

NEW JERSEY GEMS

History of

(last update: 6/8/26)

The New Jersey Gems were members of the Women's Professional Basketball League (WBL) for three seasons, 1978-1981. New Jersey was the 2nd team to have their application accepted for membership. The ownership team consisted of Thomas Brennan, Nicholas Caruso, and Joseph Belasco, all of Jersey City, New Jersey. The New Jersey team would be joining Iowa, Milwaukee, Chicago, and Minnesota. (The last three accepted were Washington D.C, New York, and Houston.)

Was it possible for a player, or a name, to be bigger than the team? How about if the team hasn't been formed yet? That was the case for Carol Blazejowski of Montclair State University in New Jersey.

In established sports, like pro basketball, it was very difficult for a new group to carve out a foothold into the minds of the people that follow that sport. Such was the case with women's basketball. To awaken people it was vital to do something spectacular. That awakening comet tearing across the sky, to make people look up, took place on March 6, 1977.

Madison Square Garden, known as "The World's Most Famous Arena," hosted a women's college basketball doubleheader. A crowd of 12,336 watched as Montclair State played Queens College. That day Carol Blazejowski set a scoring record for the Garden with 52 points. Not just women's basketball, but for the whole Garden. The media of New York, which was the epicenter of worldwide information, took notice. As the saying goes, "If you can make it in New York, you can make it anywhere."

Women's basketball as a worthwhile entertainment source had made its first impact in New York on March 6, 1977.

A July 1977 article, out of Lubbock, Texas, asked the question – *"Where Do Women Play After College?"*

When the NBA's New Orleans Jazz drafted Lucy Harris "amid giggles" last month, it made the sports pages all over the country. It also made a lot of people wonder what happens to female All-American basketball players once they graduate in college.

There were plans afoot to form a 12-city women's pro basketball league that would begin play in October, but nothing has been heard from the group since its coming out party last January.

A July 27, 1977 clipping in the Mansfield, Ohio News-Journal:

From the city that brought you American Professional Slo-Pitch League, comes the Women's Pro Basketball League (WBL). The league office is located at 5150 E Main St. Columbus OH 43213. Plans are to field 12 teams playing a 32-game schedule by December.

The first evidence of something stirring in the New Jersey area came in an April 25, 1978 article in the Asbury Park Press. Carol Blazejowski,

was asked what she thought of the possibilities of a women's pro basketball league, which has sputtered and fizzled, she said:

"I don't know whether the American public is ready to accept it yet. Maybe they're pushing too hard. I am a skeptic and also a realist. I don't just look at what could or should be. I look at what is."

A July 6th clipping out of Columbus, Oh. announced the WBL would hold a draft in New York on July 18, 1978. At least eight teams – Iowa, Milwaukee, Chicago, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Seattle, and Washington, D.C. would participate. Future franchises being spoken to were: Philadelphia, Boston, Houston, Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego, Portland, Or. and Jackson, Ms.

Despite the fact that Carol Blazejowski had stated that her post graduate goal was to be a 1980 Olympian, she was drafted in the first round (7th overall) by the New Jersey Gems. As college's second all-time point producer (behind only Pistol Pete Maravich) with 3,199 points it was amazing she had four other players chosen ahead of her.

Are we allowed to speculate that for the sake of the league – the Milwaukee team, the Minnesota team, the Washington team, and the Chicago team were all politely asked NOT to choose Blaze, because she was from New Jersey?

Afterall, the Milwaukee team pulled off a major coup with the 2nd pick of the draft. They deliberately drafted Althea Gwyn of Queens College, in New York, knowing the next team drafting, New York, wanted her. Milwaukee then made a deal with New York to trade Gwyn to New York. The compensation was New York selecting 6'3" Sarah Williams from S.E. Louisiana and giving Milwaukee their 2nd pick in the Free Agent portion of the draft. Milwaukee therefore got the player they wanted, plus an extra free agent pick.

Were Minnesota, Washington, and Chicago prevented from doing the same thing Milwaukee did knowing how desperately the New Jersey team needed Carol Blazejowski?

Why shouldn't the WBL do that? The NBA did this for 20 years – they were called Territorial picks. The owners knew fans identified with players from their own area. That was how Wilt Chamberlain, who played at the Univ. of Kansas, was a territorial pick of the Philadelphia Warriors. That made sense, because Wilt was from Philadelphia.

Maybe the first year the WBL should have allowed each team one "Territorial Pick" before the actual draft. It would be fun to speculate who those picks could have been.

The historic draft took place at the Essex Hotel in New York City on July 18, 1978. The draft consisted of two types of players to be drafted: those who were currently graduating (college grads) and those that graduated previously (free agents). Each team would be able to select five players in each category.

The league started with five rounds of graduating seniors and the teams selected in this order: Houston, Milwaukee, New York, Minnesota, Washington (to become Dayton), Chicago, New Jersey, and Iowa. The order would then rotate to make it fair, so in the 2nd round Milwaukee moved to #1, New York #2, and Houston was last. This went on for five rounds

New Jersey's selections were as follows:

Graduating Seniors

1. Carol Blazejowski	5'10"	Forward	Montclair State	played in WBL
2. Denise Burdick	6'1"	Forward	Immaculata College	played in WBL
3. Tara Heiss	5'6"	Guard	Univ. of Maryland	played in WBL
4. Maggie Nelson	6'1"	Center	Stanford Univ.	played in WBL
5. Wanda Szeremeta	5'10"	Forward	Montclair State	played 3 yrs WBL

Free Agents

1. Jean Giarissio	5'9"	Guard	New Hampshire
2. Elizabeth Harty	6'0"	Cen/Fwd	C.W. Post
3. Tina Marie Krahn	5'9"	Forward	Immaculata College
4. Suzanne Wera	5'8"	Guard	Olivet, Mi.
5. Donna Kirby	6'0"	Forward	Drexel



On paper the New Jersey team did very well with their college picks, but completely struck out on their free agent picks.

The 1980 Olympics were going to be influential in two ways. They were going to hold back several players from playing in the WBL, because they wanted to retain their amateur eligibility. The Olympics were also going to be the springboard to national recognition and future success of the WBL.



Carol Blazejowski

Therefore, most articles after the draft involved the good players who were not going to report to their respective teams as they retained their amateur status.

Thru July 19th, most newspapers referred to the WBL teams only by their city. On July 20th one newspaper wire service said that Wanda Szeremeta was drafted by the New Jersey Gems – the first acknowledgment of their name.

The three-man syndicate that purchased the New Jersey team for \$50,000 was led by Tom Brennan, a 29-year old vice president of a Hudson County marketing management firm. Despite the expected expenses for running the team to be about \$300,000, Brennan believed they would be "in the black" by year's end.

TV package deals and \$5 ticket prices would raise the necessary income. Yet a lot of it hinged on the signing of Carol Blazejowski, the Wade Trophy winner (the women's basketball equivalent to the Heisman Trophy). Brennan was positive the players who got involved in the first year would be receiving quite a few endorsements and sponsorships.

Brennan, an ex-Marine, was looking for a coach and a home site for his team. His first choice was the 3,500 Seton Hall University gym in Orange, N.J. He knew this location was temporary until the 18,500 seat arena in the Meadowlands was completed in 1980.

Training camp for the Gems opened in mid-August with eight of the other nine draftees having been contacted and ready to play. Only 6'1" Maggie Nelson of Stanford had already accepted a European offer.



A July 30th article noted that the Gems would be offering Blazejowski \$15,000, which was considered the top amount being offered by teams in the league. It also named Joe Gelasco, a football star at Villanova, and Nick Caruso as partners in the Gems partnership. None of them had any prior dealings with a sports franchise.

The group offered the head coaching position to Maureen Wendleken, the Montclair State Univ. head coach, but she turned it down. She wanted to see the league succeed, but she viewed it as a gamble and would bide her time.

Wendelken was realistic in her assessment when she said:

"I don't know if the league is going to make it. They won't draw without drawing cards like Blaze. Even at Montclair State, with a great following, we only drew 1,500 a game."

"The Madison Square Garden games were never sellouts. I just don't think they can expect to draw 5,000 a game."

How about that mid-August training camp? Did it ever take place?

On August 3rd, 1978, New Jersey Gems' 5th round pick, Wanda Szeremeta, was selected the Most Valuable Player of the Adidas Metropolitan Women's Basketball League. Other future WBL players involved were Jan Terniyak and Jill Jeffries.

After being rebuffed by Maureen Wendelken, owner Tom Brennan asked Rose Battaglia, a big name with Paramus Catholic High School and Begen Community College. Rose said, "No, thank you." They also reached out to Mercer Community College's Howie Landa. He also said that the time just wasn't right.

The Gems' were pleased when a local basketball coaching legend, Don Kennedy, agreed to coach the new team. The September 5th announcement confirmed the 71-year-old Kennedy, who had pro roots in the pre-NBA days, and the winningest record in St. Peter's history liked the challenge, something he was familiar with in the past. With a high school record of 556-226 and a college record of 326-190, his experience was never in question.

Right away two different discriminations crossed paths: could a seasoned men's coach work with and teach women? Also, could a person that was close to 50 years older than his youngest player relate to the point of creating success? Sex and age issues took the center stage.

Fortunately, Coach Kennedy was a realist;

"It's nice to be here," Don Kennedy said yesterday when introduced as coach and general manager of the New Jersey Gems of the Women's Pro Basketball League. "At my age, it's nice to be anywhere."

The biggest problem to overcome as of early September involved players. New Jersey didn't have any. There was an open invitational taking place on Saturday Sept. 9th and Sunday the 10th. But to date no one had signed a contract. The owners weren't bothered, because without a coach they didn't want to sign players that weren't in the coach's mold.

Some of the players attending the invitational would be Kathy Fitzgerald of Bogata, along with Barbara Burek and Stephanie Silvot of Garfield. The one known constant was that the Gems would have to wait until the end of the 1980 Olympics before Carol Blazejowski would negotiate with them.

While players were vital, so was a home court. Seton Hall only had five openings that could accommodate the 17 games the Gems would be playing. Rutgers University was a possibility or the Gems' practice facility, the Yanitelli Center on the campus of St. Peter's.

Coach Kennedy wanted a fast-breaking team, as he had had in the past. The coach was looking forward to his conducting his rookie and free agent camps with two sessions at 10 am and 2 pm. He also had his first meeting with Pat Lillis, St. Peter's all-time leading scorer and Seton Hall's Pam Cerrutti. These locals would be joining top draft picks Tara Heiss of Univ. of Maryland and Denise Burdick the 6'0" of Immaculata College. Overall, the Gems were expecting about 20 players to attend the camps.



The coming out party for Don Kennedy was also the first chance for the people to see the specially designed basketball the WBL would use. It was one inch smaller in circumference and lighter to accommodate the women's smaller dimensions. The team also introduced Larry Babich as the team's director of public relations.

It was less than a week since the tryout camp that the Gems made a deal with the Chicago Hustle. The Gems traded their future 1979 2nd round draft pick for Mary Sue Garrity, Chicago's 4th round pick in the last draft. Ms. Garrity was a St. Joseph graduate and the Gems were looking for as many East Coast players as they could gather. Mary Sue did not play for the Gems in 1978-79, so the transaction was probably cancelled.

On October 7, the Gems secured the Dunn Sports Complex in Elizabeth, N.J. as their home site. The 4,000 seat arena was a great size for a growing sport like women's basketball. The Gems' front office at One Marine Plaza in North Bergen let it be known that the Gems' players were available for speaking engagements or clinics.

With the season about five weeks away, the Gems announced the signing of 5'8" Kathy Fitzgerald, who was the all-time women's hooper from William Paterson College. Four days later, November 6th, the Gems signed Gail Tatterson and Jo-Ellen Bistromowitz. Tatterson tallied 1,138 points in her four years at Salisbury State Univ. Jo-Ellen, played two years in Europe, after graduating from Montclair State in 1974.

A training camp got underway at the Academy of St. Aloysius in Jersey City. Right away the Gems on November 6th, waived the following players: Ramona Benjamin, Diana Bieber, Elaine Carroll, and Cathy Inglese.

A November 8th Morristown Daily Record emphasized the slow steady plans for the Gems. Their expenses were reasonable with salaries in the \$3,500 to \$15,000 range and reasonable rent at the Dunn Sports Complex. With ticket prices of \$6 & \$5 for reserved seats, the Gems knew they needed about 2,500 a game to break even. The team began training camp with 25, but were down to 17 within a few weeks of the 1st game.

On November 14th the Gems added another Montclair State Squaw, Wanda Szeremeta. The 5'10" star scored over 1,500 points over her four years in college basketball. Her first two years were at Lamar University, in Texas before she came home to New Jersey. During her time at Montclair State she was part of the team that was the third best team in the nation behind UCLA and Maryland.



On the same day the Gems signed 5'8" Queens College graduate, Peggy Canning. Peggy had been playing in Europe over the last two years averaging 23 and 26 points a season. They also signed a Jersey City 5'9" forward from the Univ. of Vermont, Karen Green, who averaged 18 ppg. Karen was also the Most Valuable Player in the Harlem Rucker Pros Summer League All-Star game. The Rucker League is the ultimate playground basketball venue.



The Gems added 6'1" Tanya Johnson of Ferris State, who once had a 37 point 31 rebounds game her senior year. One newspaper said she was acquired from the Milwaukee Does for a 1981 draft pick. Yet that would mean she was signed as a free agent, because she wasn't drafted by Milwaukee. Also signing that day was Randi Burdick, a Montclair State graduate who was now coaching at Rutgers.

Over the three seasons of the WBL Montclair State had the highest player representation in the league with 10. (Wayland Baptist was 2nd with eight.)

These 10 included:

Jo-Ellen Bistromowitz	Pat Colasurdo Mayo	
Carol Blazejowski	Alice Schmidt	
Randi Burdick	Karen Smith	
Mary Jean Hayek	Wanda Szeremeta	(Randi Burdick >>)
Jill Jeffrey	Jan Ternyik	



On November 17th the Gems traded their 4th round choice in the Free Agent draft, Suzanne Wera from Olivet, Michigan to the Dayton Rockettes for a 5th round 1979 draft pick.

Late in November the Gems signed Debra Roelich, a Queens College graduate, who returned from Europe to try her hand with the Gems. The 5'7" guard averaged 25 points and 10 assists a game with her German team.

On November 30th the Gems made a deal with the New York Stars as they received 5'5" guard Debbie Mason, a Queens College product, for future considerations.

A clipping that the Gems would make their home debut on December 17th, appeared in the New Brunswick Home News. But even more impressive was a clipping that appeared in the New York Times mentioning the game.

The WBL began its step into history on Saturday December 9, 1978 when the Milwaukee Does attracted 7,824 fans to the Milwaukee Arena. The Does fell to the Chicago Hustle 92-87.

As the New Jersey Gems sat in waiting for their chance to play, the aura still hanging over the state of New Jersey – was Blaze. Even though Carol Blazejowski had made her decision to wait for the Olympics, the state of New Jersey and the Gems suffered. Without her, were they really a team to be watched?

Several other players also chose not to join the Gems. Tara Heiss, another Olympic hopeful, was also waiting for 1980. Denise Burdick, the 6'1" Immaculata stud, was sticking with her surveyor job, while Maggie Nelson, the 6'1" center from Stanford was playing hard to get. She was not committing, or turning the Gems down, she was just nowhere to be found.

While the Gems' top picks were not on the team, the papers told how they felt about the WBL:

Their project is ambitious. It's designed to give the most proficient of the hundreds of thousands of young women currently playing serious basketball around America a chance to cash in on their talents and display it in an appropriately professional setting.

Before the December 17th game against Chicago, the team still had 15 players on the roster:

Jo-Ellen Bistromowitz	(Montclair St.)	Sharon Manning	(Queens College)
Randi Burdick	(Montclair St.)	Sue Martin	(Immaculata College)
Pegging Canning	(Jersey City St.)	Debbie Mason	(Queens College)
Kathy Fitzgerald	(William Paterson)	Debra Roelich	(Queens College)
Karen Green	(Univ. of Vermont)	Kathryn Solano	(Cortlandt State)
Mary Jean Hayek	(Montclair St.)	Wanda Szeremeta	(Montclair St.)
Ethel Holevas	(William Paterson)	Gail Tatterson	(Salisbury State)
Tanya Johnson	(Ferris State)		

The team definitely had an East Coast flair, with Ferris State (Michigan) being the furthest west.

In the early year of women's basketball, most colleges hadn't yet developed a strong fan following, but if they had the Gems probably would have led the league in attendance.

A cute story about the Gems' first game was described this way in the Hackensack Record:

The New Jersey Gems open their Women's Basketball League season tonight against the Chicago Hustle with an unemployed teacher at center, a bilingual secretary and a college student at the forwards, and an out-of-work coach and liquor-store manager at the guards.

Coming off the bench are a YMCA swimming instructor, a mental health specialist, a first-grade teacher, and a would-be journalist. The coach is a realtor, and one of the three owners made his money as a proprietor of some cocktail lounges and Jersey City.

"The kids in my class want to know if we're going to be on TV or if we'll be playing the Knicks," says reserve guard Peggy Canning, the 1st grade teacher. "We've talked about it, but the kids have no idea of what's going on for who we are."

As the WBL tried to grow the league made a couple of expectations to assure security. Founder Bill Byrne specified: "Three things fold leagues: players costs, arena costs, and the escrow factor. We've got the money in escrow for travel expenses, arena rentals are reasonable and we have the players."

