	0		0	0		2				2
Scott, Angela	23		7	13	7	8		12	12		5				21
Tomich, Vonnice	5		11	30	4	6		1	1		5				26
Adjustment		265											29		
Totals		265	46	116	28	46	0	51	51	0	28	0	29	0	120
			FG%	39.7%	FT%	60.9%	Team Rebs		24						

Iowa Cornets															Team Games
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Alt, Suzanne	42		1	3	0	0		4	4		1				2
Bolin, Molly	30		6	16	3	3		1	1		3				15
Draving, Doris	50		8	18	6	6		12	12		6				22
Green, Anita	12		1	5	1	2		0	0		2				3
Hawkins, Kathy	14	Name not in Newspaper													
Kunzmann, Connie	44		1	2	0	1		1	1		0				2
Penquite, Rhonda	32		1	2	0	0		1	1		3				2
Rutter, Nancy	34		1	4	0	2		5	5		5				2
Sharps, Denise	20		10	21	5	6		7	7		6				25
Thomas, Debra	40		2	3	0	0		1	1		1				4
Tucker, Robin	10		7	13	3	4		3	3		2				17
Uhl, Joan	22		8	9	3	4		8	8		6				19
Adjustment		265											42		
Totals		265	46	96	21	28	0	43	43	0	35	0	42	0	113
			FG%	47.9%	FT%	75.0%	Team Rebs		24						

For Iowa Denise Sharps had 25, before she fouled out. Doris Draving had 22, before she fouled out and Joan Uhl had 19 before she fouled out. In this case Dayton's home cooking of 28 of 46 (61%) free throws was a benefit compared to Iowa's 21 of 28 (75%).

Dayton coach Tom Griffey evened his coaching record to 6-6, while the team was now 6-8. The Cornets record of 8-6 made the Midwest Division very tight. As of February 6th, Chicago was 9-7, Iowa 8-6, and Minnesota 7-7. Three teams within one game of each other.

As for the East Division – Houston was running away with a 13-1 record, New York was 8-6, and Dayton was 6-8. So, Dayton was just two games out of 2nd place.



While the Rockettes were losing close games it seemed the Dayton franchise was cursed. The WBL Commissioner, Bill Bryne, "fired" the Dayton owner, Louis Deitelbaum. At the time the Rockettes were being sued by T.V. Travel, Inc. for issuing bad checks for their services.

In December T.V. Travel received a bad \$584 check and a bad \$1,014 check. Then in January they received a bad \$4,194 and a bad \$1,436. The bad checks caused concern about future away games. As for the players and Hara Arena, payments were all up to date.

But Bill Byrne had a different story. He said there were 10-12 outstanding checks, which led the league to loan Deitelbaum \$14,000 to clean up the books. When Byrne confronted Deitelbaum about the issues Louis said, "He was trying." The other owners told Byrne to get rid of the guy and run the team out of the league office. Byrne was also disappointed with the job Tim Koelbe had done, especially because Byrne was the one that recommended that Tim run the team.

Part of the current difficulty was the Rockettes had only made six road trips so far and there were still 11 more road games on the docket. So having the money for these trips was important.

As for the old saying, "All publicity is good," this lawsuit story also went national. Cities like Bloomington, Ill., Pensacola, Fl., New Orleans, La., or Ohio cities like Fremont, Marion, and Mansfield jumped on the negative pub band wagon.

But back on the basketball court the Rockettes, on Friday February 9 said hello to Minnesota Fillies owner Gordon Nevers as he sat down in the head coach's seat. The 302 fans that came out didn't know or care who was on the other bench.

The Minnesota Fillies began the year poorly with a 1-6 record by January 7. With the firing of the female coaches this would have been a perfectly honorable occasion to send Head Coach Julia Yeater packing. But the Fillies began to put it together over the next 26 days when they reached the .500 level at 7-7. They were a formidable 6-1 and were within one game of the division lead.

Then on Sunday February 4th they travelled to New York and lost, making them 7-8. Sometime between February 4th and February 9th the Fillies owner Gordon Nevers decided to make a coaching change. Therefore, the last of the female coaches in the Women's Pro Basketball League was gone.

With Owner Nevers on the bench, the Fillies fell behind quickly 25-16. That Rockette lead increased to 18 but was eventually cut down to 44-36 by the half. In the first eight minutes of the 3rd quarter Minnesota outscored Dayton 19-10, to take a 55-54 lead. The Rockettes took the lead with an 8-1 run to hold a 62-56 lead.

In the first six minutes of the 4th quarter Minnesota went on a 20-11 run to take a 76-73 lead. But this was also before their star Marie Kocurek fouled out. Marie had 34 points on 13-18 from the field and 8-9 from the line.

The Rockettes shot a miserable 2 of 11 from the free throw line to end the game, which led to their 93-80 defeat. Coach Griffey said the Minnesota team played as a unit, while his team was playing as a bunch of individuals. Dayton fell to 6-9 with games against New York and Houston on the horizon. Minnesota, under owner Gordon Nevers, evened their record at 8-8.

Dayton Rockettes																Team Games
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	
Bucklew, Patti	40		7	13	5	9		12	12		5					19
Craig, Denise	10		3	7	2	3		8	8	4	4					8
Franklin, Connie	25	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0		0
Greene, Vivian	24		6	15	2	6		7	7	4	4					14
Holman, Joy	3		0	1	0	0		0	0		1					0
McKenzie, Michelle	20		3	7	1	2		3	3		2					7
Payne, Felicia	21		0	1	0	0		1	1		1					0
Pitts, Brenda	14		0	1	0	0		0	0		5					0
Scott, Angela	23		3	11	5	9		5	5		3					11
Tomich, Vonnie	5		7	15	7	9		2	2	4	4					21
Adjustment		238								4			28			
Totals		240	29	72	22	38	0	38	38	16	29	1	28	0		80
			FG%	40.3%	FT%	57.9%	Team Rebs		17							

Minnesota Fillies																Team Ge	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts		
Chapman, Brenda	15		7	22	7	11		3	3		3					21	
Cooper, Accronnetta	33		1	1	1	2		0	0		2					3	
DeLorme, Scooter	32		1	8	3	4		5	5		12					5	5
Engel, Cheryl	24		0	0	0	0		1	1		0					0	0
Jackson, Peggy	12		1	4	2	2		13	13		3					4	4
Kocurek, Marie	42		13	18	8	9		8	8		6					34	34
Koopman, Carol	25		1	4	0	0		2	2		2					2	2
Lundberg, Cindy	10		4	7	0	2		2	2		3					8	8
Sjoquist, Lynnette	55		Name not in Newspaper														
Wilson, Donna	11	7	17	2	2	8	8	1	16	16							
Wilson, Laurie	13	Name not in Newspaper															
Adjustment		240								12			25				
Totals		240	35	81	23	32	0	42	42	24	25	0	25	0	93		
			FG%	43.2%	FT%	71.9%	Team Rebs		17								

For Dayton Vonnice Tomich had 21 points and Patti Bucklew added 19 along with 12 rebounds. Vivian Green was held to 15 shots as she put up 14 points.

Over on the Minnesota side, Gordon Nevers made good use of Marie Kocurek. The league's leading scorer Brenda Chapman was held to 21, about 8 below her average. Donna Wilson came through with 16 points and 8 rebounds.

Back to the soap opera in the front office. Bill Byrne said he had located a new owner for the Rockettes, a car dealer from Munster, Indiana (near Chicago). Bill Lichtsinn would provide the \$50,000 fee that Byrne said he never received from Deitelbaum. Several articles said that Deitelbaum had put the money in security, but he wasn't paying for daily operations.

It also seemed the travel agency wasn't the only one receiving bad checks from Deitelbaum. His \$50,000 check to the league office was also no good. Which made sense as to why Bill Byrne first said he paid, because he had a check in hand, but the check was bad.

But, in reality Lichtsinn had not committed to the team. It was a rumor that the Dayton Daily News should never had printed, because certain details needed to be ironed out. This was why Louis Deitelbaum thought he was still in the picture for owning the Rockettes.

Hara Arena was behind two payments and a sporting goods store was also looking for money. But the most important issue was getting the team to New York.

In the Dayton community grassroots support was important. Letters to the Editor on February 11 from Katrin Smithback and Ann Eisenstein made sure they let people know of their support and what the people of Dayton were missing. The Dayton Daily News even included a picture of a team huddle to show their commitment to exposing the Rockettes to the people. Another letter was submitted on the 18th from Tina Thomas.



Newspaper exposure was also being given to Vivian Greene in the Newport News, Virginia Daily Press. Norfolk State University was Vivian's college basketball home, where she averaged 25.1 and led the team to a 74-22 record. Vivian wanted people to know her dreams had come true to play pro ball, and while she wasn't rich, she was comfortable. She was sharing an apartment with two other players. She also wanted to be sure that people knew she was working harder on defense, was taking less shots, and accumulating more assists and steals.

The one consistent theme with many players interviewed from all teams and from all areas was the belief that 10 years from now there would be a women's pro league and they helped get it all started.

Before the team left for New York the Dayton front office fired General Manager Tim Koelbe. His responsibilities would be assumed by Dave Almstead who was the Vice President of Licensing for the WBL. A search for a new general manager would be conducted, along with cementing the new ownership.

Three days after their embarrassing loss to Minnesota, the Rockettes travelled on the 12th to New York. The (6-9) Rockettes only trailed the (9-7) Stars by 2.5 games in the East Division. They were to play the Stars at the Mulchay Center of Iona College, which is in the quaint town of New Rochelle. Of course, you recognize this town as the home of Rob & Laura Petry of the Dick van Dyke Show. (I know you didn't care – but it is a fun fact.)

This Monday's contest drew only 312, which meant in the last three games the Rockettes played in front of 931 people. Three games – 931 people.

New York had a six-game home winning streak, while Dayton was 1-4 in their last five games. Dayton played a nice strong steady game as they fell behind by two in the first quarter but tied it up at 44-44 at the half.

With eight minutes left in the 3rd quarter New York had a 51-50 lead, when Althea Gwyn hobbled off the court with an ankle injury. With their intimidating defender and consistent scorer on the bench Dayton reeled off six points in a row. They carried this to the end of the quarter and had a 77-71 lead. Even though Gwyn returned for the 4th quarter Dayton's Patti Bucklew still added 14 points of her game high 26 to help the Rockettes to a 111-103 victory.

Dayton Rockettes																Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	
Bucklew, Patti	40		10	14	6	6		10	10		6				26	
Craig, Denise	10	48	8	18	6	6		21	21		4				22	
Franklin, Connie	25	Name not in Newspaper														
Greene, Vivian	24		12	29	2	4		10	10	5	2				26	
Holman, Joy	3		0	0	0	0		0	0		0				0	
McKenzie, Michelle	20		3	12	2	3		9	9		3				8	
Payne, Felicia	21		0	3	0	0		1	1		1				0	
Pitts, Brenda	14	Name not in Newspaper														
Scott, Angela	23		4	9	1	3		3	3		4				9	
Tomich, Vonnice	5		9	15	2	8		7	7		1				20	
Adjustment		192								7			27			
Totals		240	46	100	19	30	0	61	61	12	21	0	27	0	111	
			FG%	46.0%	FT%	63.3%	Team Rebs		11							

New York Stars																Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	
Arturi, Lynn	23		0	0	0	0		0	0		0				0	
Bailey, Darlene	11		0	0	0	0		0	0		0				0	
Fletcher, Carmen	30		1	4	0	0		3	3		0				2	
Geils, Donna	21		6	13	3	4		3	3		3				15	
Gross, Maria	12		0	5	0	0		1	1		1				0	
Gwyn, Althea	31		10	18	3	4		18	18		1				23	
Melbourne, Mara	24		6	16	3	5		14	14		5				15	
Novarr, Harriet	15		0	0	0	0		0	0		0				0	
Ransom, Gigi	25		1	5	0	0		4	4		3				2	
Thomas, Janice	10		9	20	6	7		2	2	7	6				24	
Young, Faye	22		5	12	3	5		8	8		2				13	
Young, Kaye	20		4	16	1	1		2	2		1				9	
Adjustment		240								13			30			
Totals		240	42	109	19	26	0	55	55	20	22	0	30	0	103	
			FG%	38.5%	FT%	73.1%	Team Rebs		12							

Dayton again had four people with over 20+ points. Patti Bucklew had 26 points on 10 of 14 from the field, along with 10 rebounds, before she fouled out for the 7th time this season. Vivian Greene had 26 points and five assists. Denise Craig became a member of the 20-20 club with 22 points and 21 rebounds. Lastly, we don't want to neglect Vonnice Tomich's 20 points and seven rebounds.