The WBL took steps to avoid salary conflicts with players when it included a clause in its standard contract which does not allow the player to reveal her salary to a third party. Although a league official claims the salary ranges is \$15,000 to \$5,000, the 14 players on the Gems roster are earning between \$7,000 and \$3,200.

As the players got ready for their first competitive game their mind set was:

"I don't think a lot of players realize they are professionals," Szeremeta says. "We've been stuck in a gym practicing and we don't really know what to expect from all this. We're still not sure the thing is for real. The day after we got our uniforms, we practiced a lot better. I mean we know we're here, but you wonder sometimes if there is anybody else out there."

One major stumbling block for the untried professional product was the location of the arena. While the Dunn Sports Complex was a new gleaming site for games, Elizabeth, New Jersey was not. It's relationship with the dangerous area of Newark, New Jersey scared some people. While the site was easy to get to, many people didn't want to try.

"We're up against a typical suburban mentality," says Bistromowitz, who played professionally in Germany for two years. "I live in Newark and a lot of my friends won't come over and visit because of where I live."

Some other early WBL factors:

The WBL must be pleased to be anywhere, considering some of the rocky beginnings of franchises. The Hustle practiced at a gymnasium in an orphanage and reneged on several promises to its players concerning the pay scale and living conditions.

The New York Stars weren't able to find a place to play - they finally hit upon Iona College in New Rochelle - until two weeks ago.

Brennan is fiscally prepared for some losses for the first two years of the WBL's five-year plan (Five years, incidentally is the limit beyond which the Internal Revenue Service will not allow a business to offset earnings with losses for tax purposes.)

For the Sunday December 17th game, the (2-0) Hustle brought their high scoring style of ball to New Jersey. Their last game, a home game against the New York Stars, turned into a 137-107 demolition in front of 2,192 Alumni Hall fans.

The Gems attracted 1,924 curious fans who saw the Gems overtake the Hustle's offensive skills with a 33-30 1st quarter lead. The Gems added to their lead to make the score 58-54 at the half to the delight of the Gems' new supporters.

Yet the fouls began to pile up for both teams. For the Hustle Debby Waddy-Rossow accumulated a number of fouls. Near the end of the 3rd period Wanda Szeremeta, Gail Tatterson, and Randi Burdick all had five fouls each. Therefore, they all had to sit through the first five minutes of the 4th quarter.

The 4th quarter began with the Gems holding an 89-88 lead. With the Hustle leading 97-93 and about seven minutes remaining the foul-prone trio returned. The Hustle lead blew up to 107-98, when Waddy-Rossow took her 23 points to the bench as she was the first to foul out.

The Gems scored four to cut the lead to 107-102. After a Szeremeta jumper and two Tatterson free throws, the Gems were within 110-108. With about three minutes left Kathy Solano tied the score at 112, before Sue Digitale upped the Hustles' lead to 114-112 with two minutes left.

With the score tied, again, at 117 and a minute remaining the Gems committed a foul and Assistant Coach, George Kennedy, son of head coach Don Kennedy, blew a gasket. His technical gave the Hustle a chance to up their lead. Rita Easterling missed the technical, but made the next two for a 119-117 lead with 48 seconds remaining. Sue Martin hit a shot from the corner to tie the score at 119.

With 34 seconds left Rita Easterling committed a foul that gave Debbie Roelich two free throws, she missed the first and made the second for a 120-119, Gems' lead. With under 28 seconds a Sue Digitale bank shot gave the Hustle a 121-120 lead, but the Gems had the ball for the final shot, and lost it. Easterling's two free throws with 10 seconds remaining sealed the 123-120 victory.

To any fans that were being introduced to women's basketball they walked out delighted with the points and the efforts.

Looking at the stat sheet it would look like a well-played game as the Gems had 17 turnovers and the Hustle had 12. Yet, the Passaic Herald News' first words were: "It may have been sloppy, but it was far from dull." This means the stats team was also rookies learning their roles.

This game must have gone on for ever as there were 117 free throws shot, with NJ: 40-56 71.4%, and Chic 41-61 67.2%.

All 12 uniformed Gems saw action with Wanda Szeremeta playing the most at 35 and fellow Squaw Mary Jean Hayek playing the least with six. The Gems were led by Szeremeta's 24 points and 11 rebounds, while Gail Tatterson had 19 points and 11 rebounds, before she fouled out. Five other Gems also scored in double figures.

The Hustle were led by Sue Digitale's 34 points and 13 rebounds. Guard Rita Easterling had 27 points on 9 of 24 from the floor along with eight assists. Three Hustle players fouled out: Debby Waddy-Rossow (23 pts), Liz Galloway (6 pts) and Karen Logan (8 pts), who was not expected to play because of an ankle injury in Milwaukee.

New Jersey Gems																Team Game #	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat	
Bistromowitz, Jo-Ellen	3	20	1	4	8	13	1	5	6	2	6	1	2	1	10	0.950	
Burdick, Randi	21	18	5	9	2	4	0	3	3	0	5	1	2	0	12	0.778	
Canning, Peggy	12	7	1	3	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0.571	
Hayek, Mary Jean	19	6	1	2	0	0	2	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	0.833	
Johnson, Tanya	22	10	0	2	0	0	1	1	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0.600	
Manning, Sharon	24	8	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0.250	
Martin, Sue	13	27	8	13	2	2	0	0	0	1	5	0	2	0	18	0.667	
Mason, Debbie	11	20	2	6	1	2	1	3	4	1	2	0	0	0	5	0.550	
Roelich, Debra	15	28	6	8	4	8	3	2	5	2	5	0	4	1	16	0.750	
Solano, Kathy	20	32	2	10	6	7	1	5	6	2	3	0	4	0	10	0.500	
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	35	8	19	8	10	2	9	11	2	5	2	2	1	24	1.114	
Tatterson, Gail	33	29	6	10	7	8	2	9	11	0	6	3	1	0	19	1.103	
Totals		240	40	87	40	56	13	38	51	13	39	7	17	3	120	0.779	
			FG%	46.0%	FT%	71.4%		Team Rebs	0								
Special Notes:																	
Technical: Asst Coach - George Kennedy																	

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	34	10	13	14	19	3	10	13	0	5	1	2	0	34	1.353
Duckworth, Tesa	44	15	2	7	0	3	0	3	3	0	3	0	0	0	4	0.467
Easterling, Rita	15	44	9	24	9	10	0	5	5	8	3	1	3	0	27	1.045
Fincher, Janie	10	21	5	15	3	8	2	7	9	4	2	2	1	0	13	1.476
Galloway, Liz	31	24	3	8	0	0	0	4	4	0	6	1	3	0	6	0.333
Logan, Karen	4	28	3	8	2	2	0	1	1	2	6	0	0	0	8	0.464
Peppler, Mary Jo	8	19	0	3	3	6	5	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	3	0.474
Rainey, Sandra	23	Name not in Box Score														
Stachon, Toni	14	19	2	6	1	2	0	7	7	0	3	0	0	0	5	0.632
Waddy-Rossow, Debby	25	36	7	20	9	11	1	5	6	1	6	2	3	0	23	0.833
Totals		240	41	104	41	61	11	43	54	15	34	7	12	0	123	0.842
			FG%	39.4%	FT%	67.2%	Team Rebs	0								

Despite the disappointing loss, the Gems were encouraged by the opening game crowd. Having played their first live competition the Gems had a week to make adjustments. Without a pre-season the Gems just played a team with two pre-season games and two regular-season games under their belts.

With the advent of a pro career after college, many local papers made sure everyone in their town knew they were the home of a pro player. A Maryland paper focused on the family of Gail Tatterson and bragged about her high school and college exploits.

The Paterson New Jersey paper let everyone know how scared to death the 6'2", 28-year-old, Mary Jane Hayek was for this first game. In fact, during the summer, she was waiting news about the try-outs but then decided not to attend. A friend recommended Mary Jane to coach Don Kennedy, so she tried out and after two practices she made the team. Even as a pro, Mary Jane kept her job as a physical education teacher. She therefore needed to plan her vacation days around the Gems' away games.

The Gems made a roster move on the 23rd as they waived former Queens College star, Sharon Manning, who was not to be confused with Peggy Canning (our 1st grade teacher).

On Saturday December 23rd the (0-1) Gems played the (0-2) Dayton Rockettes. To most of the players in the league playing games so close to Christmas and with the inability to go home made them realize life as a pro was going to be different.

The Rockettes came to the Dunn Sports Center after being the latest team to fire their coach. The WBL coaching scoreboard to date was:

Minnesota – Damaris "Dee" Hopfenspirger resigned after 1 week of training camp.

Iowa – George Nicodemus fired after two exhibition games.

Milwaukee – Candace Klinzig fired after 1st WBL game, loss to Chicago 92-87

Dayton – Linda Mann fired after two losses

The Rockettes replaced Ms. Mann with the 24-year-old assistant from the Milwaukee Does, Tom Griffey. This would be Coach Griffey's first game as the new head coach.

Until rivalries could develop between teams each incoming team was just a group of individuals representing a city. The 1,924 opening game New Jerseyites didn't return to the Dunn Sports Complex as only 816 showed up to see the Gems fall behind 26-22. By half time the Gems took a 51-50 lead, even though Dayton's Vivian Greene had 20 points at the half. The Gems 25-18 3rd quarter was sparked by Sue Martin coming off the bench to help the Gems gain a 76-68 lead going into the 4th quarter. The Gems evened their record at 1-1, with a 101-94 victory.

Very quickly the Gems' duo of Szeremeta and Tatterson were proving to be quite formidable. Wanda's 27 points and nine rebounds, just edged out Gail's 25 points and 12 rebounds. Sue Martin's 18 points and 10 rebounds played a significant role in the victory. Even though she only scored two points on one of six from the field, Tanya Johnson did grab nine rebounds for the Gems.

The Rockettes were led by Vivian Greene's 31 points on 14 of 34 from the field. She was probably the only Dayton starter that didn't foul out. Angela Scott had 13 points, 20 rebounds, and six fouls. Denise Craig had 13 points, 15 rebounds and six fouls. Michelle McKenzie came through with 10 points, eight rebounds, and six fouls.

And last, but not least, we had Patti Bucklew who had 10 points, 1 rebound and fouled out of her third game in a row. For those keeping score, and I know you are, she played in three games and never made it to the end of any of them. Patti will end the year with 18 ejections.

New Jersey Gems															Team Games
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	IO	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 Rockettes															Team G
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						

The first road trip for the (1-1) Gems had them going to Dayton to take on the (0-3) Rockettes. The Wednesday, December 27th game, at Hara Arena, attracted 574 as they saw Dayton take a 31-22 1st quarter lead. Angela Scott's 11 and Denise Craig's eight gave Dayton the upper hand. The Rockettes kept the pressure on as they went into the half with a 61-47 lead. The 14-point difference stayed the same for the rest of the game as Dayton won its first game 113-99.

The (1-2) Gems introduced a new high scorer as Sue Martin led the team with 23 points and nine rebounds. Gail Tatterson also had nine rebounds along with her 22 points. Wanda Szeremeta came through with 15 points and eight rebounds.

With the father and son coaching tandem of Don & George Kennedy, it was often difficult to figure out who picked up the team's technicals. Usually head coaches were the targets of the refs, but with assistant coach George shooting off his loudmouth in the first game, it would be hard to attribute technicals to the right Kennedy. For the future – if it doesn't say George or assistant, we will give the techs to Don Kennedy.

For the winning (1-3) Rockettes they were led by Vivian Greene's 32 points, while Angela Scott was right on her tail with 31 points and nine rebounds. Denise Craig pulled down 14 rebounds, while also adding 24 points.

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
Tattersson, 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							
Special Notes:															
Technical: Coach Kennedy															

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, Vonnie	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							

To close out the first year of the WBL, and to surprise skeptics that they already made it through 19 regular season games the (1-2) Gems would host the (1-3) Minnesota Fillies. The Saturday December 30th game was a special "Children's Day" game where children 12 and under were admitted for free.

It was hard to tell how many people were aware of the offer or took advantage of it. In fact over the whole first year I could find no newspaper ads. So, knowing how front offices often inflated their attendance figures too look good, it was hard to imagine the actual number of people sitting in the seats, when the reported attendance figures was 250.

Unfortunately, this was one of the two Gems games that had almost no information. The Fillies had a 40-38 halftime lead and the game stayed close until there was 5:25 left in the game. Kathy Solano's basket gave the Gems a lead they would not relinquish as they came through with an 84-77 victory. New Jersey evened their record at 2-2, while the Fillies fell to 1-4 to end 1978.

The Gems were led by Wanda Szeremta's 24, Gail Tatterson's 19, and Debbie Mason's 19. For the Minnesota Fillies, the WBL's leading scorer, Brenda Chapman had 25 points. Brenda became the league's leader when she torched the Houston Angels for 43, in a losing effort 13 days earlier.

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								0						0
Burdick, Randi	21								0						12
Canning, Peggy	12	Name Not in Newspapers							0						0
Hayek, Mary Jean	19	3	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
Johnson, Tanya	22								0						0
Martin, Sue	13								0						19
Mason, Debbie	11								0						0
Roelich, Debra	15								0						0
Solano, Kathy	20								0						0
Szeremeta, Wanda	23								0						24
Tatterson, Gail	33								0						19
Adjustment		237											42		8
Totals		240	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	42	0	84
			FG%	#####	FT%	0.0%	Team Rebs								

Minnesota Fillies															Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Chapman, Brenda	15								0						25
Cooper, Accronetta	33	7	0	4	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Engle, Cheryl	24								0						0
Jackson, Peggie	12								0						0
Kocurek, Marie	42								0		6				0
Koopman, Carol	25								0						9
Michaelson, Maren	21								0						0
Morrish, Mary	53	13	1	4	2	2	1	2	3	3	2	1	0	0	4
Prevost, Deb	10	28	1	7	2	5	3	1	4	3	4	2	4	0	4
Sjoquist, Lynnette	55								0						0
Wilson, Donna	11								0						0
Wilson, Laurie	13								0						0
Adjustment		192											21		35
Totals		240	2	15	4	7	4	4	8	7	12	3	25	0	77
			FG%	13.3%	FT%	57.1%	Team Rebs								

An encouraging sign to end the year was the letter to the editor in the Morristown Daily Record. In a section called, *It's Your Turn*, Evelyn Randall from Lake Hiawatha, made sure she gave the papers a piece of her mind regarding the expectations of the local journalists. She felt that instead of understanding how far women's sports had progressed they were distorting the picture by asking the women to be equivalent to the NBA.

Eastern Division

Houston	4	1	.800	94.2	83.6
New Jersey 2	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	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

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

The Gems went into 1979 with the 4th best record in the WBL.

This was important as the Gems had three game road trip as they traveled to Houston first. The (4-1) Angels had a 1.5 game lead in the division. The lead could be cut to ½ game with a victory.

The Thursday, January 4th, game was played in the Astroarena, the 6,000 seat exhibition hall next to the Astrodome. The Gems were not going to have to face Belinda Candler, who began the season with a 30-point, 22-rebound effort against Dayton. Candler was out for the 3rd game in a row with an ankle injury.

A crowd of 1,122 came out to watch the Angels take a slight 30-28 1st quarter lead. The Gems proved their equal as they tied it up at the half 53-53.

The Angels began to pull ahead and at the 9:14 mark when Assistant Coach George Kennedy was ejected with two technicals. Later Houston took advantage when Gail Tatterson went out with a knee injury to outscore the Gems 38-24 to take a 91-77 lead in to the 4th quarter.

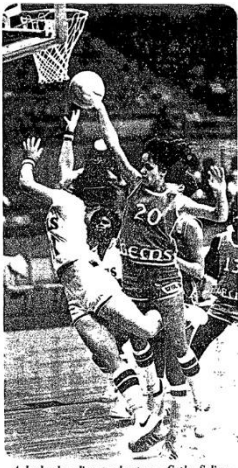
The Angels upped their record to 5-1, with their 3rd win in a row, with a 122-106 victory. The Gems were now 2-3 and 2.5 games behind. There were an incredible 74 turnovers committed in this game.



Photo by Carlos Antonio Rios, Chronicle Staff
Cynthia Washington (15) of the Angels shoots as Gems' Debbie Mason takes swipe at ball and misses.

After the game Don Kennedy got into a brief verbal exchange with Houston's head coach, Don Knodel, regarding the officials. Yet to Gail Tatterson,

"I didn't think the officiating was that bad and I didn't think they (the Angels) were any more physical, than the other teams we've played. We're a young league and the officials are going to make some mistakes at first," said Tatterson.



Aulenbacher dives to shoot over Cathy Solino
— Post photo by Bill Thompson

Wanda Szeremeta was one assist away from the WBL's first Triple-Double as she scored 27 points, grabbed 17 rebounds, handed out nine assists, and absconded with six steals.

To top it off Wanda picked up a technical in the 4th quarter. It involved her calling the official an obscene name, which actually may not be obscene in New Jersey. Her intimidation of the Angels players with both her skill and her mouth solidified her nickname, "Wicked" Wanda. Something she received from the Montclair State sports information director.

The Gems also had six others who scored in double figures with Gail Tatterson's 19 points and 10 rebounds next in line. The Angels had seven players in double figures and three others within two points of 10. Paula Mayo led the way with 18 points and nine rebounds.