Speaking of 20-20's Althea Gwyn came within two rebounds short of her fifth 20-20 in five games. Her 18 rebounds and 23 points meant there could have been two 20-20's in the same game. Remarkable. Yet the Stars high scorer for the game was Janice Thomas, who had 24 points and seven assists before she fouled out. Also, ex-coach Donna Geils had 15 points, along with Mara Melbourne.

With their 111-103 victory the (7-9) Rockettes were within 1.5 games of the (9-8) Stars.

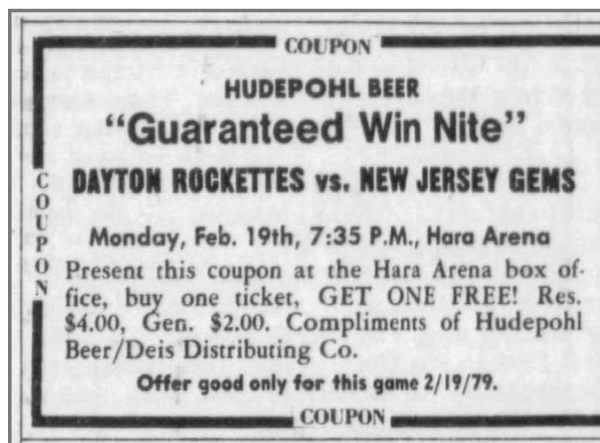


While the Rockettes were on the road there was optimism flowing out of the Hara Arena office. A white sheet of paper hung on the wall with the number 4,500. This was interim General Manager Dave Almstead's goal, or dream. When the Rockettes had their next home game, on Monday February 19th, he wanted 4,500 at the game.

The first priority was to re-establish the integrity of the league and the team, so bills were getting paid, and people were being dismissed. Mr. Almstead said the league was working with two separate entities to take control of the team. This would lead those who were paying attention to dismiss the Munster, Indiana car dealer, as the next owner.

A Daily News article on the 13th stated that the Rockettes had a game the next day Wednesday the 14th in Houston. The next home game on Monday the 19th against the New Jersey Gems would be another Guaranteed Win Night.

On February 14th, Valentine's Day, the (7-9) Rockettes and (14-2) Houston Angels met in The Summit. The Summit was the 17,000-seat home of the NBA's Houston Rockets. A Special Olympics Fund Raiser was tied to this game, so Houston was hoping for a large crowd.



The Angels did not bring their winning streak into this game. It ended at 11, when they ran into a buzz saw in Chicago and lost 120-98. They then recovered with a win over Iowa to make them 14-2.



Photo by Steve Ueckert, Chronicle Staff
Dayton Rockettes' Michelle McKenzie, right, sneaks up behind Houston Angels' Jessie Kenlaw and attempts to steal ball.

A great crowd of 4,793 (the 11th highest in WBL history and close to the number written on the wall of the Dayton office, came to watch a Celebrity/Media game before the Angels-Rockettes affair.

The Rockettes fell behind 21-17 after the first quarter. The Angels then had a 46-36 half-time lead when Vicky Chapman threw in a running hook to end the quarter. In the 3rd quarter Belinda Candler and Chapman scored easily over the shorter Rockettes and extended the lead to 74-62.

The Rockettes found themselves trailing 100-82 with 3:39 remaining. Houston had many of their subs playing, so when the Rockettes applied a full-court press, it worked. They outscored the Angels 16-4 in the final three minutes. The Rockettes got to within 104-98 before they ran out of time and lost 105-

100.

While this may have looked like a moral victory based on the final score the game was so bad according to Houston Coach Don Knodel that he didn't even want to see the videotapes.

Dayton Rockettes																Team Games
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	
Bucklew, Patti	40		3	9	4	4		13	13		6					10
Craig, Denise	10		11	18	2	3		12	12		5					24
Franklin, Connie	25		0	0	0	0		0	0		0					0
Greene, Vivian	24		9	23	0	0		9	9		6					18
Holman, Joy	3		0	1	0	0		0	0		1					0
McKenzie, Michelle	20		4	8	3	4		11	11		5					11
Payne, Felicia	21		1	1	0	2		2	2		1					2
Pitts, Brenda	14		1	3	0	3		0	0		0					2
Scott, Angela	23		6	16	3	4		5	5		3					15
Tomich, Vonnice	5		5	17	8	10		2	2		3					18
Adjustment		240								10			21			
Totals		240	40	96	20	30	0	54	54	10	30	0	21	0	100	
			FG%	41.7%	FT%	66.7%		Team Rebs	7							

Houston Angels																Team Games
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	
Auhlenbacher, Karen	11		5	11	8	8		1	1		0					18
Bubrig, Patty	33		0	1	0	0		2	2		1					0
Candler, Belinda	24		7	14	8	9		11	11		2					22
Chapman, Vicky	22		5	13	8	14		9	9		1					18
Holleyman, Glenda	20		2	8	4	4		3	3		1					8
Johnson, Pat	45		5	12	0	2		4	4		3					10
Jones, Belinda	23		3	8	0	0		4	4		0					6
Kenlaw, Jessie	40		4	9	3	8		12	12		5					11
Mayo, Paula	10		4	12	0	0		7	7		3					8
Mosley, Dolly	14		0	1	0	0		1	1		0					0
Waddell, Leanne	25		0	3	2	3		0	0		1					2
Washington, Cynthia	15		0	2	2	2		2	2		1					2
Adjustment		240								12			20			
Totals		240	35	94	35	50	0	56	56	12	18	0	20	0	105	
			FG%	37.2%	FT%	70.0%		Team Rebs	13							

Dayton's high scorer was Denise Craig with 24 points and 12 rebounds. The guards Vonnice Tomich and Vivian Greene each had 18 points. Patti Bucklew had 13 rebounds, before she fouled out and Greene also fouled out.

Belinda Candler led the Angels with 22 points and 11 rebounds. Karen Auhlenbacher and Vicky Chapman each had 18 points, while Vicky secured nine rebounds.

At the half-way point for the Rockettes, they had a record of 7-10. Let's look at the rest of the league near the halfway point of the 34-game season.

East Division

Houston	15	-	2	.882	-	-	-
New York	9	-	8	.529	6.0		
Dayton	7	-	10	.412	8.0		
New Jersey	5	-	11	.313	9.5		

Midwest Division

Iowa	10	-	7	.588	-	-	-
Chicago	11	-	8	.579	-	-	-
Minnesota	8	-	9	.471	2.0		
Milwaukee	4	-	14	.222	6.5		

For those who would follow the WBL through its entirety the fact that 5 of the 8 teams had all played the same number of games showed the preparedness and stability of the first year of a brand-new sports league. The next two years had franchise collapses, re-worked schedules, and great fluctuations in the number of games played.

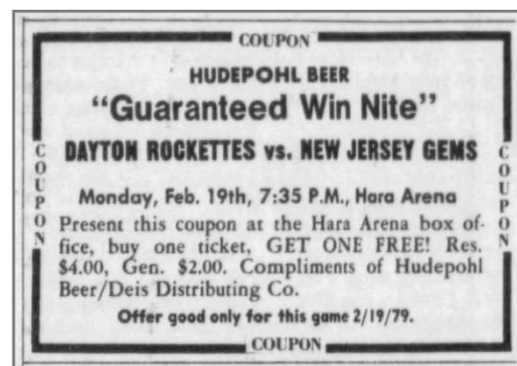
The next game scheduled for Dayton was a home game against the New Jersey Gems.

The hopes of 4,500 were riding high as both newspapers were promoting this on the day of the game:

But on February 19th there was a monster snowstorm that hit the East Coast. That evening the Dayton Daily News had the following headline: *Rockettes Postponed*

The Dayton Rockettes, poised for a full night of promotions tonight, have had to postpone it until Tuesday night.

Heavy snows hit the East Coast and the New Jersey Gems were unable to make it to Dayton for tonight's scheduled game at Hara Arena. The game will be played tomorrow at 7:35



On the morning of Tuesday, the 20th, the Daily News had the following info:

A Guaranteed (Gulp) Victory

When the Dayton Rockettes face the New Jersey Gems in tonight's Women's Professional Basketball League game scheduled for Hara Arena at 7:35 PM, they'll be putting the WBL's best player for last week on the floor.

Patti Bucklew has been chosen WBL Player of the Week, the Rockettes announced Monday. Bucklew had 26 points and 10 rebounds against New York Stars and 13 points and 13 rebounds against the Houston Angels.

Additionally, in the Stars game, she was 10 for 14 from the field, 6-for-6 from the line. Bucklew is the WBL's second best field goal shooter at 58.8 percent.

On the evening of the 20th the Daily News had the following headline:

Rockettes Lose to Snow Again

The Dayton Rockettes must be thinking about changing Guaranteed Win Night to Guaranteed Game Night.

For the second straight day, the snowbound New Jersey Gems were unable to mush their way from the East Coast to Dayton, forcing postponement of tonight's scheduled Guaranteed Win game.

No date has been picked for the game and an announcement is forthcoming when coupons and tickets will be honored.

For Dayton this postponed game may rank up there as a huge disappointment, along with the overtime loss early in the season. Was 4,500 possible for the Rockettes? With the creativity and perseverance of Dave Almstead a very large crowd was almost a certainty. Dayton as a pro basketball city might have worked if the team had put together a winning record and fans got excited over what they were seeing. Two games may have played a role in Dayton's future in the WBL.

Was momentum building for the Rockettes in Dayton? How about an official Booster's Club forming? Ann Bruns, president of the club, said the first meeting would be 6:15 pm the night of the Guaranteed Win Night. For \$5 a member got a booster badge and an opportunity to get tickets at half price. (As of 3/1/79 they had 40 paid members) Also on the 17th WAVI radio had Vivian Greene as a guest and she would field calls concerning the team.

On the 22nd the WBL announced their desire to expand the league with six new franchises. These would come from 28 different applicants from across the country. To the sportswriter, Ritter Collett of the Journal Herald, women's sports were not attracting people at the college level. Why was there a need for more pro teams? It was an insult to the intelligence of any potential investor, if they thought \$100,000 for a WBL franchise was a wise investment.

The second half of the season gave Dayton a chance to regroup and get moving forward. Their next game was on February 22nd in Minnesota. At the Metropolitan Sports Center the Fillies drew a crowd in the 300's. 331 came out this Thursday night. This would be the 4th in the last 5 games that were in the 300's to watch the Rockettes.

Two weeks earlier on February 9th the Fillies were changing coaches and Owner Gordon Nevers coached. 13 days later the Rockettes were facing a Fillies team with a new coach named Louis Mascari. This would be Louis' fourth game, and he was currently 1-2 with the Fillies.

Dayton took a 24-22 lead, which they expanded to 56-45. Minnesota could only reduce the score by one point after three quarters to 80-70. A 31-24 Fillies come back made the outcome closer, but it was still a 104-101 Dayton victory. Dayton raised their record to 8-10, while Minnesota, who were 7-7 at one point were now 9-11.

Dayton Rockettes																Team Games
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	
Bucklew, Patti	40		4	8	1	2		11	11		6					9
Craig, Denise	10		4	17	0	0		7	7		5					8
Franklin, Connie	25	Name not in Newspaper														
Greene, Vivian	24		11	27	4	4		6	6		2					26
Holman, Joy	3	Name not in Newspaper														
McKenzie, Michelle	20		7	15	3	6		14	14		5					17
Payne, Felicia	21	Name not in Newspaper														
Pitts, Brenda	14	Name not in Newspaper														
Scott, Angela	23		6	18	3	6		12	12		4					15
Tomich, Vonnie	5		11	20	7	9		5	5	9	3					29
Adjustment		240								9			17			
Totals		240	43	105	18	27	0	55	55	18	25	0	17	0		104
			FG%	41.0%	FT%	66.7%	Team Rebs		1							

Minnesota Fillies																Team Games
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	
DeBoer, Kathy	21		5	13	0	0		15	15		5					10
DeLorme, Scooter	32		3	11	2	5		2	2	15	5					8
Engel, Cheryl	24		0	2	1	4		2	2		2					1
Hawkins, Kathy	13	3	0	0	0	0		0	0	1	2	0	2			0
Keeley, Marguerite	45		10	18	5	7		13	13		4					25
Kocurek, Marie	42		11	21	11	14		16	16		2					33
Koopman, Carol	25		0	3	0	0		4	4		0					0
Lundberg, Cindy	10		1	4	1	2		4	4		1					3
Sjoquist, Lynette	55	Name not in Newspaper														
Wilson, Donna	11		9	21	3	6		7	7		1					21
Adjustment		237								9			25			
Totals		240	39	93	23	38	0	63	63	25	22	0	27	0		101
			FG%	41.9%	FT%	60.5%	Team Rebs		1							

Dayton was led by their guard tandem of Vonnie Tomich with 29 and Vivian Greene with 26. Michelle McKenzie added 17 points and 14 rebounds. Patti Bucklew contributed 11 rebounds, before she fouled out for the 9th time in 18 games. Why was this important? The Rockettes

rotation showed only six players participating in the Minnesota game. Which meant everyone played for at least 40 minutes. Over a period of time this physical drain would catch up with the team.