New Jersey Gems															Team Game #	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Bistromowitz, Jo Ann	3	16	1	2	0	2	0	3	3	0	1	0	2	1	2	0.188
Burdick, Randi	21	31	4	14	3	5	2	2	4	6	4	2	7	0	11	0.710
Canning, Peggy	12	Name Not in Newspaper														
Fitzgerald, Kathy	4	5	0	3	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0.000
Hayek, Mary Jean	19	Name Not in Newspaper														
Johnson, Tanya	22	Name Not in Newspaper														
Martin, Sue	13	34	4	13	5	9	2	4	6	0	3	3	3	0	13	0.559
Mason, Debbie	11	21	5	6	0	0	2	1	3	0	1	4	1	3	10	0.762
Roelich, Debbie	15	30	3	9	6	6	1	2	3	1	3	2	6	0	12	0.433
Solano, Cathy	20	27	5	7	2	2	0	5	5	3	6	0	4	0	12	0.704
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	44	11	23	5	7	5	12	17	9	3	6	8	2	27	1.364
Tatterson, Gail	33	32	6	7	7	11	3	7	10	2	4	0	9	4	19	0.750
Totals		240	39	84	28	42	15	37	52	21	25	17	41	10	106	0.733
			FG%	46.4%	FT%	66.7%	Team Rebs		14							
Special Notes:																
Technical: Coach George Kennedy 3rd Qtr 9:14 (2) - Ejected																
Wanda Szeremeta 4th Qtr 5:27																

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	29	3	13	4	4	3	3	6	9	2	2	2	0	10	1.172
Brockhage, Bobbi	50	4	0	3	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0.000
Bubrig, Patty	33	22	4	9	3	5	3	3	6	0	4	4	6	0	11	0.682
Candler, Belinda	24	Injured -														
Chapman, Vicky	22	21	4	13	1	1	2	3	5	4	1	2	3	0	9	1.000
Dobson, Gail	25	17	2	8	2	2	1	3	4	0	2	1	1	0	6	0.588
Holleyman, Glenda	20	22	4	10	5	6	1	4	5	6	3	2	1	1	13	1.409
Johnson, Pat	45	26	6	13	2	2	1	6	7	0	4	1	5	1	14	0.654
Jones, Belinda	23	27	5	9	1	1	0	1	1	2	0	5	3	0	11	0.667
Kenlaw, Jessie	40	20	6	8	1	1	1	11	12	1	4	1	2	1	13	1.300
Mayo, Paula	10	24	8	15	2	3	2	7	9	1	5	3	2	0	18	1.250
Mosley, Dolly	14	10	2	9	4	4	0	2	2	1	0	0	3	1	8	0.900
Washington, Cynthia	15	18	3	6	3	6	0	0	0	0	1	3	4	1	9	0.444
Totals		240	47	116	28	35	14	44	58	24	27	24	33	5	122	0.913
			FG%	40.5%	FT%	80.0%	Team Rebs		11							
Special Notes:																
Houston Stats - from 2 Accumulated sheets - backed in																

The Gems took their 2-3 record up to Milwaukee for a game on Sunday January 7th at the Milwaukee Arena. 1,214 fans came to see if the (1-6) Does could break their five-game losing streak. Of course, within that losing streak was a loss to the Iowa Cornets on 12/29/78 that had been protested and was being considered for a partial replay.

The Does jumped out to a 26-23 1st quarter lead, which they expanded on, but then with 2:17 left the Does' second leading scorer Kathy DeBoer (15.8) sprained her ankle and left the game after scoring six points. The Does took a slim 48-47 score into the locker room.

After the Gems tied it up at 50 the Does went on a 12-0 streak to make the score 62-50 with 8:26 left in the quarter. Yet over the rest of the quarter the Gems had a 17-11 advantage to cut the score to 73-67 going into the 4th quarter.

The Gems then went on their own 12-2 spree to lead 79-75, but the Does tied it at 79. When Gail Tatterson hit her jumper at 7:44, some of the air went out of the Does' balloon. After all they had lost their last three games by a total of five points. The Does, for some reason, were less aggressive on the boards and acting overconfident. In the end the Gems came through with a 93-91 victory. This evened the Gems season record at 3-3 and gave them their first road win.

The Gems were led by both Sue Martin and Wanda Szeremeta who had 24 points each. Sue also grabbed 12 rebounds and had three steals. The Gems survived a four point, 1 of 8 from the floor performance from Gail Tatterson.

The (1-7) Does were led by Lynda Gehrke who had 23 points, nine rebounds, five steals and four blocked shots. Also contributing was Marguerite Keeley who had 19 points and 10 rebounds. As a team the Does shot 38.7%, which was frustrating in a two-point loss. Or how about shooting 9 of 20 from the free throw line?

The Gems were given this victory through Does' sloppiness, but who cares?

New Jersey Gems															Team Game #	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Bistromowitz, Jo-Ellen	3	5	0	0	2	2		1	1	0	0			1	2	0.600
Burdick, Randi	21	21	5	7	2	3		2	2	1	0				12	0.762
Canning, Peggy	12	Did Not Travel ?							0						0	
Fitzgerald, Kathy	4	Did Not Travel ?							0						0	
Hayek, Mary Jean	19	10	1	4	0	2		6	6	0	1				2	0.800
Johnson, Tanya	22	6	1	1	0	0		2	2	0	1				2	0.667
Martin, Sue	13	42	10	15	4	4		12	12	2	3	3		2	24	1.024
Mason, Debbie	11	29	4	5	5	5		4	4	3	3	1		1	13	0.828
Roelich, Denra	15	19	0	2	3	6		0	0	3	4	1			3	0.526
Solano, Kathy	20	27	2	8	3	4		2	2	4	1	4		1	7	0.778
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	48	8	18	8	12		5	5	7	2				24	0.896
Tatterson, Gail	33	33	1	8	2	2		10	10	0	5				4	0.424
Adjustment							10	-10					27			
Totals		240	32	68	29	40	10	34	44	20	20	9	27	5	93	0.663
			FG%	47.1%	FT%	72.5%	Team Rebs									

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	37	5	22	0	2		14	14	3	4	1			10	0.838
Coleman, Beverly		3	0	1	0	0		1	1	0	0				0	0.333
DeBoer, Kathy	13	9	3	5	0	0		2	2	0	3	1			6	1.000
Dennis, Brenda	10	37	4	11	0	0		3	3	13	3	7			8	1.189
Ellis, Cindy	25	10	1	3	0	0		1	1	1	1	1			2	0.600
Fuller, Jan	28	5	0	0	0	0		1	1	0	0	1			0	0.400
Gehrke, Lynda	33	42	9	23	5	11		9	9	1	3	5		4	23	0.929
Hostert, Barb	6	22	3	7	0	0		1	1	3	5				6	0.591
Keeley, Marguerite	31	34	8	15	3	5		10	10	2	4	1		1	19	1.000
Smith, Joanie	1	41	8	19	1	2		4	4	8	4				17	0.902
Zweig, Doris	15	Name Not in Newspapers							0						0	
Adjustment							26	-26					20			
Totals		240	41	106	9	20	26	20	46	31	27	17	20	5	91	0.817
			FG%	38.7%	FT%	45.0%	Team Rebs									

It would be three more days before the (3-3) Gems took on the (6-3) Chicago Hustle in Alumni Hall. The Wednesday, January 10th game drew 1,173 fans as the Hustle almost doubled the Gems, 27-14 in the 1st quarter. Both teams put 31 on the board in the 2nd quarter for a 58-45 Hustle advantage.

The Gems' half time speech inspired them to climb back in the game, so that it was 80-78 Hustle going into the 4th quarter. After 48 minutes the Hustle won 108-101 to raise their record to 7-3. The Gems fell to 3-4.

The stats show the team's leading scorer, Wanda Szeremeta, only playing two minutes as she injured her ankle. When a team loses a 20+ points a game scorer and only loses by seven, it became frustrating. Gail Tatterson picked up the scoring with 35 points and 11 rebounds before she fouled out. Randi Burdick and Kathy Solano both had 16 in the losing effort.

The Hustle were led by Tesa Duckworth who had 26 points and five rebounds in just 27 minutes, before she fouled out. While Debby Waddy-Rossow had 20 points, but she left a lot more points out there, as she shot just 4 of 13 from the free throw line. Liz Galloway came within one steal of also having a Triple-Double: 12 points, 10 rebounds, and 9 steals. The nine steals probably established the WBL steal record at the time – it would be broken later by Connie Kunzmann of Iowa and Janice Thomas of New York, who did hers in a double overtime game.

The same way the Gems played without Szeremeta, the Hustle's Rita Easterling only played nine minutes this game.

New Jersey Gems																Team Game #
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Bistromowitz, Jo-Ellen	3	14	0	4	0	4	0	2	2	1	6	0	0	0	0	0.286
Burdick, Randi	21	33	6	12	4	7	0	1	1	4	3	2	6	0	16	0.636
Canning, Peggy	12	Name Not in Newspapers														
Fitzgerald, Kathy	4	4	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	4	1.000
Hayek, Mary Jane	19	Name Not in Newspapers														
Johnson, Tanya	22	22	1	5	3	7	4	10	14	0	2	0	0	0	5	0.864
Martin, Sue	13	33	4	10	1	2	0	5	5	1	5	0	4	0	9	0.364
Mason, Debbie	11	33	3	8	1	2	1	4	5	3	2	4	1	0	7	0.636
Roelich, Denra	15	29	3	11	3	6	0	2	2	1	5	2	4	0	9	0.379
Solano, Kathy	20	28	6	15	4	7	0	2	2	3	3	0	5	0	16	0.679
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	2	0	2	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0.500
Tatterson, Gail	33	42	13	19	9	11	3	8	11	1	6	3	7	1	35	1.048
Totals		240	38	90	25	46	8	36	44	14	33	11	28	1	101	0.650
			FG%	42.2%	FT%	54.3%		Team Rebs	8							

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	29	3	7	3	9	7	6	13	1	4	0	2	3	9	0.759
Duckworth, Tesa	44	27	10	17	6	9	0	5	5	0	6	2	0	0	26	1.222
Easterling, Rita	15	9	0	1	4	7	0	0	0	3	1	0	1	0	4	1.000
Fincher, Janie	10	33	2	12	5	6	0	2	2	8	3	0	3	0	9	0.727
Galloway, Liz	31	33	5	11	2	3	2	8	10	2	6	9	1	0	12	1.030
Logan, Karen	4	42	3	9	4	4	1	5	6	5	1	4	7	0	10	0.548
Pepler, Mary Jo	8	7	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	1	1	0	0	0.143
Rainey, Sandra	23	4	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	1.250
Stachon, Toni	14	27	8	14	2	2	5	3	8	3	6	1	4	2	18	1.074
Waddy-Rossow, Debby	25	29	8	19	4	13	2	5	7	2	4	2	3	0	20	1.034
Totals		240	39	93	30	53	17	36	53	26	34	19	22	5	108	0.875
			FG%	41.9%	FT%	56.6%		Team Rebs	5							

The Gems returned home for a Friday night game. They had a special promotion that said the first 1,000 people would receive a free shaver kit. The game on January 12th against the (1-7) Milwaukee Does. The theory of people coming back once they've seen a game, plus the promotion, didn't translate to a great fan reaction as just 621 came out on a great Friday night. (And the weather wasn't bad that day!)

Yet, to be honest, the promotions are not advertisements, with Gems name, date, time, or location. The team was depending on the newspapers putting small clippings in the paper.

The Gems were still without Wanda Szeremeta as she was suffering from an ankle injury. Yet that didn't stop them from taking a 26-23 1st quarter lead. The Does then dominated the Gems as they went into the half with a 49-44 lead. As the Does tried to break their six-game losing streak they put together another 33-26 3rd quarter to own an 82-70 lead.

The Does made the first basket of the 4th quarter to get to 84-70, then the Gems put together a 12-7 streak over the next seven and a half minutes, to trail 91-82 with 4:30 left.

After the previous Gems-Does game the Does' players spoke of a hex or jinx hovering over the team, because they were losing so many close games. It was probably at this point that the Does players looked at each other and couldn't find anyone to take control.

The Gems ended the game with a 14-3 run for a 99-94 victory. The Gems made 17 of 21 free throws down the stretch. For the game the Gems shot 58 free throws and the Does had 51. But the Does actually had five players foul out: Brenda Dennis, Jan Fuller, Lynda Gehrke, Marguerite Keeley, and Joanie Smith. What did this mean:

Four Milwaukee players fouled out, leaving the Does with only five, so when Marguerite Keeley committed her 6th foul with 24 seconds left, she had to stay in the game. The Does were charged with a technical foul and New Jersey's Susan Martin, who led all scorers with 27 points, made the free throw that was the final point of the game.

Sue Martin led the team with six baskets and 15 of 17 from the line for 27 points and nine rebounds. Gail Tatterson had 19 points and 11 rebounds before she fouled out.

The in-shock Does were led by Joanie Smith's 25 points and 10 rebounds before she fouled out. Gerry Booker had 23 points and 10 rebounds, but shot a miserable 7 of 22 from the line.

New Jersey Gems															Team Game #	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Bistromowitz, Jo-Ellen	3	21	3	7	1	4			9	9	2	2			7	0.952
Burdick, Randi	21	29	4	8	1	1			0	0	11	5			9	1.069
Canning, Peggy	12	5	1	2	1	3			0	0	1	1			3	1.000
Fitzgerald, Kathy	4	3	1	2	1	3			2	2	0	0			3	1.667
Hayek, Mary Jean	19	18	1	6	0	3			8	8	2	2			2	0.778
Johnson, Tanya	22	10	0	1	1	2			2	2	0	3			1	0.300
Martin, Sue	13	40	6	14	15	17			9	9	2	2			27	1.000
Mason, Debbie	11	19	1	6	6	6			4	4	3	1			8	0.947
Roelich, Debra	15	29	5	13	3	4			2	2	3	6			13	0.724
Solano, Kathy	20	33	2	7	3	5			0	0	5	5			7	0.515
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	DNP - Ankle Injury														
Tatterson, Gail	33	33	7	10	5	10			11	11	2	6			19	1.030
Adjustment							18	-18				9	21	6		
Totals		240	31	76	37	58	18	29	47	31	33	9	21	6	99	0.817
			FG%	40.8%	FT%	63.8%	Team Rebs									

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	8	19	7	22		10	10	4	3				23	1.079	
DeBoer, Kathy	13	Name Not in Newspaper															
Decker, Patti	44	5	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	1				0	0.000	
Dennis, Brenda	10	33	1	6	0	1		3	3	11	6				2	0.818	
Ellis, Cindy	25	21	3	8	0	0		1	1	1	2				6	0.429	
Fuller, Jan	28	26	4	12	8	8		8	8	0	6				16	0.923	
Gehrke, Lynda	33	26	3	13	2	3		13	13	0	6				8	0.808	
Hostert, Barb	6	20	0	4	5	6		2	2	2	4				5	0.550	
Keeley, Marguerite	31	26	3	10	3	4		6	6	1	6				9	0.654	
Prevost, Deb	32	3	0	3	0	0		0	0	0	1				0	0.000	
Smith, Joanie	1	42	10	26	5	7		10	10	4	6				25	1.024	
Zweig, Doris	15	Name Not in Newspaper															
Adjustment								31	-31			11	16	7			
Totals		240	32	101	30	51		31	22	53	23	41	11	16	7	94	0.783
			FG%	31.7%	FT%	58.8%		Team Rebs									
Special Notes:																	
Technical: Milwaukee Bench																	

The Gems were so happy to recognize their team resiliency and that they could come from behind when necessary. Their 4-4 record meant they were only a 1/2 game behind the 4-3 Rockettes, but 1.5 games ahead of their next opponent, the (2-5) New York Stars.

In a new league trying to make an impression with the public the need for rivalries, and especially natural ones was important. It seems that New Yorkers had a natural disdain for anything coming out of New Jersey, so this was going to be the Gems opportunity to gain respect from their WBL neighbors.

The first meeting between the (4-4) Gems and the (2-5) Stars took place at the Dunn Sports Complex on Sunday January 14th. Does a crowd of 1,136, as opposed to the last two crowds of 621 & 250, tell you that a rivalry was in the making?

The New York Stars were one of the rare teams in sports that never won a game in a calendar year. Their 0-3 record in 1978, put them in rare company. (New England Gulls 0-5 in 1980).

The Stars arrived in Elizabeth, N.J. on another two-game losing streak as they took a 30-27 1st quarter lead. They kept their lead, 58-56, at the half and then with a quick 14-4 start to the 3rd quarter, the Stars lead increased to 72-60. The Stars were never challenged after that run. The Gems fell 107-104, but they had no one to blame but themselves.

Their 24 of 45 from the line (53.3%) on their home court was the reason their record dropped to 4-5, while the Stars got closer with a 3-5 record.

The Gems were led by Debbie Mason who had 27 points on 9 of 9 from the floor and 9 of 11 from the line. (Rest of the Gems' free throws, 15-34 for 44%). A new contributor was Randi Burdick who had 18 points and 13 assists.

Seven Stars scored in double digits with Maria Gross and Althea Gwyn setting the standard at 20 points each. Gwyn also pulled down 13 rebounds.