Dayton just played in Minnesota on the 22nd and their next game was in Iowa on the 25th. When every penny counts in a struggling league, which was cheaper to fly home or go to the next city for several days?

The Rockettes found themselves in Des Moines to play in Veterans Memorial Auditorium for a Sunday game against the Cornets. A decent WBL crowd of 1,742 came out, but that number was not up to Iowa's standards.

Dayton began the game exchanging the lead with the Cornets five times, with two ties. Then after Iowa took the lead at 19-18, they went on a 13-6 run to close out a 32-24 lead. The WBL's 3rd leading scorer, Vivian Greene with a 23-point average, was shut out in the 1st quarter.

The Rockettes could only wish the score would have stayed in this range. The Cornets added another eight points for a 61-45 half time advantage. They also held Dayton to just one basket in the last 3:41 of the 2nd quarter.

The Rockettes would have accepted a 16-point thrashing, except the Cornets began to pour it on with a 40-26 3rd quarter behind 15 points from Molly Bolin. She hit seven shots in a row and Iowa as a team shot 18 of 22 for the quarter. The 101-71 lead should have been satisfactory.

With Dayton playing everybody in the 4th quarter, the Rockettes scored just 10 points, on four baskets, with none coming from Vivian Greene. This brought their total to 81 for the game.

Iowa, who played without Denise Sharps who had an injured knee, added 30 more for a total of 131. At the time this was the WBL's largest margin differential. 131-81, was a 50-point loss for Dayton.

Dayton Rockettes															Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Bucklew, Patti	40		2	4	1	2		2	2		5				5
Craig, Denise	10		4	21	2	2		16	16		4				10
Franklin, Connie	25		1	2	0	0		4	4		0				2
Greene, Vivian	24		9	22	0	0		5	5		5				18
Holman, Joy	3		1	5	1	4		2	2		2				3
McKenzie, Michelle	20		1	9	0	0		5	5		2				2
Payne, Felicia	21		0	5	0	0		3	3		2				0
Pitts, Brenda	14		0	5	1	2		0	0		1				1
Scott, Angela	23		8	17	7	11		7	7		3				23
Tomich, Vonnice	5		8	18	1	5		9	9	5	2				17
Adjustment		240								7			22		
Totals		240	34	108	13	26	0	53	53	12	26	0	22	0	81
			FG%	31.5%	FT%	50.0%		Team Rebs	8						

Iowa Cornets																Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	
Bolin, Molly	30		13	20	9	12		5	5		2				35	
Crevier, Tanya	24		0	1	2	2		0	0		2				2	
Drawing, Doris	50		3	8	1	1		10	10		4				7	
Green, Anita	12		6	13	2	2		1	1		1				14	
Kunzmann, Connie	44		6	12	6	12		13	13		1				18	
Penquite, Rhonda	32		6	13	2	2		8	8		2				14	
Rutter, Nancy	34		4	6	0	0		6	6		0				8	
Schrad, Mary	54		1	3	2	3		3	3		1				4	
Sharps, Denise	20	Injured - Knee														
Thomas, Debra	40		6	11	0	0		3	3		3				12	
Tucker, Robin	10		4	5	0	0		1	1	7	0				8	
Uhl, Joan	22		3	10	3	5		6	6		2				9	
Adjustment		240								22			19			
Totals		240	52	102	27	39	0	56	56	29	18	0	19	0	131	
			FG%	51.0%	FT%	69.2%	Team Rebs	5								

Dayton's 81 came from Angela Scott scoring 23, Vivian Greene scoring 18, and Vonnie Tomich adding 17, along with nine rebounds and five assists. Denise Craig did come down with 16 rebounds. Patti Bucklew did not foul out this game, though she was close with five fouls.

For the Cornets everybody who played scored. There were only five with double figures, including Kunzmann's 18, Anita Green's and Rhonda Penquite's 14's and D.K. Thomas' 12. Molly Bolin led the team with 35 on 13 of 20 from the field.

A devastating loss like this could play a psychological role in how a team responded for the rest of the season. An 8-11 record was still respectable and could be used as a springboard with 15 games remaining. The Rockettes came home being on the road for four games.



On the 28th of February a big article on Patti Bucklew was written in the Daily News. Patti has had to suffer with "Rock" jokes as she played with Slippery Rock (a Mad Magazine joke to most people) and now the Rock-ettes. She also gave up her luxury job of grooming poodles at her mother's shop to play ball.

The article emphasized her skills, because she was currently shooting 58.4%, yet she didn't take enough shots. To Coach Griffey, the problem was her confidence. She didn't know how good she could be. Griffey challenged the 6'1" Bucklew to jump and touch the rim. She said she couldn't. He told her to try. She barely brushed it in her first attempt. He then told her to grab the rim. She did it! Griffey said she could be very good. In fact, she recently scored 26 points in 24 minutes against the WBL's best big person, Althea Gwyn.

Patti was not drafted, but she read about the league in the paper and asked about free agent camps. She and 15 others travelled to Dayton, where she made the team. She realizes that her time in the pros was probably limited, so she made sure she went all out with diving for loose balls or crashing into scorer's tables. She was looking forward to Guaranteed Win Night, so she could enjoy playing in front of a large home crowd.

The February 19th Guaranteed Win Night that was cancelled – twice, and then was moved to their next home game, which was on March 1st. Unfortunately, instead of playing the worst team in the league they now had to face the best. They were about to face their Eastern nemesis, the Houston Angels. General Manager Dave Almstead asked the team if he was putting pressure on them by having this against Houston. They said no, they liked the challenge.



For Dayton they had a four-day break to get their game faces on for this Thursday March 1st game. The 4,500 desired for Feb. 19th turned into 1,300 on March 1st. Of course, that was double their last two home games combined (302 + 317).

Houston brought their league leading 16-4 record with them, but Dayton took an early 10-9 lead. On Houston's next basket they never looked back and upped the lead to 26-19 after the first quarter. The Angels increased this to 50-40 at the half. The Rockettes went into the 4th quarter, trailing 81-69 and they were never able to get close, as they lost 104-85.

Dayton Rockettes																Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	
Bucklew, Patti	40		8	12	0	1		3	3		5				16	
Craig, Denise	10		4	10	0	0		14	14		3				8	
Franklin, Connie	25		0	0	0	0		0	0		1				0	
Greene, Vivian	24		5	18	4	5		1	1		4				14	
Holman, Joy	3		0	2	0	0		0	0		1				0	
McKenzie, Michelle	20		2	7	1	2		7	7		6				5	
Payne, Felicia	21		3	5	0	0		1	1		1				6	
Pitts, Brenda	14		0	4	0	0			0		0				0	
Scott, Angela	23		8	17	2	2		5	5		1				18	
Tomich, Vonnice	5		8	21	2	6		1	1		2				18	
Adjustment		240								18			23			
Totals		240	38	96	9	16	0	32	32	18	24	0	23	0	85	
			FG%	39.6%	FT%	56.3%	Team Rebs									

Houston Angels																Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	
Auhlenbacher, Karen	11		4	8	0	0		2	2		4				8	
Bubrig, Patty	33		0	0	0	0		1	1		0				0	
Candler, Belinda	24		6	7	5	8		12	12		2				17	
Chapman, Vicky	22		8	16	2	2		7	7		3				18	
Holleyman, Glenda	20	Did Not Travel							0						0	
Johnson, Pat	45		6	12	2	3		8	8		1				14	
Jones, Belinda	23		6	11	1	2		3	3		3				13	
Kenlaw, Jessie	40		4	4	7	10		2	2		2				15	
Mayo, Paula	10		6	11	2	4		11	11		5				14	
Mosley, Dolly	14	Did Not Travel							0						0	
Waddell, Leanne	25		1	2	0	0		0	0		0				2	
Washington, Cynthia	15		1	4	1	3		3	3		0				3	
Adjustment		240								15			38			
Totals		240	42	75	20	32	0	49	49	15	20	0	38	0	104	
			FG%	56.0%	FT%	62.5%	Team Rebs									

The Rockettes leading scorers were Angela Scott and Vonnice Tomich with 18 each, while Patti Bucklew had 16 points. Tomich and Greene shot 13 of 39, to contribute to the 40% the team shot from the floor.

It would seem based on the number of free throws the Rockettes shot (9 of 16) they were trusting their outside shooting in this game. Before this game they were averaging 31 free throws a game and making 21 of them.

For Houston, who shot 56% from the field, they had six players with double figures: Vicky Chapman 18, Belinda Candler 17, Jessie Kenlaw 15, Pat Johnson 14, Paula Mayo 14, and Belinda Jones 13. Candler added 12 rebounds, while Mayo added 11.

As for Guaranteed Win Night the 1,300, which the newspapers claimed was closer to 400, received coupons for the next home game on March 11.

The league announced which players would be participating in the upcoming WBL All-Star Game. The game was to be held in New York City on Wednesday March 14th. The Dayton representatives for the East would be Vivian Greene, Denise Craig, and Vonnie Tomich.

Three days later, March 4th, the Rockettes travelled to New Jersey to play the Gems. In a four-team division this was either a battle for third or to avoid being last. The Gems were 7-13 having just beaten the 17-4 Houston Angels two days ago, 104-103. Dayton owned an 8-12 record.

The Dunn Sports Complex had 547 fans come out to watch the Gems take a 22-19 first quarter lead. This was despite the fact that one of the Gems All-Star reps, Gail Tatterson, had picked up three fouls in the first six minutes. The Gems increased their lead to 53-47 at the half.

Despite half-time pleas by Coach Tom Griffey warning them of the Gems ability to score, Tatterson and Denise Burdick each had 10 points in the 3rd quarter. The Gems outscored the Rockettes, 35-22. The lead got to 92-69 early in the 4th quarter when the Rockettes began to fight back.

After the score got to be New Jersey 101 and Dayton 82, Dayton put up 10 straight points to make it 101-92. There was still 5:52 remaining when Debbie Mason made it 103-92. Dayton scored six of the next seven points to make it 104-98. New Jersey countered with five points, with Kathy Solano scoring four of them. This gave the Gems a 109-98 lead. Even scoring the last six points of the game only brought defeat to Dayton at 109-104.

Dayton Rockettes															Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Bucklew, Patti	40		4		9	10			0		6				17
Craig, Denise	10		8		2	2		13	13						18
Franklin, Connie	25	Name not in Newspaper													
Greene, Vivian	24		7		1	1			0						15
Holman, Joy	3	Name not in Newspaper													
McKenzie, Michelle	20		6		0	0			0						12
Payne, Felicia	21		1		0	2			0						2
Pitts, Brenda	14		0		0	0			0						0
Scott, Angela	23		10		4	10		10	10						24
Tomich, Vonnie	5		6		4	4			0		6				16
Adjustment		240						29	29		17		29		
Totals		240	42	0	20	29	0	52	52	0	29	0	29	0	104
			FG%	#DIV/0!	FT%	69.0%	Team Rebs								

New Jersey Gems															Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Burdick, Denise	35		8	14	6	6			0						22
Burdick, Randi	21		2		1	1			0						5
Logan, Karen	4		2		1	2			0						5
Martin, Sue	13		5		3	5			0						13
Mason, Debbie	11		3		7	13			0						13
Peppler, Mary Jo	34	Name Not in Newspapers													
Roelich, Debra	15		1		1	2			0						3
Solano, Kathy	20		4		3	5			0						11
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		8		3	5		10	10						19
Tatterson, Gail	33	31	8	14	2	2			0						18
Adjustment		209						37	37		22		32		
Totals		240	41	28	27	41	0	47	47	0	22	0	32	0	109
			FG%	#####	FT%	65.9%	Team Rebs								

For the first time all season the New Jersey Gems moved out of last and into a tie for third. Dayton's scoring leaders were Angela Scott with 24 points and 10 rebounds. Also scoring in double figures were Denise Craig with 18, Patti Bucklew with 17, Vonnice Tomich with 16, and Vivian Greene with 15. Both Vonnice Tomich and Patti Bucklew fouled out – Patti for the 10th time.

New Jersey's victory came because they had six players in double figures. Denise Burdick had 22, Wanda Szeremeta had 19, Gail Tatterson had 18, while Sue Martin and Debbie Mason each had 13, and Kathy Solano added 11. Szeremeta also pulled down 10 rebounds.

The Rockettes took their three-game losing streak up past the Statue of Liberty and onto Long Island for a game on Monday the 5th. The New York Stars' home game was going to be played at Queens College. New York superstar, Althea Gwyn, the 20-20 queen, was a graduate of Queens College, as was guard Donna Geils.

It was believed by the Stars' front office that Queens College supporters and fans of Gwyn & Geils would come out to support them. Was this true? Did it work out? We will probably never know because other than the quarter breakdown and points for the players there was no evidence of shots made or attendance. This was typical of the lack of support by the New York area papers.

As for the game, New York took an early 16-8 lead, but Dayton came back to take a 21-20 lead. In the first seven minutes of the 2nd quarter the Stars scored 18 to take a 38-29 lead. They then added another 18 in the final five minutes for a 56-40 halftime lead.

Dayton opened the third quarter with 12 straight points to make it 56-52. But by the end of the quarter Dayton still trailed 77-69. The Rockettes got within three at 86-83 with 6:28 remaining, but the Stars went on an 8-2 run for a 94-84 advantage with three minutes left. The 101-95 final score in the Stars' favor raised their record to 12-11. The Rockettes fell into last place at 8-14, behind the 8-13 Gems.

Dayton Rockettes																Team Ge	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts		
Bucklew, Patti	40	Name not in Newspaper							0						20		
Craig, Denise	10								0						18		
Franklin, Connie	25																
Greene, Vivian	24								0						15		
Holman, Joy	3								0						0		
McKenzie, Michelle	20								0						13		
Payne, Felicia	21								0						2		
Pitts, Brenda	14								0						4		
Scott, Angela	23								0						10		
Tomich, Vonnie	5								0						13		
Adjustment		240	42		11												
Totals		240	42	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	95		
			FG%	#DIV/0!	FT%	#DIV/0!	Team Rebs										

New York Stars																Team Gen	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts		
Alt, Suzanne	13								0						8		
Arturi, Lynn	23								0						8		
Fletcher, Carmen	30								0						0		
Geils, Donna	21								0						6		
Gross, Maria	12								0						0		
Gwyn, Althea	31								0						34		
Melbourne, Mara	24								0						8		
Novarr, Harriet	15								Name Not in Newspapers								
Ransom, Gigi	25								0						0		
Thomas, Janice	10	Name Not in Newspapers							0						14		
Young, Faye	22								0						8		
Young, Kaye	20								0						17		
Adjustment		240	38		25										-2		
Totals		240	38	0	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	101		
			FG%	#DIV/0!	FT%	#DIV/0!	Team Rebs										

As for scoring leaders – Patti Bucklew had 20, Denise Craig had 18, Vivian Greene had 15, and Michelle McKenzie and Vonnice Tomich each had 13.

New York's leaders were – Althea Gwyn, who was playing only her second game after a three-game injury layoff, had 34 with an unknown number of rebounds (sadly enough, it could have been another 20+), Kaye Young had 17, and Janice Thomas had 14.

At this point the Rockettes were in free fall with a four-game losing streak and a trip to Chicago scheduled for Thursday March 8. Yet maybe the Hustle was what the Rockettes needed after all they were 2-0 against them with a road victory in January 102-95, and a home victory 112-88 also in January.

A Thursday crowd of 2,695 came out to Alumni Hall to watch the Hustle take a 37-27 first quarter lead. But Dayton's defense completely disappeared as Chicago added another 38 points to Dayton's 28 for a 75-55 half time lead. There was a good chance the Hustle running game was being fueled by the shooting of the Rockettes guards Vivian Greene and Vonnice Tomich as they were 17 of 50 for the night.

The Hustle were only able to outscore the Rockettes by eight in the 3rd quarter, 36-28 for a 111-83 lead. Chicago's 42-30 4th quarter gave the Hustle a WBL scoring record for a four-quarter game with 153. Only a future triple overtime game in the WBL between the Milwaukee Does and the New Jersey Gems would produce more points for a team in a game (163-161).

Dayton Rockettes																Team Game #	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat	
Bucklew, Patti	40	26	6	13	2	2	5	4	9	0	6	2	5	0	14	0.769	
Craig, Denise	10	29	8	16	2	2	4	11	15	3	6	3	5	0	18	1.276	
Franklin, Connie	25	5	1	1	0	2	1	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	2	0.200	
Greene, Vivian	24	38	10	30	2	2	0	3	3	7	5	4	7	0	22	0.947	
Holman, Joy	3	6	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	2	0.167	
McKenzie, Michelle	20	35	6	9	4	5	2	1	3	0	3	2	3	0	16	0.514	
Payne, Felicia	21	13	0	2	2	5	4	1	5	0	3	0	2	0	2	0.385	
Pitts, Brenda	14	16	2	8	2	3	0	0	0	0	2	1	3	0	6	0.250	
Scott, Angela	23	36	6	18	4	6	4	4	8	0	4	3	2	0	16	0.694	
Tomich, Vonnie	5	36	7	20	1	3	2	0	2	5	4	1	5	0	15	0.639	
Totals		240	46	119	21	32	22	24	46	15	36	16	35	0	113	0.708	
			FG%	38.7%	FT%	65.6%	Team Rebs		7								

Chicago Hustle															Team Game #	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Caldwell, Breena	30	14	4	5	0	0	1	0	1	2	2	1	0	0	8	1.000
Digitale, Sue	21	43	7	13	6	12	5	11	16	2	1	3	7	3	20	0.837
Duckworth, Tesa	44	17	2	4	5	8	0	1	1	2	4	2	1	0	9	0.882
Easterling, Rita	15	43	12	20	10	10	0	3	3	16	4	2	10	0	34	1.419
Fincher, Janie	10	34	7	12	8	10	1	3	4	7	5	1	0	1	22	1.206
Galloway, Liz	31	37	8	10	2	6	3	7	10	3	4	8	3	1	18	1.054
Johnson, Tanya	32	5	2	3	2	2	2	4	6	0	1	0	0	0	6	2.400
Rainey, Sandra	23	10	3	5	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	0	5	0	6	0.600
Stachon, Toni	14	Name not in Box Score														
Waddy-Rossow, Debby	25	37	12	22	6	7	2	3	5	0	3	1	2	0	30	0.919
Totals		240	57	94	39	55	14	33	47	34	26	18	28	5	153	1.075
			FG%	60.6%	FT%	70.9%	Team Rebs		6							

The losing streak was extended to five games and an 8-15 record. Again, six Rockettes had double figures. Vivian Greene's 22 on 10 of 30 from the field led the way. Denise Craig added 18 points and 15 rebounds before she fouled out. Michelle McKenzie and Angela Scott each had 16, and Vonnice Tomich put in 15. Before she fouled out for the 11th time this season, Patti Bucklew scored 14.

Chicago shot 57 of 94 for 60.6% and they had five players in double figures. Rita Easterling had 34 points and 16 assists in 43 minutes. Debby Waddy-Rossow came through with 30, while Janie Fincher had 22 points. Sue Digitale's 20 points and 16 rebounds were just a tad better than Liz Galloway's 18 points and 10 rebounds.

This win gave the Hustle a 16-8 record and a five-game winning streak which they took with them before they faced the 18-6 Houston Angels on March 11.

As the Rockettes' front office worked for recognition they announced their New Jersey make-up game on April 6th would be played at the Arena of the University of Dayton. They were also teaming up with the local AFL-CIO to offer game receipts for the AFL-CIO's City of Hope Cancer Research program. This was the first time the AFL-CIO had been involved with any sporting event.



On March 11th, the (8-15) Rockettes hosted the (13-11) New York Stars. Dayton jumped out to a 24-15 lead, which rose as high as 13, but eventually settled in at 46-37 score at the half.

A half-time break was longer than usual as the front office had a kids' basketball exhibition and a Free Throw contest. The players from each team sat courtside waiting for the activities to end. The Stars responded better to the extra time as they came out with greater enthusiasm. They made up the nine point deficit and took the lead halfway through the quarter. The Stars even went up by eight, which meant they outscored the Rockettes by 17 points at one point. The 29-18 3rd quarter gave the Stars a 66-64 lead.

The two teams fought evenly through the quarter. Then with 24 seconds left Vivian Greene hit a 25-footer to tie the score at 91. But the shot was nullified when the scorer's table recognized a correctable error within 24 seconds of the problem. In this case Althea Gwyn should have received a bonus free throw. The game time then reverted back to the error.

Althea missed her free throw, but Dayton was unable to convert this time when Patti Bucklew's shot from the top of the key was short. The Rockettes again lost a close game and the 997 fans went home disappointed.

The crowd of 997 was probably also a disappointment to the front office, because there should have been a number of people taking advantage of their free tickets from Guaranteed Win Night and it was also Student Night with half-price tickets.

Dayton Rockettes																Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	
Bucklew, Patti	40	Name not in Newspaper							0							23
Craig, Denise	10								0							14
Franklin, Connie	25															
Greene, Vivian	24								0							22
Holman, Joy	3															
McKenzie, Michelle	20								0							4
Payne, Felicia	21															
Pitts, Brenda	14								0							2
Scott, Angela	23								0							8
Tomich, Vonnie	5								0							16
Adjustment		240	39		11											
Totals		240	39	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	89	
			FG%	#DIV/0!	FT%	#DIV/0!	Team Rebs									

New York Stars																Team Games
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	
Alt, Suzanne	13	Name Not in Newspapers							0							4
Arturi, Lynn	23															
Fletcher, Carmen	30								0							5
Geils, Donna	21								0							18
Gross, Maria	12								0							0
Gwyn, Althea	31								0							14
Melbourne, Mara	24								0							4
Novarr, Harriet	15															
Ransom, Gigi	25								0							2
Thomas, Janice	10								0	10		4	28			
Young, Faye	22	Name Not in Newspapers							0							6
Young, Kaye	20								0							10
Adjustment		240	40		11											
Totals		240	40	0	11	0	0	0	0	10	0	4	0	0	91	
			FG%	#DIV/0!	FT%	#DIV/0!	Team Rebs									

With the 1979 NCAA (Larry Bird vs Magic Johnson) tournament taking place, the Dayton Daily News didn't have space for a Rockettes box score. So, no stats, other than points, was available for this game. Bucklew 23, Greene 22, and Tomich 16 led the way. The team dropped to 8-16 but they were at least staying pace with the Gems who were 8-15.

As for the Stars the Dayton Daily News highlighted the 5'3" whirling Janice Thomas who had 28 points, 10 assists, and four steals. Thomas said:

"I'm not at my peak yet. I'm a little too fat. I'm usually at 130, but I'm at 145 now. I hadn't really played in about a year when I tried out for the team." She gave up her job as a store detective when the WBL came along.

Also leading the Stars were Donna Geils with 18, while Althea Gwyn had 14. Under Coach LaVozier Lamar the Stars were 8-5 and improving.



Two days later on Tuesday the 13th the battle for the WBL's worst team took place as the (8-16) Rockettes hosted the (7-16) Milwaukee Does. Yet these weren't the same horrible Does, because eight games earlier on February 10 the Does hired Julia Yeater. The same female coach who had been fired by the Fillies after going 6-2 in her last eight games. The Does recognized a leader, guide, teacher and coach and hired her. Since her arrival the team that was once 3-13 were on a three-game winning streak and had raised their record to 7-16.

So, the .333 Rockettes would face the .304 Does. A Rockettes' loss would make them the worst. A typical Hara Arena crowd of 300 came out on Tuesday night and saw the Rockettes take a 24-22 lead. They increased this to 53-40, with help from a cold shooting Brenda Chapman. The league's leading scorer (27.0) hit just 2 of 11 for four points.

Dayton was able to increase the lead to 16 points with 6:48 left, when the Does put on a full-court press with their big people overwhelming Dayton's guards. The Does scored 14 straight points and in five minutes the lead was cut to 66-64. Then with 1:46 the Does defensive pressure deflected a pass that Michelle McKenzie grabbed and laid in. After the game, Does coach Julia Yeater, said that one basket hurt the team psychologically. A Dayton stop and a fast

break gave the Rockettes a little breathing room at 70-64. The quarter ended with Vivian Greene hitting a 15-footer at the buzzer for a 72-66 lead.

The Rockettes were never threatened, even though a 105-101 victory paints a different story. For the Rockettes they halted their six-game losing streak.