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		2		1				0						5
Burdick, Randi	21		8		2				0	13		1 << at least			18
Canning, Peggy	12		1		1				0						3
Fitzgerald, Kathy	4		2		0				0						4
Hayek, Mary Jean	19		0		0				0						0
Johnson, Tanya	22		1		0				0						2
Martin, Sue	13		5	14	2				0						12
Mason, Debbie	11		9	9	9	11			0						27
Roelich, Debra	15		3		1				0						7
Solano, Kathy	20		4		4				0						12
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	DNP - Injured Ankle							0						0
Tatterson, Gail	33		5		4				0						14
Adjustment		240				34									
Totals		240	40	23	24	45	0	0	0	13	0	1	0	0	104
			FG%	#####	FT%	53.3%	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		1		0				0						2
Bailey, Darlene	11		0		0				0						0
Fletcher, Carmen	30		5		0				0						10
Geils, Donna	21	Injured - Ankle							0						0
Gross, Maria	12		9	15	2				0						20
Gwyn, Althea	31		8		4			13	13						20
Howard, Barbara	13		0		0				0						0
Melbourne, Mara	24		6		3				0						15
Novarr, Harriet	15		1		2				0						4
Thomas, Janice	10		5		0				0						10
Young, Faye	22		4		5				0						13
Young, Kaye	20		5		3				0						13
Adjustment		240													
Totals		240	44	15	19	0	0	13	13	0	0	0	0	0	107
			FG%	#####	FT%	#DIV/0!	Team Rebs								

With the close proximity of the two East Coast teams (34 miles between Elizabeth, NJ and New Rochelle, NY) the WBL schedule had them play their six games in three back-to-back units.

The first of these back-to-back units came on Thursday January 18, as a rivalry with New Jersey meant nothing to the New Yorkers. A mere 400 came to the Mulchay Center on the campus of Iona College. Of course, with a capacity of only 2,578, 400 wasn't as bad as in other places.

A Gems loss would drop them behind their cross-river rival, so the fact that Wanda Szeremeta was still not available needed to be overcome. Therefore, the Stars began by unleashing Kaye Young and Mara Melbourne. Young poured in 11 points, on jumpers from the corner. Melbourne used her quickness to hit the offensive boards for 10 more points. The Stars had an easy 28-13 1st quarter lead and the Gems probably thought the game was over.

Yet, even though the Stars raised the score to 32-15, the Gems had visions of their Does' comeback dancing in their heads. They put together a run of 29-8, with Debbie Mason contributing 15 of those points, to take a 44-40 lead with 2:56 left. The two teams went into the locker room with the score: Gems 48, Stars 48.

The battle to stay out of last would be settled in the next 24 minutes. The Gems took the lead at 57-51, but through the ferocious rebounding of Althea Gwyn the Stars went ahead 78-75, going into the 4th quarter.

The Stars Janice Thomas, the 5'3" floor general took control to keep the Stars focused as the Gems tried to throw a press at them. During the first 10 minutes of the quarter the Stars went on a 19-12 run to take a 94-87 lead. The Gems trimmed the lead to 94-91, but in the end after a Gwyn steal, rebound, and two free throws the Stars built a 100-97 lead. A Tatterson shot at the buzzer only changed the margin of victory to one, 100-99. The (4-5) Stars jumped the (4-6) Gems who were just behind the (4-4) Rockettes.

The Gems were led by Debbie Mason's 19, Gail Tatterson's 19, and Randi Burdick's 17. 29 points were scored by unknown players. The Stars were led by Althea Gwyn's 26 points and 13 rebounds, along with Mara Melbourne's 23 points, and Janice Thomas' eight assists. 32 points were scored by unknown players.

Two games against the Stars and losing by a total of four points.

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								0						0
Burdick, Randi	21								0						17
Canning, Peggy	12								0						0
Fitzgerald, Kathy	4								0						0
Hayek, Mary Jean	19								0						0
Johnson, Tanya	22								0						0
Martin, Sue	13								0						0
Mason, Debbie	11								0						19
Roelich, Denra	15								0						0
Solano, Kathy	20								0						15
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	Injured - Ankle							0						0
Tatterson, Gail	33		1	<< at Least					0						19
Adjustment		240													29
Totals		240	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	99
			FG%	#DIV/0!	FT%	#DIV/0!	Team Rebs								

New York Stars															Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Arturi, Lynn	23								0						0
Bailey, Darlene	11								0						0
Fletcher, Carmen	30								0						0
Geils, Donna	21	Injured - Ankle							0						0
Gross, Maria	12								0						0
Gwyn, Althea	31		at least >>		2	2		13	13			1 << at least			26
Howard, Barbara	13								0						0
Melbourne, Mara	24		at least >>		2	2			0						23
Novarr, Harriet	15								0						0
Thomas, Janice	10								0	8					0
Young, Faye	22		1						0						2
Young, Kaye	20				2	2 <<at Least			0						17
Adjustment		240													32
Totals		240	1	0	6	6	0	13	13	8	0	1	0	0	100
			FG%	#DIV/0!	FT%	100.0%		Team Rebs							

I don't consider a 34 mile trek a road trip, but for the (4-6) Gems they came back from their excursion to the Dunn Sports Complex for a Saturday, January 20th, game against the (6-2) Iowa Cornets.

Iowa was glad to leave the Midwest where a Saturday, January 13th, snowstorm had them play in front of only 241 fans in Cedar Falls. 241 might be good for the New York Stars, but the Cornets were averaging 2,857 in their two previous home games. Yet they came East well rested and rusty.

The Gems took a 26-19 1st quarter lead, which disappeared when the Cornets put together a 13-0 run, giving them a 36-20 2nd quarter and a 55-46 half time lead. The Cornets defensive pressure continued as the Gems had 39 turnovers, which resulted in 21 steals by Iowa. Each quarter the Cornets increased their lead by one, as they beat the Gems in front of 558 fans, 119-108.

For the (4-7) Gems, Debbie Mason had 33 points including 15 of 17 from the line. Randi Burdick, was emerging as a dependable performer as she had 20 points on 10 of 11 from the line. As for the (7-2) Cornets, Doris Draving's 23 points and 13 rebounds were tops, while Denise Sharps 22 was a close 2nd. Five other Cornets also had double figure points.

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	Name not in Newspaper													
Burdick, Randi	21		5		10	11			0						20
Canning, Peggy	12		1		2	2			0						4
Fitzgerald, Kathy	4		0		2	2			0						2
Hayek, Mary Jean	19	Name not in Newspaper													
Johnson, Tanya	22		2		1	3			0						5
Martin, Sue	13		7		3	4			0						17
Mason, Debbie	11		9		15	17			0						33
Roelich, Debra	15		1		0	0			0						2
Solano, Kathy	20		6		1	2			0						13
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	DNP - Injured Ankle													
Tatterson, Gail	33		5		2	4			0		6				12
Adjustment		240									23		39		
Totals		240	36	0	36	45	0	0	0	0	29	0	39	0	108
			FG% #DIV/0!		FT% 80.0%		Team Rebs <input type="text"/>								

Iowa Cornets															Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Alt, Suzanne	42	Name not in Newspaper													
Bolin, Molly	30		8		3	4			0						19
Draving, Doris	50		9		5	9		13	13						23
Green, Anita	12		5		1	3			0						11
Hawkins, Kathy	14	Name not in Newspaper													
Kunzmann, Connie	44		1		1	1			0						3
Penquite, Rhonda	32		3		0	0			0						6
Rutter, Nancy	34		4		6	9			0						14
Sharps, Denise	20		9		4	6			0						22
Thomas, Debra	40		5		0	0			0						10
Tucker, Robin	10		3		5	6			0						11
Uhl, Joan	22	Injured - Knee							0						0
Adjustment		240									34	21			
Totals		240	47	0	25	38	0	13	13	0	34	21	0	0	119
			FG% #DIV/0!		FT% 65.8%		Team Rebs <input type="text"/>								

The Gems had six days off before they headed to the Midwest for two games in two days in Minnesota and Iowa.

During the week the Gems signed Gail Wasmus, a player of unknown height from Ashland College (Ohio), where she scored 1,200 points in her career.

(Ed: Side note – my research into the stats of the WBL was/is because of people like Gail Wasmus, Cindy Rock, Bobbi Brockhage, or Beverly Coleman. These were ladies who might have only played in 1 game, but their names appeared in the same box scores as the WBL elite. There is little known information about them, but they are important to the WBL's history.)

Also, in preparation for some roster changes the Gems waived Peggy Canning and Mary Jane Hayak. Peggy's career ended after seven game appearances for 32 minutes scoring 14 points (2.0). Mary Jane's time in the WBL showed her with 12 points, 22 rebounds, in 57 minutes playing time in eight games.

With two spots on the roster open the Gems signed an unfamiliar player and a familiar player. The unfamiliar player, Pam Browning a 6'0" forward from the University of Kentucky, was the 2nd round free agent pick of the Minnesota Fillies in 1978. No transactions between the two teams were recorded, so the assumption is by not signing with the Fillies, maybe they didn't know she signed with New Jersey. There should have been a compensation to Minnesota.

The familiar player was Denise Burdick, the 6'1" center from Immaculata, who was the 2nd round pick of graduating seniors, that chose to stick with her surveyor's job rather than play pro ball. With the league surviving a whole month, Denise wanted to be a part of the original players in the WBL.

These next two games were important to the mental psyche of the Gems. With a record of 4-7, two wins would bring them back to respectability, while two losses would send them down the slippery slope of failure. The prospects didn't look good though, because Wanda Szeremeta stayed home for treatment on her injured ankle.

When Wanda was in the line up the team was 3-3, but since her injury they were 1-4. The Friday January 26th game attracted an unknown number of fans somewhere between 0 and 15,500, the capacity of the Metropolitan Sports Center. If you're betting, the number was probably closer to 0.

The (4-7) Fillies were on an opposite projection than the (4-7) Gems. After starting the year 1-6, the Fillies had a three-game winning streak, before losing to Chicago last night, 120-107. The two 4-7 teams played a close 1st quarter as the Gems took a 25-24 lead.

But just like their Iowa game last week when they were outscored 13-0 in the 2nd quarter, this time it was 15-0 by the Fillies. The 31-16 2nd quarter gave Minnesota a 55-41 half time lead.

The Gems cut the lead almost in half to eight as they put up a 32-26 3rd quarter to stay behind 81-73. Minnesota put their foot on the neck of the Gems as they closed out the game, 111-92. The 111 was a new Minnesota scoring record.

The Gems were led by Randi Burdick's 23 points and Debbie Mason's 19. Gail Tatterson, who had been quiet lately, added 16 points before she fouled out. In 11 minutes of action, Gail Wasmus, had two points and two rebounds.

The surging Fillies were now 5-7 for the year, as they were led by Donna Wilson's 34 and Brenda Chapman's 33. At this time of the year, Chapman was the league's leading scorer still.

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		1						0						2	
Burdick, Randi	21								0						23	
Fitzgerald, Kathy	4	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	
Hayek, Mary Jean	19	Name not in Newspaper														
Johnson, Tanya	22		1						0						2	
Martin, Sue	13								0						18	
Mason, Debbie	11								0						19	
Roelich, Debra	15								0						3	
Solano, Kathy	20								0						7	
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	Injured - Ankle														
Tatterson, Gail	33								0		6				16	
Wasmus, Gail		11	1	3	0	0	1	1	2	0	2	0	1	0	2	
Adjustment		224									19					
Totals		240	3	3	0	0	1	1	2	0	29	0	2	0	92	
			FG%	100.0%	FT%	#DIV/0!	Team Rebs									

Minnesota Fillies																Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	
Chapman, Brenda	15								0						33	
Conlin, Terry		3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	
Cooper, Accronetta	33	Name not in Newspaper														
DeLorme, Scooter	32								0						7	
Engle, Cheryl	24								0						12	
Jackson, Peggy	12								0						1	
Kocurek, Marie	42								0						10	
Koopman, Carol	25								0						9	
Lundberg, Carol	10								0						5	
Sjoquist, Lynette	55								0						0	
Wilson, Donna	11								0						34	
Wilson, Laurie	13								0						0	
Adjustment		237									19					
Totals		240	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	22	0	0	0	111	
			FG%	#DIV/0!	FT%	#DIV/0!	Team Rebs									

The (4-8) Gems brought their four-game losing streak with them to Cedar Rapids, Iowa. But the losing streak wasn't as big a problem as the slowness of the bus. On the morning of January 27, there were 2.6 inches of snow, which didn't get any better in Cedar Rapids, where they had 3.0 inches. Part of the problem was this Saturday game was not an evening game, but 2:00 pm. The anticipated 5-hour bus ride took them about 6.5 hours, arriving 10 minutes before tip-off.

With hopefully a reasonable opportunity to stretch and prepare the Gems walked out to see 3,582 fans in the 5 Seasons Center. This was the first athletic event to be held in the brand-new arena.

The Gems gave the Cornets a game in the 1st quarter as they only trailed 20-16, before being blown out in the 2nd quarter – again. The Gems were down 50-35 at the half. There was nothing specific that killed the Gems, not free throws, not turnovers, just the Cornets. Iowa came through with a 94-80 victory to give the Gems their fifth loss in a row.



Doris Draving of the Iowa Cornets appears to be pleading for the ball during a scramble in the Five Seasons Center Saturday afternoon. Professional women's basketball was making its initial appearance here Saturday.

The Gems were led by Kathy Solano and Debbie Mason with 17 each. Pam Browning, in her WBL debut scored five points and grabbed 12 rebounds, of which nine were offensive in 28 minutes of play. For Iowa Doris Draving came through with 21 points before she fouled out and Debra K. Thomas scored 18.

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	Name not in Newspaper														
Browning, Pam	22	28	2	7	1	2	9	3	12	0	4	2	3	2	5	
Burdick, Randi	21		5		2	2			0						12	
Fitzgerald, Kathy	4	Name not in Newspaper														
Martin, Sue	13		6		2	4			0						14	
Mason, Debbie	11		2		13	16			0						17	
Roelich, Debra	15	Injured - Ankle														
Solano, Kathy	20		7		3	5			0						17	
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	Injured - Ankle														
Tatterson, Gail	33		5		4	6			0						14	
Wasmus, Gail			0		1	2			0						1	
Adjustment		212		80							16					
Totals		240	27	87	26	37	9	3	12	0	20	2	3	2	80	
			FG%	31.0%	FT%	70.3%	Team Rebs									
Special Notes:																
Bus left Minn at 7:30 am arrived in Cedar Rapids at 1:50 for 2:00pm game																

Iowa Cornets															Team G	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	
Alt, Suzanne	42		1		0	0			0						2	
Bolin, Molly	30		4		2	2			0						10	
Draving, Doris	50		9		3	4			0		6				21	
Green, Anita	12		0		2	3			0						2	
Hawkins, Kathy	14	Name not in Newspaper														
Kunzmann, Connie	44		4		2	2			0						10	
Penquite, Rhonda	32		1		0	2			0						2	
Rutter, Nancy	34		0		2	4			0						2	
Sharps, Denise	20		3		2	2			0						8	
Thomas, Debra	40		9		0	0			0						18	
Tucker, Robin	10		2		2	2			0						6	
Uhl, Joan	22		5		3	4			0						13	
Adjustment		240		90							23					
Totals		240	38	90	18	25	0	0	0	0	29	0	0	0	94	
			FG%	42.2%	FT%	72.0%	Team Rebs									

This was New Jersey's last game for January 1979, so here are the standings:

EAST

	<u>W</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>Pct</u>	<u>GB</u>
Houston	11	1	.917	----
New York	6	6	.500	5.0
Dayton	5	6	.455	5.5
New Jersey	4	9	.308	7.5

MIDWEST

	<u>W</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>Pct</u>	<u>GB</u>
Iowa	8	4	.667	----
Chicago	8	6	.571	1.0
Minnesota	6	7	.462	2.5
Milwaukee	2	11	.154	6.5

Before the next game on Friday February 2nd the Gems cleared out several more spots in their roster. The first player waived was Kathy Fitzgerald, whose seven game Gems' career ended with 15 points in 42 minutes. Kathy would be picked up by the Minnesota Fillies on March 19th, where she would play five more games and score 11 more points in 42 minutes.

The second player waived was Gail Wasmus who ended her Gems' stay scoring three points in two games with 15 minutes of floor time.

The last player waived was Pam Browning, who played 28 minutes in one game scoring five points and grabbing 12 rebounds. Players like this don't get waived, so there had to be a reason. Her Kentucky teaching license could not be transferred to New Jersey, so she was allowed to return home. Pam did return to the Gems the next season.

But the biggest move was the trade with Chicago. The Gems sent 6'1" Tanya Johnson to the Hustle. Tanya's numbers with the Gems were 11 games, 121 mins (11.0), 25 points (2.3), and 45 rebounds (4.1).

The Hustle sent two players, and it wasn't Abbot & Costello, Laurel & Hardy, or Batman & Robin, but Logan & Pepler. Karen Logan was the creator of the women's basketball and also an integral part of the beginning of the WBL. Her close friend, 35-year-old Mary Jo Pepler, was better known as a volleyball player than basketball player. Mary Jo had Olympic experience in the 1964 Tokyo games and in 1975 was the winner of the Superstars Competition.

In Pepler's 11 games with the Hustle she played 149 minutes (13.6), scored 23 points (2.1), and grabbed 31 rebounds (2.8). Karen Logan, who also acted as assistant coach with the Hustle, had somewhat better stats with 369 minutes in 12 games (30.8), 80 points (6.7), while grabbing 33 rebounds (2.8), and handing out 42 assists (3.5).