Dayton Rockettes																Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	
Bucklew, Patti	40		8	14	5	8		7	7		4				21	
Craig, Denise	10		6	11	2	4		15	15		4				14	
Franklin, Connie	25	Name not in Newspaper														
Greene, Vivian	24		7	18	2	4		5	5	9	3				16	
Holman, Joy	3	Name not in Newspaper														
McKenzie, Michelle	20		13	22	2	2		16	16		3	3		1	28	
Payne, Felicia	21	Name not in Newspaper														
Pitts, Brenda	14		1	1	0	0		0	0		0				2	
Scott, Angela	23		6	15	1	3		10	10		2				13	
Tomich, Vonnie	5		4	10	3	6		3	3	9	6				11	
Adjustment		240								9						
Totals		240	45	91	15	27	0	56	56	27	22	3	0	1	105	
			FG%	49.5%	FT%	55.6%	Team Rebs									

Milwaukee Does																Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	
Booker, Gerry	24		6	11	2	2		13	13		3				14	
Chapman, Brenda	22		10	27	4	8		2	2		3				24	
Decker, Patti	44	Name not in Newspaper														
Dennis, Brenda	10		2	5	2	4		5	5	7	2				6	
Ellis, Cindy	25	Name not in Newspaper														
Fuller, Janice	28		6	14	6	8		13	13		2				18	
Gehrke, Lynda	33	Name not in Newspaper														
Hostert, Barb	6	Name not in Newspaper														
Koopman, Carol	13		1	4	0	0		1	1		1				2	
Prevost, Deb	32		11	22	2	3		1	1		2				24	
Smith, Joanie	1		6	17	1	3		7	7		5				13	
Wilson, Laurie	30	Name not in Newspaper														
Zweig, Doris	15	Name not in Newspaper														
Adjustment		240								7						
Totals		240	42	100	17	28	0	42	42	14	18	0	0	0	101	
			FG%	42.0%	FT%	60.7%	Team Rebs									

For Michelle McKenzie, a player who only began playing organized ball in her senior year of high school, this was confirmation of Coach Griffey's confidence in her. This was her fifth start in a row and she came through with 28 points and 16 rebounds. Patti Bucklew had 21 points and only four fouls. Vivian Greene had 16 points and nine assists. Future All-star rep Denise Craig came off the bench and she came through with 14 points and 15 rebounds.

A face that was first associated with the Minnesota Fillies, Brenda Chapman, was the leading scorer for the Does with 24. She had been acquired in a trade on February 16. Also, scoring 24 for the Does was Deb Prevost. Janice Fuller came through with 18 points and 13 rebounds, while Gerry Booker also had 14 points and 13 rebounds.

For all the planning and preparation the WBL did their first year there seemed to be an interesting anomaly. It didn't seem like a WBL All-Star game was ever planned for. Therefore, the league determined only a few weeks earlier that there should be an All-Star game on Wednesday March 14th.

The game would be between the two divisions, and it would be held in the Felt Forum of Madison Square Garden in New York City. While the Forum's rental fee was \$10,000, the league knew the exposure in the Mecca of basketball was important. Each team was represented by three players who had been selected earlier, yet that didn't help the travel logistics.

Half the teams (Dayton, Houston, Iowa, and Milwaukee) all had games the night before on Tuesday the 13th. Therefore, plane arrangements, especially for Iowa and Milwaukee who were on the road were difficult.

And not only was travel tough to get to New York, six of the teams (Chicago, Houston, Milwaukee, Minnesota, New York, and New Jersey) had games the next day. So, it appears that Houston and Milwaukee had it the worst with games before and after the All-Star game.

For the Rockettes they were represented by Vivian Greene (who started), along with Vonnie Tomich and Denise Craig. They were part of the winning East squad, who were coached by Houston's Don Knodel. The 2,731 (of a 3,601 capacity) saw the East prevail, 112-99.

Vivian Greene had eight points and two steals in 13 minutes. Denise Craig had 14 points and eight rebounds in 23 minutes, while Vonnie Tomich had 11 points and three assists in 18 minutes. Supposedly the players were paid \$150 each and were allowed to keep their uniforms. The uniforms did go back with the players, but the \$150 never made it into a paycheck.

The Rockettes had nine games left in this first season and on Friday the 16th they hosted the (8-16) New Jersey Gems. The Gems had just lost the night before, March 15th, in Houston, 95-89. So, a trip to Dayton was just step two of a 3 games in four-day trip. The Rockettes at 9-16 had finally moved back in front of the Gems.

The March 17 Dayton Daily News summarized the Rockettes first 2/3 of the season very well.

During the first two-thirds of the Women's Professional Basketball League season, the Dayton Rockettes played as if they were somewhere between nodding acquaintances and total strangers.

The first player to have possession of the ball within 30 feet of the basket did one of three things: shot a 30-footer, dribbled five times and shot a 15-footer, or dribbled eight times and shot a layup. But after repeating essentially the same speech dozens of times, Coach Tom Griffey has finally convinced his players that the "team" in teamwork is not the wrong kind of four-letter word.

A crowd of only 410 came to Hara Arena and saw the Gems take a 23-22 first quarter lead. But after the Rockettes took a 26-24 lead they never trailed again. They took control with a 50-45 lead at the half. When the score got close at 76-74, Dayton responded with a 21-6 run and a 97-80 lead. For the 2nd half the Rockettes shot 59% and moved the ball. Dayton closed out the game with a 106-94 victory. A two-game winning streak and a 10-16 record. Nothing helps losing more than playing the bottom two teams in the league.

Dayton Rockettes															Team Games
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Bucklew, Patti	40		3	11	3	5		11	11		4				9
Craig, Denise	10		9	14	0	0		16	16		3				18
Franklin, Connie	25	Name not in Newspaper													
Greene, Vivian	24		6	16	3	4		5	5		2				15
Holman, Joy	3		0	2	0	0		0	0		1				0
McKenzie, Michelle	20		5	13	0	0		7	7		6				10
Payne, Felicia	21		0	0	0	0		0	0		2				0
Pitts, Brenda	14		0	3	0	0		2	2		1				0
Scott, Angela	23		14	38	5	10		11	11		3				33
Tomich, Vonnice	5		7	17	7	10		7	7		1				21
Adjustment		240													
Totals		240	44	114	18	29	0	59	59	0	23	0	0	0	106
			FG%	38.6%	FT%	62.1%	Team Rebs								

New Jersey Gems															Team Games
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Burdick, Denise	35		3	6	0	0		1	1		3				6
Burdick, Randi	21		0	3	0	0		0	0		4				0
Logan, Karen	4		5	12	2	2		7	7		2				12
Martin, Sue	13		5	11	1	1		5	5		2				11
Mason, Debbie	11		2	8	5	7		6	6		2				9
Peppler, Mary Jo	34		1	4	0	0		3	3		1				2
Roelich, Debra	15		1	1	0	0		0	0		1				2
Solano, Kathy	20		8	17	0	3		8	8		4				16
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		6	16	4	8		10	10		2				16
Tatterson, Gail	33		6	11	8	10		8	8		4				20
Adjustment		240													
Totals		240	37	89	20	31	0	48	48	0	25	0	0	0	94
			FG%	41.6%	FT%	64.5%	Team Rebs								

For Dayton, Angela Scott came through with 33 points on 14 of 38 shooting along with 11 rebounds. (38 shots was the most by any Dayton player, breaking Vivian Greene's record of 34. The 14 baskets made were two short of the Greene's record of 16 baskets in a game) Vonnice Tomich added 21, while Denise Craig added 18 points and 16 rebounds.

For the Gems Gail Tatterson had 20 points and eight rebounds, while both Kathy Solano and Wanda Szeremeta had 16 points each. Szeremeta also pulled down 10 rebounds.

That Saturday, on March 17th, the Rockettes traded 5'8" guard Brenda Pitts to the Minnesota Fillies for an undisclosed 1980 draft pick. While Brenda was with Dayton she played 20 games for 172 minutes. She shot 14 of 56 from the floor (25%) and 8 of 25 from the line (32%) for 36 points and a 1.8 per game average.

The Rockettes took a trip to Milwaukee for a Sunday game at the Milwaukee Arena. 1,042 came out to see if the Does, under Julia Yeater, had improved. Dayton began the game scoreless in the first 3 ½ minutes, while Milwaukee built up a 14-point lead in the first quarter. According to Coach Yeater, Dayton came out playing tired and not moving the ball on offense. They made the Does defense look good.

With the hot shooting of Janice Fuller and the aggressive rebounding of Gerry Booker the Does took a 27-16 first quarter lead. Brenda Chapman had six points in the 2nd quarter as the Does went ahead by 18, 45-27 with 4:25 left in the half. But a 16-8 Rockettes run made the half time score a respectable 53-43.

The Does came out of the locker room and shot just 26% in the third quarter to Dayton's 48%. Yet the Does were able to get ahead by 18, 63-45 with 8 ½ minutes remaining. This was when Dayton went on a 24-6 run to tie the score at 69 after three quarters.



Milwaukee tried to take control as they had 10 point leads two times in the 4th quarter, but each time the Rockettes rallied. After 47 minutes and 59 seconds the Does had a 96-94 lead, when Denise Craig put back an offensive rebound to tie the score at 96 and send it to overtime.

Dayton took its only lead of the game at 102-100 with 3:22 remaining. But the new Does scored five points and eventually came through with a 111-108 victory.

Before acknowledging the high scorers it should be noted that Rockettes were able to hit only 12 of their 20 free throws for 60%. The Does shot a similar 59%, but theirs was based on 23 of 39. Almost double the number of free throws. But that was life in the WBL at times.

Dayton Rockettes															Team Game #		
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat	
Bucklew, Patti	40	16	2	3	0	0		4	4	0	6	0	1		4	0.438	
Craig, Denise	10	44	5	17	2	2		11	11	6	6	0	4	1	12	0.705	
Franklin, Connie	25	2	0	2	0	0		0	0	1	1	0	0		0	1.000	
Greene, Vivian	24	53	14	28	6	8		7	7	10	2	0	6		34	1.038	
Holman, Joy	3	27	2	6	0	0		0	0	3	3	2	2		4	0.370	
McKenzie, Michelle	20	38	9	16	0	2		3	3	2	2	0	0		18	0.658	
Payne, Felicia	21	6	0	0	0	2		1	1	0	3	1	0		0	0.333	
Pitts, Brenda	14	Name not in Newspaper												1			
Scott, Angela	23	53	11	27	0	2		16	16	2	4	4	5		22	0.774	
Tomich, Vonnice	5	26	5	10	4	4	3	3	6	6	0	7		14	0.846		
Adjustment							16	-16									
Totals		265	48	109	12	20	16	29	45	30	33	7	25	2	108	0.736	
			FG%	44.0%	FT%	60.0%	Team Rebs		15								

Milwaukee Does															Team Game #		
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat	
Booker, Gerry	24	45	7	15	1	6		17	17	4	2	1	5	1	15	0.800	
Chapman,Brenda	22	43	9	17	12	15		10	10	5	4	3	4		30	1.140	
Dennis, Brenda	10	10	1	3	0	0		0	0	1	0	0	0		2	0.400	
Ellis, Cindy	25	11	2	4	0	0		3	3	3	2	2	2		4	1.182	
Fuller, Janice	28	21	7	11	0	0		4	4	0	4	2	0		14	0.952	
Gehrke, Lynda	33	26	5	7	3	4		5	5	0	4	0	0		13	0.692	
Hostert, Barb	6	12	1	1	0	0		1	1	1	3	0	4		2	0.083	
Koopman, Carol	13	6	2	2	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	1		4	0.500	
Prevost, Deb	32	38	6	17	2	4		7	7	5	3	0	8		14	0.605	
Smith, Joanie	1	38	3	15	5	10		5	5	5	2	1	3		11	0.632	
Wilson,Laurie	30	9	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0		0	0.000		
Zweig, Doris	15	6	1	5	0	0	4	4	0	0	0	0		2	1.000		
Adjustment							24	-24									
Totals		265	44	98	23	39	24	32	56	24	25	9	27	1	111	0.743	
			FG%	44.9%	FT%	59.0%	Team Rebs		24								

Vivian Greene demonstrated her All-Star skills as she had 34 points, 10 assists, and 7 rebounds. Angela Scott had 22 points and 16 rebounds. Each of these two warriors played all 53 minutes. Three Rockettes fouled out – Denise Craig who scored 12 points, grabbed 11 rebounds, and handed out six assists. Also, Vonnie Tomich who had 14 points and six assists. The last to foul out was Patti Bucklew, for the documented 12th time.

Coach Julia Yeater improved her Does record to 5-5 as she had six players scoring in double figures. Of course, leading the way was the WBL's leading scorer, Brenda Chapman, who had 30 along with 10 rebounds and five assists. Does All-Star Gerry Booker had 15 points and 17 rebounds. Janice Fuller and Deb Prevost had 14 each.

(Tom Davis: When doing research on teams it was important to *not* trust everything you read. Both the Dayton Journal Herald and the Dayton Daily News reported that the Does were being coached by the former National Basketball Association coach, whose last name was Costello. Unfortunately, the Herald thought it was Lou Costello. We had to assume that Bud Abbot was assisting and with this being their first game each one of them probably didn't know, "Who Was on First?")

Other than some Letters to the Editor asking for more positive headlines regarding the Rockettes there was no other outside news. The search for a new owner seemed to have disappeared. An earlier article said there was one possible owner, but that person wanted to move the team out of Dayton right away. With only seven games remaining, it seemed the league was the owner of the Rockettes.

Five days later on Friday the 23rd the (10-17) Rockettes made another trip to play the last place (8-18) New Jersey Gems at the Dunn Sports Complex. Only 367 people came to watch this battle. And with only a few games left and both teams theoretically, but not mathematically out of the playoffs there was going to be a different vibe.

Dayton opened up with a 37-30 first quarter, which became 60-59 at the half. The Rockettes added to their lead with a 31-25 3rd quarter and a 91-86 lead. The final score of 122-116 Dayton showed that neither team was ready to get down and play defense.

Dayton Rockettes															Team Ge	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	
Bucklew, Patti	40		6	13	2	2		10	10		6				14	
Craig, Denise	10		11	19	1	1		17	17		3				23	
Franklin, Connie	25		Name not in Newspaper													
Greene, Vivian	24		13	33	2	2		3	3		5				28	
Holman, Joy	3		4	8	2	4		6	6		4				10	
McKenzie, Michelle	20		6	14	5	10		11	11		5				17	
Payne, Felicia	21	Name not in Newspaper														
Pitts, Brenda	14	Name not in Newspaper														
Scott, Angela	23		13	20	4	5		13	13		1				30	
Tomich, Vonnie	5	Injured - Ankle														
Adjustment		240														
Totals		240	53	107	16	24	0	60	60	0	24	0	0	0	122	
			FG%	49.5%	FT%	66.7%	Team Rebs		7							

New Jersey Gems																Team Ge			
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts				
Burdick, Denise	35		7	13	0	0		7	7		3					14			
Burdick, Randi	21		3	5	0	0		2	2		2					6			
Logan, Karen	4		4	7	1	1		4	4		0					9			
Martin, Sue	13		2	4	0	0		3	3		1					4			
Mason, Debbie	11		7	11	5	10		3	3		3					19			
Nelson, Mariah	19		2	6	1	2		4	4		2					5			
Peppler, Mary Jo	34		Name Not in Newspapers																
Solano, Kathy	20		0	4	0	0		3	3		0					0			
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		14	22	5	7		2	2		3					33			
Tatterson, Gail	33	9	14	8	13	11	11	2	26										
Adjustment		240																	
Totals		240	48	86	20	33	0	39	39	0	16	0	0	0	116				
			FG%	55.8%	FT%	60.6%	Team Rebs		12										

Dayton had only six players who played in the game, because guard Vonnie Tomich had injured her ankle, therefore everyone contributed. Angela Scott had 30 points on 13 of 20 from the floor and 13 rebounds. Vivian Greene had 28 points of 13 of 33 shots. Denise Craig had 23 points and 17 rebounds. Michelle McKenzie and 17 points and 11 rebounds. Patti Bucklew had 14 points, 10 rebounds, and six fouls. The last contributor was a rarely use 5'3" guard named Joy Holman. She chipped in with 10 points and six rebounds.

The Gems were carried by All-Star Wanda Szeremeta's 33 on 14 of 22 from the field. Another Gem All-Star Gail Tatterson had 26 points and 11 rebounds. 19 points came from the last Gem All-Star, Debbie Mason, on 7 of 11 from the floor.

This brief two game road trip ended with the Rockettes in Houston at the Astro Arena on Sunday the 25th. A typical Houston crowd of 647 came out to watch the Angels take a 29-17 lead. They controlled the game with a 56-41 half time advantage. The 72-64 3rd quarter lead ended with a 103-89 victory for Houston. With their 22nd victory in 29 games the Angels clinched first place in the East Division.

Dayton Rockettes																Team Ga			
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts				
Bucklew, Patti	40		2	9	5	8		12	12		4					9			
Craig, Denise	10		8	18	2	2		5	5		5					18			
Franklin, Connie	25		0	0	0	0		0	0		0					0			
Greene, Vivian	24		9	26	4	5		7	7		2					22			
Holman, Joy	3		1	3	4	6		1	1		5					6			
McKenzie, Michelle	20		5	12	0	1		8	8		4					10			
Payne, Felicia	21		4	7	0	3		3	3		3					8			
Pitts, Brenda	14		Name not in Newspaper																
Scott, Angela	23		7	27	2	3		13	13		5					16			
Tomich, Vonnie	5	DNP - Injured Ankle																	
Adjustment		240								13			26						
Totals		240	36	102	17	28	0	49	49	13	28	0	26	0	89				
			FG%	35.3%	FT%	60.7%	Team Rebs		11										

Houston Angels																Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	
Auhlenbacher, Karen	11		3	5	4	6		8	8		5					10
Bubrig, Patty	33		0	1	2	2		0	0		1					2
Candler, Belinda	24		7	16	2	4		8	8		4					16
Chapman, Vicky	22		5	10	0	0		7	7		4					10
Holleyman, Glenda	20		1	3	2	2		3	3		1					4
Johnson, Pat	45		2	7	2	4		9	9		3					6
Jones, Belinda	23		5	11	1	2		3	3		2					11
Kenlaw, Jessie	40		5	8	1	7		11	11		2					11
Mayo, Paula	10		8	20	5	6		19	19		3					21
Mosley, Dolly	14		0	0	0	0		0	0		0					0
Waddell, Leanne	25	4	4	0	2	2	2	1	8							
Washington, Cynthia	15	0	1	4	5	0	0	0	4							
Adjustment		240								19			29			
Totals		240	40	86	23	40	0	70	70	19	26	0	29	0	103	
			FG%	46.5%	FT%	57.5%	Team Rebs		10							



Photo by Michael Sharkey, Chronicle Staff
Houston Angels Vicky Chapman (22), Paula Mayo (10) and Jessie Kenlaw (40) surround Dayton Rockette Patti Bucklew (40) but

For the Rockettes Tomich was still out injured, but at least eight players were available. Vivian Greene had 22 points and seven rebounds, while Denise Craig had 18 points, but only five rebounds. Angela Scott took 27 shots, made seven and scored 16 points, while pulling down 13 rebounds. Patti Bucklew's 12 rebounds and nine points helped.

The Angels were led by Paula Mayo's 21 points and 19 rebounds. Therefore, Paula was just one rebound short of joining Belinda Candler in the Houston 20-20 club. Candler was the next highest scorer with 16. Two players had 11 and two others had 10.

The two game road trip ended with a 1-1 record and a current record of 11-18, with five games to go. The chance for a .500 season ended in Houston.

With the season drawing to a close and no owner having been found, the movement rumors kept floating about. Interim General Manager Dave Almstead was busy responding to lawsuits when he mentioned that buyers from Dallas and Indianapolis were interested in buying the Rockettes.

With Indianapolis in the picture the last home game of the year would be moved from the University of Dayton Arena to Market Square Center in Indianapolis. This would be a test to see what the response would be like. If the Rockettes could clear up their latest lawsuit, by WHIO radio for \$1,476 related to advertising, then the team would be easier to sell.



There was also an article stating the players were actually behind in the paychecks. Previously the players were reluctant to say anything, because they knew the front office was trying. But when the players tried to buy things on credit and mentioned they were with the Rockettes there was no grace offered by merchants. Front office people, like Toni Wolfe and Mike Valentine, both quit over lack of pay.

In the meantime, the collaboration between the Rockettes and the AFL-CIO for the City of Hope Day was documented at the mayor's office with Mayor McGee in the middle.



One person that didn't like to read about the Rockettes moving was injured star player Sheila Patterson. The local standout believed Dayton was a good market and she wanted to play there. She especially wanted to thank all the people that believed in her during her formative years. She had school counselors, an assistant principal, and coaches that taught her how to handle herself and keep herself focused on achieving great goals. Sheila thought performing for the Rockettes was the best way she could give back.

The Rockettes last five games had four home games and one on the road in Iowa. On Thursday March 29th Hara Arena and 1,034 fans welcomed the (16-16) Minnesota Fillies. With just two games remaining the only chance, the Fillies had to make the playoffs was a four-game losing streak by the Iowa Cornets and a five-game losing streak by the Chicago Hustle. But with those two teams playing each other twice, this meant the playoffs were out of the question.

Since the last time the Rockettes and Fillies had met, on February 22, the Fillies had fired Coach Louis Mascari on March 4th, after going 1-6. Mascari therefore made an 8-8 team, into a 9-14 team. On March 5th team owner Gordon Nevers took over as coach again.

Gordon Nevers, who was the nephew of the National Football League's legend, Ernie Nevers, had a sports background which he displayed from the bench. He was 1-0 before hiring Louis Mascari, and after his firing Nevers was 7-2, including a five-game winning streak. With a personal record of 8-2 and two games remaining, but no chance of making the playoffs, Nevers turned the reins over to Trish Roberts.

Trish was the 1976 Olympian that was going to be the capstone for the Fillies franchise. Except she had a devastating knee injury before the season started. As a mature leader she was available to help the Fillies and now with two games remaining she became the newest head coach.

Only one day had gone by since Nevers stepped down and Roberts took over. Therefore, her emphasis was going to be on a strong defense. Dayton Coach Tom Griffey made sure his players were not bothered by Dayton's outside circumstances. Yet one problem that would bother them was the injured ankle of All-Star Vonnie Tomich, who didn't dress for the game.



Dayton only had eight players available for this game, yet they only trailed 17-16 after the first quarter. The Rockettes could only put up 13 in the 2nd quarter, while the Fillies put up 24 for a 41-29 half time lead. By shooting only 22% in the first half, the Rockettes were surprised to still be in the game.

Dayton doubled their point total with a 29-26 3rd quarter and drew within nine at 67-58. In the 4th quarter Dayton tied the score four times, with the last at 82-82 with 2:48 left. They were still close at 87-84 with 1:04 left but missed free throws and other shots gave them an 89-84 loss. The Fillies got over .500 at 17-16, while Dayton now stood at 11-19.

Dayton Rockettes															Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Bucklew, Patti	40		5	11	2	4		8	8		6				12
Craig, Denise	10		6	18	0	2		4	4		3				12
Franklin, Connie	25	Name not in Newspaper													
Greene, Vivian	24		9	28	3	7		4	4		2				21
Holman, Joy	3		2	6	2	5		1	1		2				6
McKenzie, Michelle	20		3	11	4	7		7	7		2				10
Payne, Felicia	21	7	0	2	0	0		3	3		1				0
Pitts, Brenda	14	Name not in Newspaper													
Scott, Angela	23		8	16	7	8		7	7	6	3				23
Tomich, Vonnice	5	DNP - Injured Ankle													
Adjustment		233													
Totals		240	33	92	18	33	0	34	34	6	19	0	0	0	84
			FG%	35.9%	FT%	54.5%	Team Rebs								

Minnesota Fillies															Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Cooper, Accronnetta	33		1	1	0	0		8	8		1				2
DeBoer, Kathy	21		6	13	2	3		9	9		3				14
DeLorme, Scooter	32		4	9	4	4		6	6		4				12
Engel, Cheryl	24	Name not in Newspaper													
Fitzgerald, Kathy	4	Name not in Newspaper													
Hawkins, Kathy	13	Name not in Newspaper													
Keeley, Marguerite	45		5	12	4	6		7	7		2				14
Kocurek, Marie	42		8	14	5	8		8	8		6				21
Koopman, Carol	25	Name not in Newspaper													
Lundberg, Cindy	10		6	12	0	0		5	5		4				12
Pitts, Brenda	14	Name not in Newspaper													
Wilson, Donna	11		6	12	2	2		5	5		3				14
Adjustment		240													
Totals		240	36	73	17	23	0	48	48	0	23	0	0	0	89
			FG%	49.3%	FT%	73.9%	Team Rebs								

Angela Scott had 23 points, seven rebounds, and six assists. Vivian Greene had 21 points on 9 of 28 and 3 of 7 from the free throw line. Again, the free throws were hurting Dayton as they had 33 free throws but only made 18 (55%). Both Denise Craig and Patti Bucklew had 12 points each, and Bucklew fouled out for her 14th time.

Coach Roberts used a limited rotation as only seven players participated with six scoring in double figures. Marie Kocurek, a Fillies All-Star, had 21 points, while Kathy DeBoer (the player acquired for scoring leader Brenda Chapman), Marguerite Keeley, and Donna Wilson all had 14. Donna Wilson, another Fillies All-Star, grabbed five rebounds. Scooter DeLorme and Cindy Lundberg each chipped in with 12 points.