After the disastrous two game road trip the Gems should have been glad to be home, except their next opponent was the (11-1) Houston Angels. The Angels brought with them a nine-game winning streak, which didn't move the needle with the New Jersey crowd. Only 388 came out to the Dunn Sports Complex. Again, my research did not turn up any pre-game advertising, so if you didn't possess a pocket schedule, then the Gems' games were a mystery.

The Newark Star-Ledger did have an article on the "New" Gems, based on the roster movements that had been taking place. One piece of good news for the (4-9) Gems was the return of Wanda Szeremeta from her ankle injury. During her absence the team was a miserable 1-5, so they hoped Wanda's presence would turn the team around.

To the displeasure of the 388 who came out, they saw why Houston was sitting on top of the WBL as they took a 26-18 lead. In the 2nd quarter it got even worse for the Gems as they fell behind 58-40. After this the two teams played the next 24 minutes fairly evenly as the Gems lost, 113-96.

Even though Wanda started the game and played 24 minutes she was only able to score two points, while accumulating six fouls. Overall, six Gems finished in double figures with Gail Tatterson's 20 leading the way and Kathy Solano's 16 being next.

Houston was led by Paula Mayo's 32 points and 15 rebounds, which was better than Belinda Candler's 25 points & 10 rebounds.

New Jersey Gems															Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Bistromowitz, Jo Ann	3		0		0	0			0						0
Burdick, Denise	35		6		3	4			0						15
Burdick, Randi	21		4		4	4			0						12
Fitzgerald, Kathy	4														
Logan, Karen	4		0		0	0			0		6				0
Martin, Sue	13		6		2	2			0						14
Mason, Debbie	11		5		5	7			0						15
Peppler, Mary Jo	34	Name not in Newspaper													
Roelich, Debra	15	Injured - Ankle													
Solano, Cathy	20		6		4	7			0						16
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	24	2		0	0			0		6				4
Tatterson, Gail	33		7		6	6			0		6				20
Adjustment		216									16				
Totals		240	36	0	24	30	0	0	0	0	34	0	0	0	96
			FG%	#DIV/0!	FT%	80.0%	Team Rebs								

Houston Angels															Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Auhlenbacher, Karen	11		1		5	7			0						7
Bubrig, Patty	33		1		0	0			0						2
Candler, Belinda	24		8		9	10		10	10						25
Chapman, Vicky	22		5		0	0			0						10
Dobson, Gail	25	Did Not Travel													
Holleyman, Glenda	20		1		0	0			0						2
Johnson, Pat	45		4		0	0			0						8
Jones, Belinda	23		3		6	6			0						12
Kenlaw, Jessie	40		3		1	7			0						7
Mayo, Paula	10		15		2	5		15	15						32
Mosley, Dolly	14	Did Not Travel													
Washington, Cynthia	15		2		4	7			0						8
Adjustment		240									21				
Totals		240	43	0	27	42	0	25	25	0	21	0	0	0	113
			FG%	#DIV/0!	FT%	64.3%	Team Rebs								



TEACHING PRO — Gail Tatterson, star center of the New Jersey Gems of the Women's Professional Basketball League, gives a clinic on fundamentals during passing and dribbling drills at the Little Silver Recreation Commission Clinic yesterday.

Before the Gems next game Gail Tatterson conducted a clinic for Little Silver residents at the Markham Place School gym on the 3rd. Gail's story about her journey to the WBL included her being asked to try out for the Washington team (who later moved to Dayton), but the New Jersey try-outs were the same day, so she stayed closer to home and went there. With the Washington move to Dayton, she was glad she went to New Jersey.



HOT SHOT — Gail Tatterson shows 12-year-old Danielle Hedges of Little Silver the proper way to handle a basketball before releasing a jump shot.

Gail had been experiencing all the nuances of a new venture.

"The first time we stepped on the court, it was really strange. The other team was

already warming up, and when we came out, there was dead silence. Oh, there were a couple of people clapping like this," she recalled, her hands clapping slowly, echoing in the empty school gym as if to recreate that eerie first night.

"But by halftime, after a couple of really fast quarters, the crowd was screaming. It sounded more like 10,000."

Gail's attitude was exactly what made the WBL participants so great:

With the future of the league perennially in doubt, Tatterson still has her teaching credentials to fall back on. But she took a chance, dared to be a pioneer, and may in years to come be regarded much as Jackie Robinson and John L Sullivan are regarded in their respective sports. Pioneers all.

"I knew I'd never have another chance to do something like this," she said. "I think that after the Olympics there will be a lot of growth and attention paid to the sport. And as long as I keep in shape, I'm going to keep on playing."

"And even if the league folds," she pointed out, "I'll be able to say that I was there."

In the continued spirit of growth for the sport, the Gems celebrated New Jersey's Girl's High School Basketball Day with a preliminary game before their next scheduled game on Sunday the 4th.

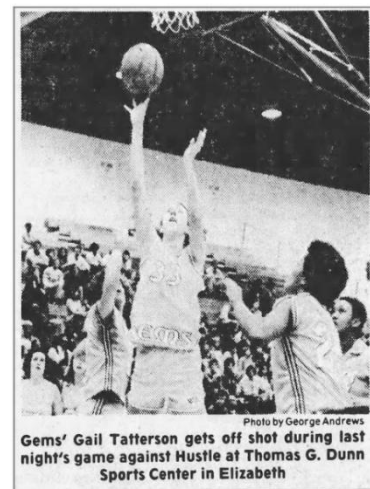
The (4-10) Gems' six-game losing streak had another chance to be broken against the (9-6) Chicago Hustle. This would be the first opportunity for the traded players to face their former teams.

A healthy crowd of 1,148 came out to possibly see history being made. One of the referees for this game was Phyllis Deveney, who broke the sex barrier by calling this professional basketball game. Whether she was any good or not depended if you were on the winning team or losing team. To the loser, all refs suck.

The two teams fought to a 30-30 1st quarter tie. The Hustle created a 12-point lead, 56-44, before the Gems put together a 9-2 run, with five points from Sue Martin and four from Denise Burdick. The Hustle took their 58-53 lead into the locker room at the half. Tatterson went into the locker room with 21 points.

The Gems took the lead at 67-64 at the midway point, then the Hustle went on a 15-2 run for a 79-69 lead. A time out with 3:01 left gave the Gems a chance to regroup and tie the score at 82. The Hustle took an 86-82 lead going into the 4th quarter.

The 4th quarter saw the lead go back and forth until the Gems went up 105-103. Two Tatterson free throws with 3:21 left gave the Gems a 107-103 lead, but Liz Galloway's two free throws cut the lead to 107-105.



Here is the account from the Newark Star-Ledger:

Turnovers - 33 by the Gems and 23 by the Hustle - were significant but the most telling one took place with 34 seconds showing when Chicago lost the ball on a backcourt violation and a frustrated Janie Fincher (who scored 17 for Chicago) hurled the ball to the floor and was hit with a technical.

Denise Burdick hit the free throw to put the Gems ahead 108-105.

"Don't foul, don't foul," was the plaintive cry from the Gems' bench and the crowd as well but Denise Burdick came in contact with Debbie Waddy-Rossow, who led the Hustle with 27 points and she cut the Gems' lead to one.

Again, the turnovers plagued both clubs: this time the Gems, who had an inbounds pass from Denise Burdick picked off by Rossow and a drive to the basket by Susan Digitale gave Chicago the lead at 109-108 with six seconds showing.

The Gems called time to plot their next play.

"I was supposed to take the inbounds pass and drive to the basket," Tatterson recalled. "But that's not really my best move and when I laid the ball down, thank God Randi was there to pick it up."

Randi Burdick, fouled on the play, went to the line to shoot three to make two. She made two free throws and a desperation buzzer shot by Fincher hit off the backboard and the Gems had won 110-109.

The losing streak was over and Gail Tatterson established a new WBL scoring record with 44 points, breaking Brenda Chapman's record of 43, set against the Houston Angels. Gail's 18 of 24 from the floor also included nine offensive and nine defensive rebounds for 18. The Gems should have scheduled more clinics for Gail to run, if these were the results they got.

Wanda Szeremeta played 42 minutes where she scored 17, along with grabbing 12 rebounds and handing out six assists. Newcomer Denise Burdick also scored 17.

The combination of Denise Burdick & Randi Burdick was the 2nd unit of two players with the same last name, on the same team, at the same time.

The first, the New York Stars' twin sisters, Faye & Kaye, shouldn't count, because they were related. The other combos in the WBL's history were Donna Wilson & Laurie Wilson, who both played with Minnesota, while Barb & Kim Hansen both played with the Pioneers. These combinations made accurate stats hard to verify when a newspaper gave only a last name. I probably should also add the New Jersey coaches, Don & George Kennedy. If a box score said: Technical on Coach Kennedy – which was it?

(Ed: Only because I had to do the research – these were the other similar last names in the WBL, but didn't play together: Booker (2), *Browning* (2), *Chapman* (2), Cooper (2), Harris (2), *Johnson* (4), *Jones* (3), Martin (4), *Mayo* (2), McKenzie (2), Meyers (2), Pope (2), Roberts (2), Smith (2), *Stewart* (2), Thomas (3), *Walker* (2), *Washington* (2), Williams (2). 19 sets and I was personally a part of 8 of them.)

The (9-7) Hustle brought only eight players to New Jersey, of which seven played and six had double figures. Debby Waddy-Rossow had 27 points and 12 rebounds, while Rita Easterling had 19 points and 15 assists.

New Jersey Gems																Team Game #	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat	
Bistromowitz, Jo Ann	3	Name Not in Newspapers														0	0
Burdick, Denise	35	28	6	18	5	5	4	9	13	1	5	0	4	0	17	1.000	
Burdick, Randi	21	15	1	3	2	2	1	0	1	4	3	0	3	0	4	0.667	
Logan, Karen	4	29	5	9	2	2	1	8	9	4	3	0	2	0	12	0.931	
Martin, Sue	13	25	3	12	2	3	3	2	5	0	1	2	2	0	8	0.520	
Mason, Debbie	11	22	0	6	0	0	1	1	2	6	4	1	5	0	0	0.455	
Peppler, Mary Jo	34	4	0	2	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0.750	
Roelich, Debra	15	Injured - Ankle															
Solano, Kathy	20	32	3	8	2	2	2	1	3	11	1	4	4	0	8	1.031	
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	42	7	17	3	4	4	8	12	6	0	0	9	0	17	0.762	
Tatterson, Gail	33	43	18	24	8	12	9	9	18	1	4	1	4	1	44	1.419	
Totals		240	43	99	24	30	27	38	65	33	21	9	33	1	110	0.904	
			FG%	43.4%	FT%	80.0%		Team Rebs	8								
Special Notes:																	
N.J. Gail Tatterson 44 pts new record - breaks Brenda Chapman record of 43 pts																	

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	33	7	11	1	2	7	9	16	1	6	2	3	0	15	0.970	
Duckworth, Tesa	44	20	4	8	2	2	2	1	3	0	3	1	0	0	10	0.700	
Easterling, Rita	15	48	7	15	5	6	0	0	0	15	4	2	8	0	19	0.896	
Fincher, Janie	10	44	8	23	1	2	3	5	8	6	2	1	4	0	17	0.773	
Galloway, Liz	31	25	3	15	3	7	1	5	6	1	5	3	0	0	9	0.800	
Rainey, Sandra	23	Name not in Box Score															
Stachon, Toni	14	27	6	14	0	0	0	1	1	4	0	1	5	1	12	0.630	
Waddy-Rossow, Debby	25	43	11	19	5	5	4	8	12	1	5	3	3	0	27	0.953	
Totals		240	46	105	17	24	17	29	46	28	25	13	23	1	109	0.838	
			FG%	43.8%	FT%	70.8%		Team Rebs	6								
Special Notes:																	
Technical: Janie Fincher 4th Qtr																	

As usual for team's struggling in the WBL, the Hackensack Record, did a hit-piece showing the attendance change from the opening game excitement of 1,900 people to the dull reality of a mid-season game with 388 (against Houston). League survival seemed to be the mantra of most cities' newspapers and this one had to break it down this way:

An announced crowd of 388 watch the Houston Angels defeat the Gems 113 to 96. A person-by-person count with 5:24 remaining in the first period was 183, including a relative of part-owner Nick Caruso and assorted other freebies. Each player receives 2 complimentary tickets for each game. Figure that that's about 25 nonpaying fans. Then president Tom Brennan, included in the hand count, must have a few buddies he takes care of. Figure finally 50 of the 100 or so season ticket holders didn't show. You still are left with 183 paid tickets. At \$6 a ticket, paying the players will be hard.

In a Newark Star Ledger article one of the newest Gems, Karen Logan, was given a chance to tell her story of what she envisioned the WBL to look like. Unfortunately, the Chicago Hustle, nor others listened to her. She didn't want a feminine version of the NBA with strong arm tactics, but one of passing, cutting, and shooting based on finesse. Even her creation of the Hustle uniform was designed to emphasize what women had to offer.

As a 29-year-old veteran she believed her role in New Jersey was going to be to stabilize the team to reach its potential. In fact, in her second Gems' game, against Chicago, she had 12 points, nine rebounds and four assists.

The article concluded with vital trivia information for all of us: Teammate Mary Jo Peppler beat Karen Logan in the 1st Superstars Competition (1975). In the most recent Superstars Competition, New Jersey's own, Carol Blazejowski, finished 2nd and earned \$27,000. Which she couldn't accept, if she wanted to retain her amateur status.

The WBL schedule called for six games within your division and four games against the other division. Therefore, when the (5-10) Gems travelled to Chicago to play the (9-7) Hustle on Thursday February 8th, this would be their last meeting of the year. The Hustle held a 2-1 advantage, and the 1,122 who came out to Alumni Hall probably knew that because of their adoption and involvement with the Hustle. They also knew the Hustle wanted revenge for their last loss in New Jersey.

The Gems had their full complement of 10 players as they fell behind 34-29 after one quarter. They had a tough time keeping up as they went into the half trailing 58-51. Whatever inspirational words Coach Don Kennedy had to inspire the team, didn't work. The Hustle added a 41-29 3rd quarter for a 99-90 lead and eventually a 130-116 victory.

The Gems, who fell to 5-11, had six players in double figures with Gail Tatterson's 29 points on 11 of 13 from the floor, along with 11 rebounds, and six fouls led the way. Her ejection was her 7th for the season. Wanda Szeremeta was still struggling, because while she had 22 points it was created by 7 of 26 from the field. But she did have nine rebounds and four assists. Denise Burdick was also getting into playing shape as she played 30 minutes and had 19 points.

The (10-7) Hustle also had six players in double figures, but theirs included 31 from Debbie Waddy-Rossow and 30 from Rita Easterling. Liz Galloway was a basket and a steal from having a Triple-Double: Eight points, Nine Steals, and 14 rebounds.

New Jersey Gems																Team Game #	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat	
Burdick, Denise	35	30	8	18	3	4	1	4	5	0	3	0	0	0	19	0.800	
Burdick, Randi	21	16	1	6	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	2	3	0	2	0.125	
Logan, Karen	4	17	1	2	4	4	0	0	0	0	4	0	1	0	6	0.294	
Martin, Sue	13	23	6	8	1	2	1	7	8	1	3	1	9	0	13	0.652	
Mason, Debbie	11	23	4	9	4	5	2	3	5	5	1	1	5	3	12	1.000	
Pepler, Mary Jo	34	10	0	0	0	2	0	2	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0.100	
Roelich, Debra	15	6	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	2	2	1	0	0	0.667	
Solano, Kathy	20	39	6	15	1	3	0	2	2	4	5	3	11	0	13	0.385	
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	41	7	26	8	11	3	6	9	4	5	3	8	0	22	0.829	
Tatterson, Gail	33	35	11	13	7	8	3	8	11	2	6	0	7	2	29	1.057	
Totals		240	44	98	28	40	12	32	44	17	30	12	46	5	116	0.667	
			FG%	44.9%	FT%	70.0%		Team Rebs	8								
Special Notes:																	
Technical: New Jersey Coach Kennedy																	

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	39	5	15	4	5	3	10	13	4	4	4	5	1	14	0.872	
Duckworth, Tesa	44	26	8	14	2	2	3	3	6	1	2	0	3	1	18	0.885	
Easterling, Rita	15	42	6	14	18	20	0	3	3	17	3	2	13	0	30	1.333	
Fincher, Janie	10	35	7	17	5	6	1	3	4	7	5	6	6	1	19	1.057	
Galloway, Liz	31	39	4	12	0	0	6	8	14	2	6	9	4	0	8	0.795	
Morrish, Mary	8	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.000	
Rainey, Sandra	23	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0.000	
Stachon, Toni	14	18	5	9	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	4	0	10	0.444	
Waddy-Rossow, Debby	25	38	12	23	7	8	2	3	5	0	5	2	5	0	31	0.868	
Totals		240	47	105	36	41	15	33	48	31	26	23	40	3	130	0.929	
			FG%	44.8%	FT%	87.8%		Team Rebs	2								

Before the next game there was a lot of activity taking place involving the Gems. First was the Parsippany-Troy Hills Rec. Center organizing a bus trip to bring a group to the Gems-Stars game on Feb. 25th.

Second, was the publicity given to the Parsippany Budweiser Belles third baseman, Randi Burdick. With no place for athletic college grads to go, Randi focused her talents on semi-pro fast pitch softball. Her current opportunity with the Gems, was a great off-season training to get in shape. But her 13.5 points and 5.5 assists per game were helping the Gems. So, she was glad when Wanda Szeremeta called to tell her about the Gems' tryouts.