March 30th brought more negative publicity about the Rockettes concerning paychecks. The league spoke about the \$91,000 they paid to keep the team going. There was also an illustration of how the team had taken care of the players by paying their cab fare so they could get around the city. How long this lasted or stopped was not mentioned.

In general, if a paycheck was one day late some people viewed this as a major crisis. In reality there were just two times the checks were about two weeks late.

Almstead said a story on the Rockets financial status that appeared in Thursday's Daily News gave an improper slant to the facts of the situation. "A lot of the information in that article was inaccurate. What was inaccurate, I don't want to comment on."

"I'm here to keep this club going and to sell it," he continued. "I'm not here to shout at sports writers."

WBL Commissioner Bill Byrne was at Hara Thursday and met with the Rockettes after the game.

Almstead said the fact that the visit came on the same today as the Daily News story was only coincidental. "Bill just wanted to say 'Hi' and to talk to the players about helping them get jobs during the summer," Almstead said.

As the month of April rolled around the Rockettes made their last road trip of the year. On Sunday April 1st, they travelled to Sioux City, Iowa to face the (19-12) Cornets. This was the same Iowa team that had dropped a 50-point bombing on them in Des Moines on February 25.

The Cornets had played their games in several different cities in Iowa as they wanted to take advantage of the popularity of women's basketball. In this case Sioux City, in the far northwest corner of the state and 200 miles from Des Moines, was the playing site. 1,443 came out to cheer on their Iowa Cornets and Iowa didn't disappoint them. In fact, a large contingent from Everly, Iowa came out to cheer on their local hero, Connie Kunzmann.



The Cornets took a commanding 35-18 lead. Hopefully the Rockettes had short memories, because in their previous 50-point loss they only trailed 32-24 in the 1st quarter. It was going to be up to Dayton to be sure the lead didn't balloon too large, too fast. Therefore, holding the Cornets to 21, while scoring 22 made it a palatable 56-40 at the half.

Dayton was able to get to within 70-64 with two minutes left in the 3rd quarter. But a 9-0 run at the end gave Iowa a 79-64 lead. Iowa finished off the Rockettes easily with a 36-20 4th quarter and a 115-84 victory. A 31-point loss was bad, but at least it wasn't 50.

Dayton Rockettes																Team G		
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts			
Bucklew, Patti	40		3	16	2	4			0		6					8		
Craig, Denise	10		6	18	0	0		15	15	6					12			
Franklin, Connie	25		0	0					0	0				0				
Greene, Vivian	24		8	21	4	4			0	3				20				
Holman, Joy	3		0	0					0	0				0				
McKenzie, Michelle	20		0	6	0	0			0	4				0				
Payne, Felicia	21		0	1	2	2			0	0				2				
Pitts, Brenda	14		Name Not in Newspapers															
Scott, Angela	23		5	22	1	3			0	4				11				
Tomich, Vonnice	5	14	23	3	4		0	1			31							
Adjustment		240						44	44									
Totals		240	36	107	12	17	0	59	59	0	24	0	0	0	84			
			FG%	33.6%	FT%	70.6%	Team Rebs											

Iowa Cornets																Team Ga			
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts				
Bolin, Molly	30	16	1	6	0	0			0		3					2			
Crevier, Tanya	24	4	0	3	0	0			0	0	0					0	0	0	
Draving, Doris	50	25	9	12	4	7		16	16	3									22
Green, Anita	12		4	5	2	2			0	2									10
Kunzmann, Connie	44		3	7	13	19		14	14	1									19
Penquite, Rhonda	32		6	13	4	4			0	1									16
Rutter, Nancy	34		3	5	2	2			0	1									8
Schrad, Mary	54		7	1	6	0		0		0	0								2
Sharps, Denise	20		8	19	3	3			0	4									19
Thomas, Debra	40		5	9	0	0			0	2									10
Tucker, Robin	10		1	4	0	0		0	0					2					
Uhl, Joan	22		2	7	1	2		0	2					5					
Adjustment		188						41	41										
Totals		240	43	96	29	39	0	71	71	0	19	0	0	0	115				
			FG%	44.8%	FT%	74.4%	Team Rebs												

Vonnie Tomich led the team with 31 points on 14 of 23, while Vivian Greene added 20 points. Denise Craig had 12 points and 15 rebounds, before she fouled out. Patti Bucklew had a tough game as she shot 3 of 16 for eight points before she fouled out for the 15th time.

The Cornets had six players with double figures led by Doris Draving's 22 points and 16 rebounds in just 25 minutes. Denise Sharps and Connie Kunzmann each had 19 points. Connie also pulled down 14 rebounds. Rhonda Penquite's 16 was the next high scorer.

Molly Bolin who had scorched the nets for 53 points about a week earlier was held to two points in 16 minutes on 1 of 6 shooting. Her coach's said she had a cold and a bad hip, but Molly said she had no excuse for her play.

The victory was important to Iowa as they were fighting the Chicago Hustle for first place and home court advantage in the Midwest Division playoffs. As of April 1st Iowa was 20-12, while Chicago was a half-game behind at 19-12, having just lost to Iowa on the 30th.

Two days after the 31-point Iowa lost the Rockettes welcomed to Hara Arena . . . the Cornets. Tuesday April 3rd saw 1,381 join the Rockettes as they hoped to stop their Iowa embarrassments.

Dayton jumped out to an 11-2 lead before the Cornets could get untracked. Molly Bolin then came in off the bench and tossed in 10 points to give Iowa the lead at 23-20 after one quarter. Iowa then hit 11 of 17 shots, while holding Dayton to 15 to grab a 50-35 advantage. Patti Bucklew and Michelle McKenzie got into foul trouble early and went to the bench which meant Dayton had no inside game. McKenzie, who picked up four quick fouls, scored just five points on 2-12 from the field for the game.

Based on the previous Iowa-Dayton game, the Rockettes had a new goal other than win. Lose Respectfully. When the game ended with another Dayton loss, 99-78 the team recognized a great coincidence. Dayton was cutting off 16 points from each Iowa game. The Cornets scored 131 on 2/25, 115 on 4/1, and now 99 on 4/3.

For the Rockettes record of 11-21 record, with two games remaining, they were glad to hear the New Jersey Gems lost also. This meant they wouldn't end up in last place in the East.

As for Iowa, a 21-12 record with one last game against the 19-13, assured them of at least a tie with the Hustle. Also, with their current 4-1 advantage over Chicago, they also clinched the Midwest home court advantage in the playoffs. As for the finals, the Midwest rep could only have home court the advantage if the (19-14) New York Stars upset the (26-8) Houston Angels.

With just 78 points Dayton had only two players with double figures. Angela Scott's 31 and Vivian Greene's 23 led the way. The next highest was Patti Bucklew with nine and her 16th set of six fouls in a game.

As for Iowa, Molly Bolin returned to form to score 22. Connie Kunzmann's 13 and D.K. Thomas' 13 added to Iowa's dominance. Kunzmann's 14 rebounds were just two better than Draving's 12, who also tossed in 11 points. Joan Uhl contributed 12 points.

Dayton Rockettes																Team Ge	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts		
Bucklew, Patti	40		3		3	6			0		6					9	
Craig, Denise	10		4		0	0			0		8						
Franklin, Connie	25		Name Not in Newspapers								0						
Greene, Vivian	24		10	3	3	0										23	
Holman, Joy	3		1	0	0	0										2	
McKenzie, Michelle	20		2	12	1	3			0							5	
Payne, Felicia	21		0	0	0	0										0	
Pitts, Brenda	14		Name Not in Newspapers														
Scott, Angela	23		13	5	10	0										31	
Tomich, Vonnice	5	Name Not in Newspapers															
Adjustment		240		76							21						
Totals		240	33	88	12	22	0	0	0	0	27	0	0	0	78		
			FG%	37.5%	FT%	54.5%	Team Rebs										

Iowa Cornets																Team Games		
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts			
Bolin, Molly	30		10		2	3			0							22		
Crevier, Tanya	24		0		0	0			0							0	0	
Draving, Doris	50		4		3	4			12							12	11	
Green, Anita	12		3		0	0										0	6	
Kunzmann, Connie	44		4		5	7			14							14	13	
Penquite, Rhonda	32		3		0	0										0	6	
Rutter, Nancy	34		2		0	0										0	4	
Schrad, Mary	54		Name Not in Newspapers															
Sharps, Denise	20		4		1	1										0	9	
Thomas, Debra	40		6		1	1										0	13	
Tucker, Robin	10	1	1	3		0	3											
Uhl, Joan	22	4	4	5		0	12											
Adjustment		240									23							
Totals		240	41	0	17	24	0	26	26	0	23	0	0	0	99			
			FG%	#DIV/0!	FT%	70.8%	Team Rebs											

Back on the front office scene, Dave Almstead gave an update about the cost of expansion franchises and how Dayton would be a bargain.

"Right now, the asking price for the 11-21 Rockettes is \$130,000," according to Almsted. "But it will keep going up with expenses. Still that's not a bad price, considering it's an established team with nine veteran players.

"When the league started," he adds, "the price for a franchise was \$50,000. Now it's \$100,000. There are definite advantages to buying an existing team. For one thing, you've got draft rights in the first and second round whereas an expansion team must wait until Round 3. You've already got a nucleus of players, and you can't beat experience."

The league started play this season with eight teams. "We could have as many as 16 next season," points out Almstead, "but more realistically, we'll have 14. San Francisco and St. Louis have already been approved. Next week, we'll announce the additions of Dallas and Seattle."

Dayton's last two home games would not be in Hara Arena. Instead on Friday, April 6th the Arena, on the University of Dayton campus, would be the site for a game against the last place New Jersey Gems. The Gems brought their 9-23 record to Dayton to see if they could reach double figures in victories.



Even with a new location another attendance in the 3's (354) showed up to watch the team. New Jersey took an early 30-29 lead, but fell behind when Dayton scored 18 straight points to end the half and take a 59-44 lead. The Gems cut the lead to 10 at 86-76, but it became 15 later. The Gems made a late run, but ran out of time and lost to Dayton, 116-108.

Dayton had six in double figures including Patti Bucklew who had 19, before she fouled out for the 17th time. Angela Scott had 24 points and 18 rebounds, before she fouled out. Michelle McKenzie had 21 points and eight rebounds. Vivian Greene had 19 points on 19 shots, along with 11 rebounds. Denise Craig scored 16 points and had 13 rebounds.

Dayton Rockettes																Team Ge					
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts						
Bucklew, Patti	40		8	13	3	5		4	4		6					19					
Craig, Denise	10		6	15	4	6		13	13		5					16					
Franklin, Connie	25		0	0	0	0		0	0		0					0					
Greene, Vivian	24		8	19	3	3		11	11		4					19					
Holman, Joy	3		0	0	0	0		0	0		0					0					
McKenzie, Michelle	20		8	20	5	10		8	8		3					21					
Payne, Felicia	21		2	3	2	2		5	5		2					6					
Pitts, Brenda	14		Name not in Newspaper																		
Scott, Angela	23		9	30	6	9		18	18		6					24					
Tomich, Vonnice	5	4	19	3	6	5	5	4	11												
Adjustment		240																			
Totals		240	45	119	26	41	0	64	64	0	30	0	0	0	116						
			FG%	37.8%	FT%	63.4%	Team Rebs		0												

New Jersey Gems															Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Burdick, Denise	35		0	5	0	0		2	2		3				0
Burdick, Randi	21		1	5	1	2		0	0		6				3
Logan, Karen	4		6	10	0	0		5	5		1				12
Martin, Sue	13		3	6	3	3		2	2		3				9
Mason, Debbie	11		7	12	7	10		4	4		4				21
Nelson, Mariah	19		4	6	2	4		5	5		2				10
Peppler, Mary Jo	34		0	0	0	0		0	0		1				0
Solano, Kathy	20		1	7	1	2		6	6		1				3
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		7	16	12	16		8	8		3				26
Tatterson, Gail	33		9	15	6	9		10	10		5				24
Adjustment		240													
Totals		240	38	82	32	46	0	42	42	0	29	0	0	0	108
			FG%	46.3%	FT%	69.6%	Team Rebs		0						

As New Jersey was playing out the string and waiting for the season to end they were led by Wanda Szeremeta's 26, Gail Tatterson's 24, and Debbie Mason's 21.

The next high scorer for New Jersey was Karen Logan, who had 12 points on 6 of 10 from the field along with five rebounds. Karen played a huge role in the formation of the Women's Basketball League and especially with her recommendation for a smaller female sized ball. The men's standard ball was 29.5" in diameter, while the newly invented women's ball would be 28.5". A 3% difference.

These 12 points would be the last she would score in a league that began with her as a projected star and where most of the younger players had surpassed her skill level.

Even with one game remaining some of the players were making their summer plans. Vivian Greene considered going back to school, while Patti Bucklew would return home to Pittsburgh. Michelle McKenzie was looking forward to doing basketball camps. Tom Griffey knew that his tenure as a coach would be over with new owners, so he was going to return to Milwaukee and pick up his job as a restaurant manager. Yet the players acknowledged their love of the game and wherever the franchise ended up going - they would follow.



The Journal-Herald noted after the last game that:

Six groups will check out the Rockettes in Indianapolis. Dave Almstead, the Rockettes general manager, has talked seriously with two of the groups, both from Indianapolis.

The most promising group is attempting to form a sports conglomerate in the Indianapolis area, according to Almstead. The group is considering buying Market Square Arena and the Indianapolis Pacers of the National Basketball Association.

Almstead said the group's other acquisitions will take priority over buying the Rockettes.

The last game for the WBL's first season involved the Dayton Rockettes and the Chicago Hustle. So, Chicago was involved with both the first and last games of this inaugural season. Several things were happening with this last game.

For Chicago a victory would give them the same record as the Iowa Cornets, which provided only historical visual value. A tie didn't put them ahead of Iowa and even with a loss they stayed ahead of the New York Stars.

For Dayton there were rumors of the team moving, because of the lack of attendance. So, a game in Indianapolis, at Market Square Arena, was really a showcase event. For the players of Dayton playing in Indy was going to be a pain. The players were required to find their own transportation to get to the game. They also received no meal money for this trip away from home. Each of these items was supposed to be reimbursed when they received their final checks.

A crowd of 1,547, which was the Rockettes 3rd highest "home" attendance of the year, came out. The Rockettes tried their best to not disappoint their possible new fan base, but they fell behind 27-25, and 56-51. But they came out of the locker room smoking and put a 40 spot on the Hustle to Chicago's 26.

The 91-82 Dayton lead hit a peak at 104-86 with 7:22 left in the game. But in the next 4:48 Dayton could manage only one point. Meanwhile the Hustle added 17 to trail 105-103 with 2:34 left. Later, with Dayton leading 111-110 the Hustle tried to get a time-out, but Vonnie Tomich was busy fouling Rita Easterling. Rita's two free throws gave the Hustle a 112-111 lead.

When Dayton came out of their huddle, after a time out, Vonnie Tomich, who said she never inbounded the ball, was called for a traveling violation before throwing the ball in. Vivian Greene had to intentionally foul Easterling to get the ball back. But Rita made both shots and Dayton fell 114-111. The Chicago victory sealed the first-year records as Dayton 12-22, and Chicago 21-13.

Dayton Rockettes																Team Game #	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat	
Bucklew, Patti	40	24	7	13	6	8	6	3	9	3	6	0	3	2	20	1.333	
Craig, Denise	10	33	3	9	0	2	2	12	14	7	3	4	6	2	6	0.970	
Franklin, Connie	25	Name Not in Newspapers															
Greene, Vivian	24	46	7	14	5	6	1	3	4	9	4	2	9	0	19	0.739	
Holman, Joy	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0.000	
McKenzie, Michelle	20	47	11	25	5	8	8	6	14	0	5	1	2	0	27	0.851	
Payne, Felicia	21	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0.500	
Pitts, Brenda	14	Name Not in Newspapers															
Scott, Angela	23	38	8	17	1	1	0	5	5	2	0	1	0	0	17	0.711	
Tomich, Vonnie	5	46	9	15	4	4	3	3	6	6	5	4	10	0	22	0.739	
Totals		240	45	93	21	29	20	33	53	27	24	12	30	5	111	0.833	
			FG%	48.4%	FT%	72.4%	Team Rebs		5								

Chicago Hustle																Team Game #	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat	
Caldwell, Breena	30	14	0	5	0	0	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	0	0	0.357	
Digitale, Sue	21	38	4	8	3	5	2	11	13	2	5	1	2	3	11	0.711	
Duckworth, Tesa	44	16	1	7	2	2	3	1	4	1	4	1	0	0	4	0.688	
Easterling, Rita	15	45	12	20	9	11	2	2	4	11	4	1	5	0	33	1.222	
Fincher, Janie	10	41	5	13	3	4	2	8	10	11	2	3	7	0	13	1.000	
Galloway, Liz	31	45	6	15	2	4	4	2	6	6	4	3	4	0	14	0.689	
Johnson, Tanya	32	5	0	1	1	2	1	1	2	0	0	1	2	0	1	0.400	
Rainey, Sandra	23	Name not in Box Score															
Stachon, Toni	25	Name not in Box Score															
Waddy-Rossow, Debby	25	36	17	27	4	5	2	5	7	0	2	1	2	0	38	1.222	
Totals		240	45	96	24	33	17	31	48	33	22	12	24	3	114	0.900	
			FG%	46.9%	FT%	72.7%	Team Rebs		8			12					

Dayton was led by Michelle McKenzie's 27 points and 14 rebounds in 47 minutes. Vonnie Tomich was next with 22 points, six rebounds, and six assists, along with four steals, in 46 minutes. The third top scorer, Patti Bucklew, had 20, before she fouled out for the 18th time, in only 24 minutes. She also pulled down nine rebounds. And playing 46 minutes and scoring 19 points was Vivian Greene.

After the game Vivian Greene said:

"When we went to our last game, we thought we were going to be paid," said Greene. "We waited an hour after for Mr. Byrne to come down to talk to us. He didn't come down. He sent a note down and asked for our home addresses. He said he'd get in contact with us."

As Chicago prepared for the playoffs, which would begin in just two days (April 10th), they didn't get a chance to rest their players at all. Chicago who played with just a 10 player roster all year were led by Debby Waddy-Rossow's 38 points, with seven rebounds. Next up was Rita Easterling's 33 points and 11 assists in 45 minutes. Liz Galloway came through with 14 points, six rebounds, and six assists, also in 45 minutes. In 41 minutes of play Janie Fincher recorded the first known triple double in WBL history, when she posted 13 points, 10 rebounds, and 11 assists.

While the WBL playoffs were taking place Michelle McKenzie was still in Dayton giving a presentation at the Dayton Job Corp center. She and several other pro athletes, like the Cleveland Browns Gregg Pruitt and Reggie Rucker, were encouraging youth to get good jobs.

On May 1st a New York Times article acknowledged the surprise that the WBL made it through its first season with all of its franchises. Yes, Dayton cost the league \$96,000 (\$68,000 travel, planes, hotels, meals), but they were the only casualty.

The future cost would be \$100,000 for entry this year. It had to be paid by May 12th, so a team could prepare for the draft. The following year the franchise fee would rise to \$250,000. As a whole the league began with just \$400,000 (8 x \$50,000) to work with.

Despite the fact that national names like Ann Meyers, Carol Blazejowski, and Lusia Harris did not participate, others filled in and made names for themselves in the league. Brenda Chapman led the league in scoring with 27.8, Debra Waddy-Rossow was second at 24.5, while 6'2" Althea Gwyn led the league in rebounding with 17 a game.

Katie McEnroe, the WBL's Public Relation Director, said the Dayton franchise had been sold to an unnamed Washington D.C. source (Tom Davis: How ironic since the team started there. Also ironic was the fact that two weeks later Bill Bryne said this information was incorrect.) Yet the Dayton player's contracts had been sold to an unnamed Los Angeles interest.

The unnamed interest was a Chicago businessman, Bob Joseph, who said all the players would be paid next week, because he had purchased their contracts as a part of the new California team.

The Dayton Daily News wanted to be sure we knew what bills were left unpaid:

- \$2,089 – Quick Ticket of Houston, Tx, for game tickets
- \$2,000 – Dr. William Donahue, for Sheila Patterson's knee
- \$1,464 – Hara Arena, last game rental, plus office space
- \$1,004 – Miami Valley Broadcasting, radio advertising
- \$ 750 – West Side YMCA, practice facility
- \$ 300 – Toni Wolfe, team secretary three weeks' pay
- \$ 173 – Quality Office Products, for office supplies
- \$ 36 – Flyer News, the Univ of Dayton newspaper, for advertising

The article highlighted each unpaid vendor and about unpaid bills from January and February. The best story involved Quick Ticket who said the Rockettes faxed them a copy of the check they had mailed in November. Yet Quick Ticket never received the original, so the Rockettes said they must have lost it. No replacement was ever sent.

As for attendance, Hara Arena recorded for 15 home games a paid attendance of 6,220, an average of 415. The total attendance was 19,360, an average of 1,291.

The last article documented to the Dayton Rockettes was May 31, 1979. Three players, Sheila Patterson, Michelle McKenzie, and Vivian Greene stuck around the Dayton area to work through the summer. Vivian said she was still owed about \$1,800 in salary and last game expenses.

Greene said that:

"Dave Almsted would hand us our checks and he'd tell us to spend it wisely, like it was the last one we were going to get. We'd ask for our next paycheck, and Dave would come out with, "Well, what did you do with that last paycheck?" We told him that was none of his business.

"But by us being young, we went with whatever came along. Nobody wanted to jeopardize their being in the league."

Over in Washington D.C. an international investment businessman named Nat Frazier was the proud owner of the Rockettes uniforms, but not their debts. Those debts were the league's responsibility. Frazier was trying to negotiate with Bob Joseph for the rights to Vivian Greene, because she was from the area.

As an ending note about Vivian Greene. She was a player who exemplified what the league was about.

She was drafted by Washington, was an All-Star with Dayton in year one.

In year two, she played all 10 games with the Washington Metros until they folded.

She was chosen by Milwaukee in the dispersal draft and played at least 12 games.

She was then traded to the St. Louis Streak where she played at least eight games.

For the final year of the league, she was a member of the Nebraska Wranglers where she played all 36 regular season games scoring 185 points and averaging 5.14.

Vivian went from All-Star to solid sub, but she came out as a champion as a member of the Wranglers.

She was also one of only 31 players who played all three seasons.

(Tom Davis: if you picked up on how many close games the Rockettes were in, it can be verified with a fun stat called "Three Point Games."

Three Point Games are close and could go either direction. Therefore, what would a team's record be if they won the three-point games they had lost or if they lost the three-point games they had won.

The Dayton Rockettes instead of being 12-22, would have been 17-17 and made the playoffs. In contrast the 19-15 New York Stars would have been 10-24 and the worst team in the league.)

Player	No.	GP	Min	M.p.G	FGM	FGA	FG %	FTM	FTA	FT %	Of Rb	Df Rb	Total	Reb Avg	Ast	PF	Stl	TO	BS	PTS	Avg	Eff. Rat.
Bucklew, Patti	40	34	993	29.21	187	344	0.544	88	132	0.667	126	128	254	7.47	19	178	48	69	36	462	13.59	0.738
Craig, Denise	10	33	1,222	37.03	216	522	0.414	64	88	0.727	133	307	440	13.33	71	151	91	164	32	496	15.03	0.822
Franklin, Connie	25	17	83	4.88	6	18	0.333	4	9	0.444	8	12	20	1.18	3	9	6	12	1	16	0.94	0.434
Greene, Vivian	24	34	1,441	42.38	317	831	0.381	110	148	0.743	57	123	180	5.29	180	119	102	164	3	744	21.88	0.848
Holman, Joy	3	25	273	10.92	18	61	0.295	15	27	0.556	8	7	15	0.60	23	29	14	32	4	51	2.04	0.344
McKenzie, Michelle	20	34	1,015	29.85	141	378	0.373	56	102	0.549	98	130	228	6.71	27	122	41	66	9	338	9.94	0.586
Patterson, Sheila	31	1	25	25.00	6	14	0.429	3	7	0.429	11	7	18	18.00	0	3	0	6	1	15	15.00	1.080
Payne, Felicia	21	27	265	9.81	20	70	0.286	12	34	0.353	34	36	70	2.59	16	48	20	26	1	52	1.93	0.558
Pitts, Brenda	14	20	172	8.60	14	56	0.250	8	25	0.320	27	23	50	2.50	14	14	14	15	1	36	1.80	0.657
Scott, Angela	23	34	1,411	41.50	246	607	0.405	127	207	0.614	166	185	351	10.32	55	92	95	112	25	619	18.21	0.753
Sherer, Deborah	33	2	16	8.00	1	1	1.000	0	2	0.000	0	0	0	0.00	0	6	0	2	0	2	1.00	0.000
Tomich, Vonnie	5	30	1,225	40.83	206	474	0.435	125	195	0.641	41	61	102	3.40	172	106	75	187	4	537	17.90	0.711
Adjustments			119		5			6												16		
	34	8,260			1,383	3,376	0.410	618	976	0.633	709	1,019	1,728	50.82	580	877	506	855	117	3,384	99.53	0.717

So Concludes the Story of the DAYTON ROCKETTES