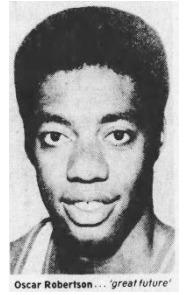


Third, on February 11th, in the Newark Star-Ledger, a big picture of an NBA legend, Oscar Robertson, was linked to the following headline:

The Big O Planning to Put Gems on TV

According to Robertson, he and three New Jersey businessmen have spoken to the Gems' owners, and plan to videotape a telecast of the Gems' game of March 9 against the Houston Angels at the Thomas Dunn Sports Center in Elizabeth.

Robertson, who would act as a color analyst, says the negotiations have already begun with several New York television stations and that his group, entitled Impulse Sports Productions, would pursue cable channels if necessary.



In the early stages of women's sports, and especially as it tried to get people to pay good money to watch them perform, having a name like Oscar Robertson linked to the Gems was huge.

Oscar was the all-time leading scorer in college basketball, until Pete Maravich came along in the late 60's. He was, until recently, the only man to average a Triple-Double in the pros. He was also an outspoken advocate for civil rights and an NBA player rep, when intelligent spokesmen were needed to fight the NBA owners.

Small newspaper clippings, but no known newspaper ads, appeared before the Gems next game against the Iowa Cornets on Sunday February 18th. The first 500 fans – which would be everybody for some Gems games – would receive a Free T-Shirt compliments of Pro-Keds and the Gems.

The (11-7) Iowa Cornets had to travel in from Milwaukee, where they beat the Does 98-89 the night before. The fact that Sunday's game began at 2 pm, should have been an advantage the Gems could exploit. According to the Newark Star-Ledger the Cornets were led by Joan Uhl, Molly Bolin, and Doris Draving, who was averaging 18.5 points, and 13.0 rebounds (4th in league). The Gems were paced by Gail Tatterson's 20.6 ppg and Wanda Szeremeta's 18.4 ppg.

The crowd of 1,055 saw the Cornets shake off their travel stiffness to take a 32-23 1st quarter lead. The point difference stayed the same as the two teams played to a 60-51 half time score. The third quarter belonged to Molly Bolin as she outscored the whole Gems' team 20-16. The other Cornets added 18 more to give the Cornets a 98-67 lead.

The Cornets had no reason to rest anyone, because their next game was still four days away. So, without mercy, Iowa added a 34-21 4th quarter to complete a 132-88 shellacking of the Gems. The first 500 people walked away happy with their free T-shirts, while the other 555 couldn't believe what they just saw.

The 44-point loss by the Gems set a new WBL victory for ineptitude, but don't worry Gems' fans because the Cornets put a 50-burger (131-81) on the Dayton Rockettes one week later, February 25th.

Debbie Mason led the team with 20, while Szeremeta and Denise Burdick had 16 each. Gail Tatterson was shut down with just 9 points. The (12-7) Cornets were led by Molly Bolin's 31, and 22 from Debra Thomas. Robin Tucker's 13 assists set a new Cornets record. In a battle of big people, Doris Draving was only able to score eight before she fouled out – so Tatterson's nine was the winner.

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		2	2			0						16
Burdick, Randi	21		3		1	2			0						7
Logan, Karen	4		2		0	0			0						4
Martin, Sue	13		2		3	3			0						7
Mason, Debbie	11		8		4	7			0						20
Pepler, Mary Jo	34		1		1	2			0						3
Roelich, Denra	15		2		0	0			0						4
Solano, Kathy	20		1		0	0			0						2
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		7		2	2			0						16
Tatterson, Gail	33		3		3	5			0		6				9
Adjustment		240									19				
Totals		240	36	0	16	23	0	0	0	0	25	0	0	0	88
			FG%	#DIV/0!	FT%	69.6%			Team Rebs						

Iowa Cornets															Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Bolin, Molly	30		12		7	8			0						31
Draving, Doris	50		2		4	5			0		6				8
Green, Anita	12		7		2	3			0						16
Kunzmann, Connie	44		7		2	2			0						16
Penquite, Rhonda	32		3		0	0			0						6
Rutter, Nancy	34		1		6	7			0						8
Sharps, Denise	20		4		1	2			0						9
Thomas, Debra	40		8		6	6			0						22
Tucker, Robin	10		3		0	0			0	13					6
Uhl, Joan	22		4		2	2			0						10
Adjustment		240		91							14				0
Totals		240	51	91	30	35	0	0	0	13	20	0	0	0	132
			FG%	56.0%	FT%	85.7%			Team Rebs						

This February 18th game marked the 1/2 way point for the Gems. Here are the standings:

Eastern Division

Houston	16	3	.842	----
New York	9	8	.529	6.0
Dayton	7	10	.412	8.0
New Jersey	5	12	.294	10.0

Midwestern Division

Iowa	12	7	.632	----
Chicago	12	8	.600	.5
Minnesota	9	10	.474	3.0
Milwaukee	4	16	.200	8.5

It's a good thing that Iowa had a few days to get home, because on the night of February 18th a monster snowstorm hit the northeast. I believe 16.6 inches of snow in Jersey qualifies. The Gems were scheduled to fly to Dayton for a game the next day, but that game had to be cancelled. It was re-scheduled for April 6th.

So, the Gems had a week before they had to play their local rivals, the Stars, in the 2nd set of back-to-back games with them. As of game day, Sunday February 25, the (10-8) Stars had a 4.5 game lead over the (5-12) Gems for a playoff spot. Any kind of 4 or 5 game winning streak would put a team back in contention. For the Stars they would be playing with a disadvantage as their superstar Althea Gwyn was out with an ankle injury. Her 24.6 ppg average was missed.

The Gems and 1,017 others, including the group from Parsippany Rec. Center, were hoping for better results than their last promotion. This game had the first 500 attending, receiving a Free Shaving Kit.

Therefore, for those who were also at the Iowa game they were probably worried as the Stars took a 30-23 1st quarter lead over the Gems. But New Jersey fought back with a 29-16 2nd quarter behind 10 Denise Burdick points and six rebounds, for a 52-46 half time lead. The Gems kept up the pressure in the 3rd quarter to make it 78-67. They made sure they didn't allow the Stars to get any momentum, as the two teams split 60 turnovers between them.

The 104-93 Gems victory was quite satisfying for the sake of East Coast bragging rights. Two Stars victories by four points compared to an 11-point thrashing. The Gems had seven players in double figures. Debbie Mason's 18 on seven of eight from the field, was followed by Tatterson's 16 points, 13 rebounds, and her 9th ejection.

The Stars points came from 14 points from Mara Melbourne, who also had 14 rebounds. The other leading scorer, who also had 14 was Kaye Young, who was 12 of 15 from the free throw line. Her basket had to be part of a WBL record, in that it took her 17 shots to make it.

New Jersey Gems															Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Burdick, Denise	35	25	5		3	4		9	9						13
Burdick, Randi	21		4		2	2			0		6				10
Logan, Karen	4		2		4	5			0						8
Martin, Sue	13		3		6	6			0						12
Mason, Debbie	11		7	8	4	5			0						18
Peppler, Mary Jo	34	Name Not in Newspapers							0						0
Roelich, Debra	15		1		0	0			0						2
Solano, Kathy	20		4		4	6			0	8					12
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		4		5	9			0						13
Tatterson, Gail	33		6	9	4	6		13	13		6				16
Adjustment		215						22	22		27		NJ+NY=60		
Totals		240	36	17	32	43	0	44	44	8	39	0	0	0	104
			FG%	#####	FT%	74.4%		Team Rebs							

New York Stars															Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Alt, Suzanne	13		2		4	5			0						8
Arturi, Lynn	23		2		2	2			0						6
Fletcher, Carmen	30		3		1	3			0						7
Geils, Donna	21		4		5	6			0		6				13
Gross, Maria	12		1		0	0			0						2
Gwyn, Althea	31	Injured - Ankle							0						0
Melbourne, Mara	24		6		2	4		14	14						14
Novarr, Harriet	15		1		2	2			0						4
Ransom, Gigi	25		4		2	2			0						10
Thomas, Janice	10		2		7	9			0						11
Young, Faye	22		2		0	0			0						4
Young, Kaye	20		1	17	12	15			0						14
Adjustment		240		82				46	60		25		NY+NJ=60		
Totals		240	28	99	37	48	0	60	74	0	31	0	0	0	93
			FG%	28.3%	FT%	77.1%		Team Rebs							

Almost everyone involved with the WBL had their eyes on the future. This was especially true for the players who grew up in frustration as they had no place to play. So, when Wanda Szeremeta showed up in Bloomfield to help kick off the new elementary school girls' basketball program, it was a big deal. Wanda knew how pioneers sacrificed, and were often forgotten, but she was there to teach and encourage the young ladies of the future.

The home and home series meant the next game was Wednesday February 28th game at Mulcahy Center at Iona College. The unknown number of people who attended were treated to a close competitive game. For the Stars, Althea Gwyn was still out with an ankle injury.

The (6-12) Gems took a 24-12 1st quarter lead over the (10-9) Stars behind eight points from Kathy Solano and six points from Gail Tatterson. In the first three minutes of the 2nd quarter, the Gems built a 30-15 lead when the Stars switched defenses. According to Stars' Coach LaVoizier their 2-2-1 zone defense did the trick as they went on a 26-4 run to take a 41-34 half time lead. While a zone defense was illegal in the WBL, this type of defense was allowed when applied as a full court press.

Unfortunately, the NY – NJ newspaper curse raised its ugly head as the number of points scored in the 3rd quarter was unknown. In the end we at least know the final score was 94-89 in favor of the Stars.

Gail Tatterson had 24 points and Szeremeta had 8 – the other 57 was broken up amongst whatever players made the trip across the river. The Stars' Janice Thomas had 26 points and seven assists. Kaye Young and Gigi Ransom had 12 points each.

New Jersey Gems																Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	
Burdick, Denise	35								0						0	
Burdick, Randi	21								0						0	
Logan, Karen	4								0						0	
Martin, Sue	13								0						0	
Mason, Debbie	11								0						0	
Peppler, Mary Jo	34								0						0	
Roelich, Debra	15								0						0	
Solano, Kathy	20								0						0	
Szeremeta, Wanda	23								0				At Least>>		8	
Tatterson, Gail	33								0						24	
Adjustment		240													57	
Totals		240	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	89	
			FG%	#DIV/0!	FT%	#DIV/0!		Team Rebs								

New York Stars																Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	
Alt, Suzanne	13								0						10	
Arturi, Lynn	23								0						0	
Bailey, Darlene	11								0						0	
Fletcher, Carmen	30								0						0	
Geils, Donna	21								0						0	
Gross, Maria	12								0						0	
Gwyn, Althea	31	Injured - Ankle														
Melbourne, Mara	24								0						0	
Novarr, Harriet	15	Name Not in Newspapers														
Ransom, Gigi	25								0						12	
Thomas, Janice	10								0	7					26	
Young, Faye	22								0						0	
Young, Kaye	20								0						12	
Adjustment		240													34	
Totals		240	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	94	
			FG%	#DIV/0!	FT%	#DIV/0!		Team Rebs								

In a hastily created event the WBL announced an All-Star game to be played in Madison Square Garden – kind of. Actually, the game would be played on Wednesday March 14th in the Felt Forum, the 3,106 seat amphitheater attached to M.S.G.

Chosen to represent the Gems were Gail Tatterson, Wanda Szeremeta, and Debbie Mason. They would be joined by reps from the Houston Angels, Dayton Rockettes, and the New York Stars. Houston’s coach, Don Knodel, earned the right to coach the East. Doug Bruno, of the Chicago Hustle, was in first place at the right time as he would coach the Midwest.

The March winds blew strong as the (17-4) Houston Angels invaded the Dunn Sports Complex. The Angels played a game the night before, March 1st, in Dayton, where they won 104-85. Yet the Gems game would be their 5th of seven straight games on the road. But these seven games were spread out over a 27-day period.

The last Houston-New Jersey game attracted 388. That was great compared to the 148 who showed up for this game. The 148 was the all-time lowest crowd in New Jersey's history. It would rank 3rd in all-time lows. The California Dreams set the record in the 1979-1980 season when they had 90 people watch the . . . you guessed it, Houston Angels. The 2nd lowest was 100 when the 1980-1981 Minnesota Fillies had to create a special team in order to keep their franchise.

As expected, the Angels jumped out to a 28-21 1st quarter lead, but the Gems matched that with a 29-22 2nd quarter to create a 50-50 halftime score. There were six lead changes in the 3rd quarter, before the Gems took a 74-68 lead. Then the Angels ended the quarter with a 10-0 streak to take the 78-74 lead.

The Angels slowly built up a 12-point lead, but the Gems refused to fold. They chipped away, a little at a time, and with 1:45 left the Angels had a 101-98 lead, but four straight points by the Gems made it 102-101. The Angels took the lead back at 103-102 on a Belinda Jones basket with 47 seconds left. After an exchange of missed shots Kathy Solano broke free for a lay-up with 18 seconds left giving the Gems a 104-103 lead.

As the Angels ran their game winning play, the Gems deflected a pass and a desperation 20-footer by Belinda Jones with three seconds left – missed! The 6-13 Gems became the 7-13 Gems, by knocking off the best team in the league, 104-103.

The Gems were led by Gail Tatterson's 37 points on 14 of 16 from the floor, along with 16 rebounds. Gail's 26.5 game average since she gave her clinic also helped the team achieve a 3-3 record recently. The Gems were also aided by Denise Burdick's 15 points, which was close to her 16.0 ppg average, which she had achieved over her first five games.

Amazingly the Gems only took 65 shots from the floor and made 39 of them for 60%. They also took advantage of their opportunities at the free throw line as they hit 26 of 36 compared to Houston's 15 of 18.

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		1	2			0						15
Burdick, Randi	21		2		1	2			0						5
Logan, Karen	4		1		3	5			0						5
Martin, Sue	13		1		2	2			0						4
Mason, Debbie	11		4		5	6			0						13
Peppler, Mary Jo	34	Name Not in Newspapers							0						0
Roelich, Debra	15	Name Not in Newspapers							0						0
Solano, Kathy	20		4		2	2			0						10
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		6		3	5			0						15
Tatterson, Gail	33		14	16	9	13		16	16						37
Adjustment		240		49						15					
Totals		240	39	65	26	37	0	16	16	0	15	0	0	0	104
			FG%	60.0%	FT%	70.3%		Team Rebs							

The losing Angels were led by Belinda Candler's 26 points and 13 rebounds, while Belinda Jones and Paula Mayo split 40 points evenly.

Houston Angels															Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Auhlenbacher, Karen	11		3		1	2			0						7
Bubrig, Patty	33								0						0
Candler, Belinda	24		10		6	6		13	13						26
Chapman, Vicky	22		6		4	4			0						16
Holleyman, Glenda	20	Did Not Travel													
Johnson, Pat	45		4		0	1			0						8
Jones, Belinda	23		9		2	3			0						20
Kenlaw, Jessie	40		3		0	0			0						6
Mayo, Paula	10		9		2	2			0						20
Mosley, Dolly	14	Did Not Travel													
Waddell, Leanne	25								0						0
Washington, Cynthia	15								0						0
Adjustment		240		97							25				
Totals		240	44	97	15	18	0	13	13	0	25	0	0	0	103
			FG%	45.4%	FT%	83.3%	Team Rebs								

The end of this tightly fought contest concluded with an interesting incident in the halls near the locker rooms. Houston's assistant coach Greg Williams was on the phone with the Houston Sports desk, when he heard the mother of Gems' star "Wicked" Wanda Szeremeta voicing her displeasure over Houston getting all the breaks.

Greg was still upset over the game so as he got off the phone he turned and said, "Oh you're crazy, lady!" So, Mrs. "Wicked" said, "What did you say, young man? You don't talk to me that way." She then walked over to Williams, grabbed him by his lapels and started lifting him into the air.

When Coach Knodel saw what was happening he came over and asked what was the problem.

Mrs. Wicked yelled, "He called me a crazy lady" (in her strong Eastern European accent). Williams could not respond, as she still had him by his suit lapels with her hands at his throat.

Coach Knodel, being the quick thinker he was, said: "Oh no, lady. He was talking to me and said, "We played LAZY tonight. You just misunderstood him. He didn't call you crazy." Luckily for Williams, she accepted that and let him go.

The Gems continued in their luxury of a long time on the East Coast, as their only road game between February 18th and March 9th (19 days) was the 34-mile trip to New Rochelle, New York. The next Sunday, March 4th game against the (8-12) Dayton Rockettes was an opportunity to climb out of last place.

Since the last time these two teams met the 0-3 Rockettes of December 27th, hit a peak of 5-5 on January 21st, and had been 3-7 since. The (7-13) Gems were looking for their first two-game winning streak of the season. 547 came to the Dunn Sports Complex to watch the Gems take a 22-19 1st quarter lead, which they upped to 53-47 at the half.

The Gems kept the pressure up as they dominated the 3rd quarter, 35-22, behind 10 points each from Tatterson and Denise Burdick to go into the 4th quarter with a safe 88-69 lead. With visions of the locker room celebration when they achieved their two-game winning streak dancing in their heads, they raised their lead to 23-points, 92-69. The 19-point lead stayed intact as the Gems had a 101-82 lead with 8:30 on the clock.

But then over a two-and-a-half-minute period of time the Rockettes had a 10-0 streak, with four points each from Vonnie Tomich and Angela Scott to make it 101-92. The Gems came out of their time-out huddle to score quickly and raise the score to 103-92, but Dayton was determined to ruin the Gems game by scoring six of the next seven points to make the score 104-98 with under two minutes. The Gems then took control with a 5-0 stretch and a 109-98 lead. BUT – Dayton came back with six of their own to make it 109-104, which turned out to be the final score.

So, both teams were tied with 8-13 records.

New Jersey Gems															Team G
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							

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							

The Gems were led by Denise Burdick who had 22, while Wanda Szeremeta had 19 points and 10 rebounds. The Rockettes had six in double figures. Angela Scott was first with 24 points and 10 rebounds, while Denise Craig had 18, Patti Bucklew 17, Vonnie Tomich 16, and Vivian Greene 15.

The last of these home games was about to end on Friday March 9th. The third place (8-13) Gems, who moved ahead of the (8-15) Rockettes over the last week, were about to face the (17-6) Houston Angels. The Angels were in the midst of a two-game losing streak as they lost to Iowa 96-94, after losing to the Gems 104-103.

But the best news was what was taking place at the Dunn Sports Complex. If you remember earlier, the Oscar Robertson TV announcement – this was the game that was going to be taped and then broadcast. Instead of the Angels attracting New Jersey crowds of 388 and 148, Oscar's team got the word out and 2,818 filled the 4,000 seat arena.

Could the Gems, with their two-game winning streak put together the type of performance needed to attract future fans? Unfortunately, the Angels brought their guerilla warfare defense to the arena and the 1st quarter ended with the Angels leading 17-13.

The Gems responded with a 21-18 2nd quarter, but that only made the half time score, 35-34, Houston. Not really the captivating, eye-catching, run-n-gun excitement that holds the interest of a new audience.

Things picked up slightly in the 2nd half as the Gems took a 49-48 lead midway through the quarter, but the Angels responded with a 7-0 run that ended at the 3:48 mark. The remaining part of the quarter saw a 7-7 stalemate as the Angels took a 62-56 lead into the 4th quarter. Despite the noise, the excitement, and the possibility of a third win in a row, the Gems succumbed 87-84. For the (18-6) Angels this was a rare close game victory. For a team that eventually would go 26-8, seven of their losses were by three points or less.

The Gems were led by Wanda Szeremeta's 29 and Gail Tatterson's 17 points and 10 rebounds. Kathy Solano had 11 assists, while Denise Burdick's 10 points and 12 rebounds also played a significant role. The Angels were led by Vicky Chapman's 18 points, and Paula Mayo's 17 points and 11 rebounds. But the star of the game for the Angels was Pat Johnson, who came off the bench for 12 points and 14 rebounds.

New Jersey Gems															Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Burdick, Denise	35		3		4			12	12						10
Burdick, Randi	21		0		0				0						0
Logan, Karen	4		3		3				0						9
Martin, Sue	13		1		0				0						2
Mason, Debbie	11		3		5				0						11
Peppler, Mary Jo	34		1		1				0						3
Roelich, Debra	15	Name Not in Newspaper							0						0
Solano, Kathy	20		1		1				0	11					3
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		12		5				0						29
Tatterson, Gail	33		7		3			10	10		6				17
Adjustment		240					9	5	14						
Totals		240	31	0	22	0	9	27	36	11	6	0	0	0	84
			FG%	#DIV/0!	FT%	#DIV/0!	Team Rebs								
Special Notes:															
Technical: Coach Don Kennedy															

Houston Angels															Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Auhlenbacher, Karen	11		2		1				0						5
Bubrig, Patty	33								0						0
Candler, Belinda	24		3		3				0						9
Chapman, Vicky	22		9		0				0		6				18
Holleyman, Glenda	20		0		0				0						0
Johnson, Pat	45		4		4			14	14						12
Jones, Belinda	23		4		1				0						9
Kenlaw, Jessie	40		2		1				0						5
Mayo, Paula	10		7		3			11	11						17
Mosley, Dolly	14		0		0				0						0
Waddell, Leanne	25		3		6				0						12
Washington, Cynthia	15								0						0
Adjustment		240					30	4	34						
Totals		240	34	0	19	0	30	29	59	0	6	0	0	0	87
			FG%	#DIV/0!	FT%	#DIV/0!	Team Rebs								

All losses are tough, but the trip to Minnesota by the Gems, must have had some lively talk about the size of the crowd and the excitement of the game. The (8-14) Gems had a game on Sunday March 11 at the Metropolitan Sports Arena against the (9-14) Fillies.

The Gems, and the 1,064 who came to watch were curious who the Fillies' newest head coach was. As of March 10th the Fillies had had four coaches – Dee Hopfenspirger, who quit during training camp, Julia Yeater, who went 7-8 before she was fired, owner Gordon Nevers, who coached one game and won, and Louis Mascari, who was 1-6, before he was fired on March 4th.

The Fillies' new coach was an old coach, in that Gordon Nevers took over again. The two teams were tied at 22 after one quarter and the Fillies took a 49-44 lead into the half. Minnesota had a solid 29-19 quarter, which pushed the Gems into a desperation mode as they trailed 78-63.

Instead of fighting back, like they saw Dayton do to them, they folded and were outscored 34-20 in the 4th quarter. The 112-83 loss was a disaster and had nothing for the team to build off of. Wanda Szeremeta's 23 led the team, while Gail Tatterson's 19 points was accompanied by her 11th ejection for the season.

The (10-14) Fillies were led by Donna Wilson's 26 points, and Kathy DeBoer's 22 points and 10 rebounds. The Fillies were lifted up by the presence of ex-Olympian Patricia Roberts who was supposed to be their anchor during the season, but sustained a knee injury. Roberts played 16 minutes and had 13 points and six rebounds.

New Jersey Gems															Team Game #
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Burdick, Denise	35								0						6
Burdick, Randi	21								0						2
Logan, Karen	4								0						6
Martin, Sue	13								0						4
Mason, Debbie	11								0						15
Peppler, Mary Jo	34	Name Not in Newspapers							0						0
Roelich, Denra	15	Name Not in Newspapers							0						0
Solano, Kathy	20								0						8
Szeremeta, Wanda	23								0						23
Tatterson, Gail	33								0		6				19
Adjustment		240						49	49		12				
Totals		240	0	0	0	0	0	49	49	0	18	0	0	0	83
			FG%	#DIV/0!	FT%	#DIV/0!		Team Rebs							

Minnesota Fillies															Team Game #	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Blacklock, Kim	55	4	1	2	0	4	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0.750
DeBoer, Kathy	21							10	10						22	
DeLorme, Scooter	32								0						2	
Engle, Cheryl	24								0						2	
Hawkins, Kathy	13	23	3	6	0	0	3	3	6	4	0	1	1	1	6	0.870
Keeley, Marguerite	45								0						14	
Kocurek, Marie	42							14	14						17	
Lundberg, Cindy	10								0						8	
Roberts, Trish	44	16	6	12	1	1	3	3	6	1	2	2	0	0	13	1.438
Wilson, Donna	11								0						26	
Adjustment		197						15	15		18					
Totals		240	10	20	1	5	6	46	52	5	20	3	1	1	112	0.733
			FG%	50.0%	FT%	20.0%		Team Rebs								

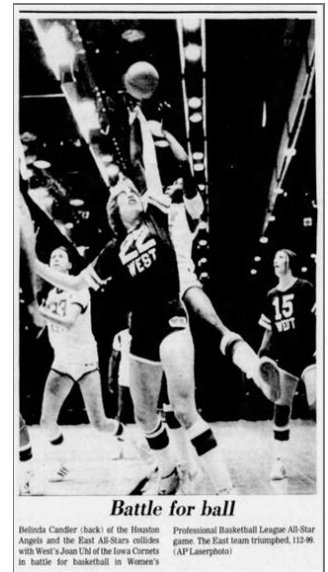
Before the next scheduled WBL game the league shoe-horned in the WBL All-Star game on Wednesday March 14th. Therefore, while the rest of the team flew from Minnesota to Houston, Debbie Mason, Gail Tatterson, and Wanda Szeremeta all flew to New York City. I wonder if they took the same flight as Minnesota's Marie Kocurek, Donna Wilson, and Marguerite Keeley?

In order for the WBL to put on this game they had a floor trucked down from West Point (50 miles north), and the scoreboard was brought in from a local high school.

A crowd of 2,731 were willing to pay the \$5 or \$7.50 ticket price (which equals \$24 or \$36 in 2026 dollars) and sit in the 3,601 seat arena to watch the best of the best. The East squad was coached by Houston's Don Knodel and he tapped Gail Tatterson (#33, see right) as one of his starters. Gail's time on the floor was super-efficient as she had 10 points and eight rebounds in just 17 minutes of action, along with two assists.

As a reserve Wanda Szeremeta played 24 minutes, but struggled finding the basket as she shot 1 of 9 from the field. Her six points were accompanied by five rebounds and four assists. Debbie Mason was the least efficient player amongst all the East All-Stars as she had three points, three rebounds, and three turnovers in just 14 minutes of action.

The East won decisively as they fell behind 30-18, but closed it to 60-53 by the half. They then poured it on with a 35-20 3rd quarter and an 88-80 lead, which concluded with a 112-99 victory. The West's Rita Easterling was the game's MVP as she had 19 points and 18 assists.



Battle for ball
Belinda Candler (back) of the Houston Angels and the East All-Stars collides with West's Joan Uhl of the Iowa Cornets in battle for basketball in Women's Professional Basketball League All-Star game. The East team triumphed, 112-99. (AP/Laserphoto)

Eastern Division All-Stars																		
Coach: Don Knodel Houston Angels 21 - 6																		
Team	No.	Name	Pos.	Min	2 FGM	2FGA	FTM	FTA	OF RB	DF RB	TOT RB	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Houston Angels	24	Candler, Belinda	F	19	4	6	1	3	3	1	4	4	3	0	0	0	9	1.105
New Jersey Gems	33	Tatterson, Gail	C	17	5	9	0	3	5	3	8	2	3	0	1	0	10	1.235
New York Stars	31	Gwyn, Althea	C	28	8	23	3	8	7	9	16	2	1	0	5	3	19	1.214
New York Stars	10	Thomas, Janice	G	23	3	9	2	2	3	4	7	6	3	2	3	0	8	1.130
Dayton Rockettes	21	Greene, Vivian	G	13	4	9	0	0	0	1	1	2	5	2	2	0	8	1.000
Dayton Rockettes	5	Tomich, Vonnie	G	18	5	9	1	2	1	1	2	3	2	1	3	0	11	0.944
New Jersey Gems	11	Mason, Debbie	G	14	0	2	3	4	1	2	3	1	2	1	3	0	3	0.429
Houston Angels	12	Aulenbacher, Karen	G	23	2	5	3	4	0	5	5	5	2	2	2	0	7	0.957
Dayton Rockettes	18	Craig, Denise	F	23	7	13	0	0	1	7	8	1	2	0	1	1	14	1.000
New York Stars	20	Young, Kaye	F	18	1	7	1	2	1	3	4	3	3	3	0	0	3	0.889
New Jersey Gems	23	Szeremeta, Wanda	F	24	1	9	4	5	3	2	5	4	3	3	3	0	6	0.792
Houston Angels	52	Mayo, Paula	F	20	5	10	4	7	3	7	10	1	3	3	1	1	14	1.400
					240	45	111	22	40	28	45	34	32	17	24	5	112	1.025
						FG %:	0.405	FT %:	0.550		Team Rbs	N/A						

Midwestern Division All-Stars																		
Coach: Doug Bruno Chicago Hustle 17 - 9																		
Team	No.	Name	Pos.	Min	2 FGM	2FGA	FTM	FTA	OF RB	DF RB	TOT RB	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Iowa Cornets	22	Uhl, Joan	F	19	1	3	0	0	1	4	5	0	2	0	3	0	2	0.211
Chicago Hustle	25	Rossov, Debra Waddy	F	27	9	19	8	14	3	2	5	0	3	2	1	1	26	1.185
Minnesota Fillies	42	Kocurek, Marie	C	30	7	12	3	8	6	4	10	1	6	4	1	1	17	1.067
Chicago Hustle	10	Fincher, Janie	G	24	2	7	1	2	0	1	1	1	4	2	7	0	5	0.125
Chicago Hustle	15	Easterling, Rita	G	40	5	11	9	10	0	4	4	18	4	1	9	0	19	1.275
Milwaukee Does	1	Smith, Joanie	G	13	1	5	0	0	1	2	3	0	2	0	1	0	2	0.308
Milwaukee Does	16	Booker, Gerry	F	18	3	10	3	9	3	5	8	2	1	1	1	2	9	1.167
Iowa Cornets	18	Bolin, Molly	G	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000
Milwaukee Does	30	Chapman, Brenda	G	23	2	5	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	0	1	0	4	0.304
Minnesota Fillies	33	Wilson, Donna	F	17	2	8	1	2	0	2	2	0	1	2	1	0	5	0.471
Minnesota Fillies	45	Keeley, Marguerite	F	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0.000
Iowa Cornets	50	Draving, Doris	C	21	4	11	2	7	5	12	17	0	2	0	1	1	10	1.238
					240	36	92	27	52	20	38	23	26	12	27	5	99	0.783
						FG %:	0.391	FT %:	0.519		Team Rbs	14						



There was no breakdown of compensation for the winning team versus the losing team. Supposedly the players were paid \$150 each and they got to keep their All-Star uniforms.

It was rumored that every All-Star took their \$150 winnings and invested \$100 of it in Walmart, which was selling for 2 cents a share in 1979. Therefore, everyone with 5,000 shares was now worth \$600,000. Or that was the plan, but no one actually received any money!

The next day, Thursday March 15th, six of the eight WBL teams had a game. So, the logistics of getting the All-Stars to the right cities must have been a nightmare.

The Trenton Times did a huge article on Wanda Szeremeta (#23, above) called "Wicked Wanda and Her Dream." As a youth in New Jersey, she knew she wanted to be a pro basketball player. After high school she earned a scholarship to Lamar University in Texas, where she played for two years before transferring to Montclair State University, back in New Jersey. Wanda's parents had the opportunity to see her play in the All-Star game, but she presented an attitude that many in the WBL had adopted:

It was a fun game, but her professional career is business first and pleasure later.

"I am a pro athlete and nothing else," Szeremeta says. "Basketball is my social life and my work. It is a daily job. There is no time off. Maybe after April 7th when the season ends, I'll look for other things, but it is my only interest now and my hope is to keep playing as many years as I'm able."

For the 3rd time in 13 days the Fillies would meet the Angels. The Thursday, March 15th game was played in front of 596 fans in the 6,000 seat Astroarena. The reason this fact is vital is because of how quiet it was during the game. The (20-6) Angels took a commanding 26-15 1st quarter lead. The difference stayed at 11 as the Gems went into the locker room trailing 45-34.

Sometime during the game the Gems' lost both of their coaches to technicals. Yet the ejection of head coach Don Kennedy was because of a misunderstanding.

It started when New Jersey coach Don Kennedy got upset over a call and he yelled out to either Gerald Cecil or William Hendley, who were the referees, "What are you some kind of a homer?"

Of course, he was accusing the ref of favoring the home team, but that is not what the ref heard. The ref heard a coach with a thick New Jersey accent and he stopped halfway down the floor and turned around to give Coach Kennedy a "T." (Technical foul)

Coach Kennedy was flabbergasted, "What did I say?" The ref struts up to him and says, "Nobody gets away with calling me a Homo." (The ref heard "homer" in a legitimate New Jersey language- "What are you some kind of a Ho-ma?")

Whoever was now in charge of the Gems, and it most likely was Karen Logan, as the oldest, and most experienced, the Gems made a 3rd quarter comeback. Their 36-27 spurt cut the Angels lead to 72-70. The Gems took the lead at 78-77, but the Angels responded with eight unanswered points to take an 85-78 lead. In the end the Gems lost 95-89, but they were at least proving to be a tough team for the Angels.

All-Star Debbie Mason led the way with 23, while Denise Burdick came through with 16. The Angels were led by their All-Stars, Belinda Candler with 23 points, and Paula Mayo with 22.

New Jersey Gems															Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Burdick, Denise	35		6		4	4			0						16
Burdick, Randi	21		2		0	0			0						4
Logan, Karen	4		4		0	0			0						8
Martin, Sue	13		3		0	0			0						6
Mason, Debbie	11		7		9	10			0						23
Peppler, Mary Jo	34		0		0	0			0						0
Roelich, Debra	15	Name Not in Newspapers							0						
Solano, Cathy	20		4		2	2			0						10
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		2		3	3			0						7
Tatterson, Gail	33		4		7	12			0						15
Adjustment		240		72							22	14	33		
Totals		240	32	72	25	31	0	0	0	0	22	14	33	0	89
			FG%	44.4%	FT%	80.6%	Team Rebs								
Special Notes:															
Technical Foul: New Jersey Coach Kennedy (2) - ejected															
New Jersey Asst. Coach Kennedy (2) - ejected															

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		7	8			0	5		3			13
Bubrig, Patty	33	Name Not in Newspapers							0						
Candler, Belinda	24		7		9	12			0						23
Chapman, Vicky	22		7		4	4			0						18
Holleyman, Glenda	20		1		0	0			0						2
Johnson, Pat	45		1		2	3			0						4
Jones, Belinda	23		3		3	3			0						9
Kenlaw, Jessie	40		2		0	0			0						4
Mayo, Paula	10		9		4	4			0						22
Mosley, Dolly	14	Name Not in Newspapers							0						
Waddell, Leanne	25		0		0	0			0						0
Washington, Cynthia	15		0		0	0			0						0
Adjustment				85							23	12	26		
Totals		0	33	85	29	34	0	0	0	5	23	15	26	0	95
			FG%	38.8%	FT%	85.3%	Team Rebs								

The Gems had no chance to rest as their next game was in Dayton against the (9-16) Rockettes, who were 1/2 game ahead of the (8-16) Gems. The Rockettes were led by All-Star Vivian Greene, the WBL's 4th leading scorer at 21.9, along with All-Star Vonnie Tomich (17.5), and Angela Scott (17.6). Greene and Tomich were 5th & 6th respectively in assists, while All-Star Denise Craig was 2nd in rebounding with 13.8.

Statistically All-Star Gail Tatterson was not only averaging 20.1 points, but she was also leading the league in field goal percentage at .629. Quietly Kathy Solano had moved into 7th in WBL assists.

The Friday March 16th game attracted only 410 people to the Hara Arena as they saw the Gems take a slight 23-22 lead. Dayton's 28-22 2nd quarter gave them a 50-45 half time lead. The Dayton lead increased to 72-66 and then 106-94 by game's end. Quickly the battle to avoid last place was not in the Gems' favor.

Three players carried a lot of the Gems' stats: Tatterson 20 points & eight rebounds, Szeremeta 16 points & 10 rebounds, and Kathy Solano 16 points & eight rebounds. One player who was not allowing Father Time to take over her life was 29-year-old Karen Logan who came through with 12 points and seven rebounds.

The victorious Rockettes got 33 points from Angela Scott, who needed to ice her arm after the game as she was 14 of 38 from the floor. The 38 shots set a new WBL record. She also pulled down 11 rebounds in the process. All-Star Vonnie Tomich came through with 21 points and seven rebounds.

New Jersey Gems															Team G
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							

Dayton Rockettes															Team Ga
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							

The three game road trip was over – and four games, if you were an All-Star. One person who was not going to be a Gem any longer was Debra Roelich, who was waived. This was the end of her WBL career as she played 340 minutes over 21 games (16.2), and scored 94 points (4.5).

At the same time the Gems finally signed the 6'1" center from Stanford, Mariah "Maggie" Nelson, who was their 4th pick in the Graduating Senior part of the 1978 WBL Draft. Mariah was, and still is, a brilliant researcher and writer, who was biding her time before committing to the WBL.

The Sunday March 18th game against the (12-14) Minnesota Fillies should have been the recipient of a successful effort by Oscar Robertson's TV taping. The game of Friday March 9th against the Houston Angels ended up exciting and was broadcast the next day – Saturday March 10th. This was the first home game after that venture. Was it a success?

... and speaking of channel 68, the station went through tons of trouble informing publications late last week that last Friday night's New Jersey Gems women's basketball game would be taped, and aired Saturday at 12:30. The scheduled movie was cancelled. But those who tuned in at 12:30 PM Saturday found a 15-second announcement blaming technical difficulties at the game site for cancellation of the telecast.

Yes, the 2,818 who attended could not rewatch the game, because it was never taped. The thousands who might have been curious enough to check out a few minutes of the game also had nothing to watch. The hope for a surge in Gems' attendance wasn't going to happen. The great intentions of the Big O, turned into a big 0, for the Gems, because of technical difficulties.

The Sunday game against the Fillies brought in one less person than the Rockettes 410. The Gems dug themselves such a large hole that Coach Kennedy pulled all five of his starters off the floor at the six-minute mark. The Gems could only score 18 to the Fillies 31. They trimmed part of that score by 3 as they trailed 49-39 at the half.

Minnesota regained those lost points as the lead got as high as 19, before the Gems got it back to a reasonable 78-65 after three quarters. Within the first six minutes of the 4th quarter the Gems cut the 13-point lead to three. The two teams jockeyed for control, but with a minute left the Gems trailed 108-103, when Tatterson tapped in a rebound to make it 108-105. The lead became one, 108-107, when Randi Burdick hit a jumper with 36 seconds left.

The final 36 seconds turned into a comedy of errors, where no one was sure who wanted to win. With the Fillies' leading 108-107, they brought the ball up the floor and then kicked it out of bounds. The Gems took this gift and threw an errant pass turning into another turnover and the Fillies' ball. Kathy DeBoer was fouled on the play and sank one of free throws, 109-107 Fillies.

The Gems had 10 seconds to try and tie the score. An isolation featuring Debbie Mason, who had scored 24 points up to this point, resulted in a lost dribble at the top of the key. The Fillies grabbed the ball and the win.

The Gems had six, and almost a seventh, in double figures with Mason's 24 on top. Denise Burdick continued being quiet and consistent as she had 20 and Tatterson had 17. The Fillies, who improved to 14-13, which was the first time they were over .500, were led by Marie Kocurek's 34 points on 14 of 22 from the field. Kathy DeBoer's 26 and All-Star Donna Wilson's 19 added to the Fillies' fire power.

New Jersey Gems															Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Burdick, Denise	35								0						20
Burdick, Randi	21								0						12
Logan, Karen	4								0						11
Martin, Sue	13								0						0
Mason, Debbie	11								0						24
Peppler, Mary Jo	34								0						9
Solano, Kathy	20								0						10
Szeremeta, Wanda	23								0						4
Tatterson, Gail	33								0						17
Adjustment		240									31				
Totals		240	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	31	0	0	0	107
			FG%	#DIV/0!	FT%	#DIV/0!	Team Rebs								

Minnesota Fillies																Team Ga
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	
Cooper, Accronetta	33								0						0	
DeBoer, Kathy	21								0						26	
DeLorme, Scooter	32								0						9	
Engle, Cheryl	24								0						2	
Hawkins, Kathy	13	Name not in Newspaper							0							
Keeley, Marguerite	45								0						11	
Kocurek, Marie	42		14	22	6				0						34	
Lundberg, Cindy	10								0						5	
Pitts, Brenda	25	10	1	3	1	2	1	1	2	2	2	1	6	0	3	
Roberts, Trish	44	Name not in Newspaper							0							
Wilson, Donna	11								0						19	
Adjustment		230									20					
Totals		240	15	25	7	2	1	1	2	2	22	1	6	0	109	
			FG%	60.0%	FT%	350.0%		Team Rebs								
Special Notes:																
Technical Foul: Coach Gordon Nevers																

With another loss and a record of 8-18, it was not surprising to see a drop in those willing to come out and support the Gems. When the (10-17) Dayton Rockettes came to the Dunn Sports Complex for a game on Friday March 23rd, the previous 409 dropped to 367. And to think these numbers were probably inflated!

This would have been the perfect TV game to tape as the Gems put up 30 in the 1st quarter, but the Rockettes put up 37. The halftime score was 60-59, Dayton's favor. Dayton increased their lead to seven, 91-84 going into the 4th quarter. The Gems took control and with 1:03 remaining they had a 116-113 lead. This was because of a 32-22 run that took 11 minutes of hard work to achieve.

But the Rockettes used a strength they had had all game long, rebounding, to close out the game with a 9-0 run of their own for the 122-116 victory. Dayton's 60-39 rebounding advantage, included a 32-9 offensive rebound advantage. This meant the Dayton offense was throw it up toward the basket and a Rockette would eventually put it in.

Giving up nine points in 1 minute was the equivalent of a team scoring 432 points in a game! But at least this wasn't as bad as the time the Indiana Pacer's Reggie Miller scored 8 points in 9 seconds against the Knicks in 1995!

The Gems, at 8-19, and with seven games left, were now 2.5 games behind the 11-17 Rockettes for last place. The three Gems All-Stars came through with 78 points – Szeremeta 33, Tatterson 26, and Mason 19. Their newest addition, Mariah Nelson, came through with five points and four rebounds for the team.

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 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						

After the 23rd home game against the Rockettes, the Gems had two road games against the two best teams in the league. The (8-19) Gems travelled to Council Bluffs, Iowa (southwest corner of Iowa, near the Nebraska border). Waiting for them was the (16-12) Cornets, who were in 2nd place two games behind the (18-10) Chicago Hustle.

In an Iowa rarity, only 600 came out to watch the pros play ball. Even with the prospect of Iowa girl's basketball legend, Denise Long Sturdy, playing pro ball, the people of Council Bluffs just didn't respond. The 28-year-old Denise Long, had signed, and played just two days ago, in front of 5,114 Cedar Rapids' fans.

The Gems were hoping to do better than their last game against Iowa, when they lost by 44. This time they allowed Iowa to take a 29-24 1st quarter lead, which expanded to 54-40 by the half. The Gems could only trim off one point to 77-64 as they went into the 4th quarter.

As a team the Gems were outshooting the Cornets 47% to 39%, but the Gems had only taken 60 shots to the Cornets 82. A strong 35-30 final quarter for the Cornets gave them the 112-94 victory.

The Gems with a record of 8-20, were pleased to learn they weren't the first team to achieve 20 losses in a season. The Does, only 24 hours earlier, lost their 20th. Both teams had identical 8-20 records on March 25th.

The Gems scoring leaders were Szeremeta with 25, Tatterson with 20, and Mariah Nelson with 18. Tatterson also pulled down 11 rebounds. On a positive note, this was the 5th game in a row that Tatterson didn't foul out.

The Cornets set some team records with Joan Uhl pulling down 20 rebounds, while scoring 13 points. Denise Sharps had 26 points and 10 rebounds. Guard Robin Tucker took control of the team as she not only had 17 points, but also dished out 14 assists.

It is a good thing that people didn't come out to specifically see Denise Long perform, because she stayed back in Des Moines with a head cold.

New Jersey Gems															Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Burdick, Denise	35		0		0	2			0						0
Burdick, Randi	21		3		0	0									6
Logan, Karen	4		2		1	2		7	7						5
Martin, Sue	13		2		0	0			0						4
Mason, Debbie	11		3		0	1			0						6
Nelson, Mariah	19		8		2	2									18
Peppler, Mary Jo	34	5			0	0			0						0
Solano, Kathy	20		5		0	0									10
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		11		3	4			0						25
Tatterson, Gail	33		9		2	5		11	11						20
Adjustment		235		93				28		13	27				
Totals		240	43	93	8	16	0	46	18	13	27	0	0	0	94
			FG%	46.2%	FT%	50.0%		Team Rebs							
Special Notes:	speculated, based on team shot 46% thru 3 qtrs														

Iowa Cornets																Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	
Bolin, Molly	30		6		3	4			0						15	
Crevier, Tanya	24		0		0	0			0						0	
Drawing, Doris	50		3		3	5		12	12						9	
Green, Sister	12		2		2	2			0						6	
Kunzmann, Connie	44		2		4	6			0						8	
Long Sturdy, Denise	42	Injured - Out Sick														
Penquite, Rhonda	32		0		0	0			0						0	
Rutter, Nancy	34		0		0	0			0						0	
Schrad, Mary	54		0		0	0			0						0	
Sharps, Denise	20		12	20	2	3		10	10						26	
Thomas, Debra K.	40		9		0	0			0						18	
Tucker, Robin	10		5	8	7	7			0	14					17	
Uhl, Joan	22		5		3	6		20	20						13	
Adjustment		240		84				33		6	16					
Totals		240	44	112	24	33	0	75	42	20	16	0	0	0	112	
			FG%	39.3%	FT%	72.7%		Team Rebs								
Special Notes:																
speculated, based on team shot 39% thru 3 qtrs																
Denise Long Sturdy - stayed home with a Cold																

Things weren't getting any easier for the Gems on this two game road trip as they went south to Houston to take on the (22-7) Angels. The Tuesday March 27th game attracted 1,861 fans, as the Angels took a 27-13 lead within the first eight minutes, when the Gems put together a 14-6 run, to make the score 33-27. Within the first two minutes of the 2nd quarter the score was tied 35-35, when the Gems went on a 25-10 burst to take a 60-45 lead. If it weren't for the 18 point and nine rebound efforts of Paula Mayo, who almost didn't play with a knee injury, the Angels would have been toast. A 13-6 push by the Angels made it 66-58 at the half.



Photo by David Strickland, Chronicle Staff
Houston Angel Learnie Waddell drives to the basket while New Jersey Gems Karen Logan, right, and Randi Burdick (21) close in.

The Angels locker room was conflicted, because the Angels coach Don Knodel was wired for sound to accommodate a television station. Knodel said he was on his best behavior in the 1st quarter, but the 2nd quarter was so bad it sent him over the top. His half time speech wasn't edited for clarity, it was edited for public consumption.

The Angels, who were the best defensive team in the league, giving up 39 was a shocker to Coach Knodel. The Gems ran into a different team in the 3rd quarter as the Angels' full court press caused 18 Gems turnovers in just the 3rd quarter. New Jersey put up 12 points in 12 minutes. Houston also sat some of their starters as Glenda Holleyman scored nine of her 15 and Cynthia Washington scored eight of her 13 in the 3rd quarter. Overall, the Angels added 25 more. Still, the score was close at 83-78, going into the 4th quarter. The final scoreboard showed the Angels outscoring the Gems 29-25 for a 112-103 victory, but was there more to be learned from the stat sheet?

The Gems shot 52% (40-77) from the field and 79% (23-29) from the line, but committed 36 fouls and turned the ball over 35 times. The winning (23-7) Angels shot 38% (37-96) from the field and 61% (38-62) from the line, while committing only 21 fouls.

Yet the free throw discrepancy wasn't what bothered the Gems coaches the most

As usual the Gems' father-son coaching duo of Don and George Kennedy, were dissatisfied with the officiating. "We get a 15-point lead and then we can't get it across mid-court because Houston is using a zone defense," complained George Kennedy, who along with his father leads the WBL in technical fouls. "It was a sin for the officials to take this game away from our girls."

"A zone press is legal," countered Knodel. "You can't run a zone defense in the WBL but you sure as hell can use a zone press. They just couldn't handle what we were doing on the press."

The Gems lost two of their stars to fouls, Wanda Szeremeta and Gail Tatterson. Wanda left with just two baskets and 10 points, while Gail had four baskets, 11 points, and a technical to boot! The leading scorer was Debbie Mason with 22, while Denise Burdick came through with 16.

The Angels were led by Paula Mayo's 24 points and 12 rebounds. The Angels' two other All-Stars, Belinda Candler and Karen Auhlenbacher had 20 and 17 points respectively.

New Jersey Gems															Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Burdick, Denise	35		6		4	4			0						16
Burdick, Randi	21	Name not in Newspaper							0						0
Logan, Karen	4		3		2	2			0						8
Martin, Sue	13		7		0	0			0						14
Mason, Debbie	11		8		6	8			0						22
Nelson, Mariah	19		6		0	0			0						12
Peppler, Mary Jo	34		4		2	4			0						10
Solano, Cathy	20	Name not in Newspaper							0						0
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		2		6	8			0		6				10
Tatterson, Gail	33		4		3	3			0		6				11
Adjustment		240		77							24		35		
Totals		240	40	77	23	29	0	0	0	0	36	0	35	0	103
			FG%	51.9%	FT%	79.3%	Team Rebs								
Special Notes:															
Technical: Gail Tatterson															

Houston Angels															Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Auhlenbacher, Karen	11		6		5	7			0						17
Bubrig, Patty	33	Name Not in Newspapers													
Candler, Belinda	24		6		8	14			0						20
Chapman, Vicky	22		3		10	14			0						16
Holleyman, Glenda	20		6		3	3			0		6				15
Johnson, Pat	45		1		1	2			0						3
Jones, Belinda	23	DNP - pulled shoulder muscle							0						0
Kenlaw, Jessie	40		0		1	8			0						1
Mayo, Paula	10		10		4	5		12	12						24
Mosley, Dolly	14	Name Not in Newspapers													
Waddell, Leanne	25		0		3	4			0						3
Washington, Cynthia	15		5		3	5			0						13
Adjustment		240		96							15				
Totals		240	37	96	38	62	0	12	12	0	21	0	0	0	112
			FG%	38.5%	FT%	61.3%	Team Rebs								

The team returned to New Jersey with not only an 8-21 record, but an eight game losing streak to boot and really nothing to play for. There were just five more games – two at home and three on the road.

The next game was just what the Gems needed as the (8-21) Milwaukee Does came to the Dunn Sports Complex for a game on Friday March 30th. The Does possessed the WBL's leading scorer, Brenda Chapman (27.5), who was a Minnesota Fillies star the last time these two teams met. Another All-Star of their team was Gerry Booker who was averaging 12.8 rebounds per game.

The 1,011 who ventured out may not have been aware this was going to be a battle for team pride. No one wanted to be THE worst team in any league. These two were on the bottom and wanted the bragging rights for superiority.



Winning pro games requires work and that work is usually seen on the defensive end, but when you're in last, who cares about defense? The two teams ended up tied, 25-25, after one quarter and both teams agreed to no longer play defense.

Milwaukee put up 43 2nd quarter points to the Gems mere 31 to take a 68-56 half time lead. The 3rd quarter had the Gems get within eight, 101-93, which was almost the score of their previous game on January 12th. Except the battle to avoid last still had 12 more minutes of run-n-gun-n-have fun left.

The agreement to ban defense continued as the Gems outscore the Does 35-29 to make the score 130-128, Milwaukee. A Tatterson field goal with 10 seconds left tied the score at 130-130. As the overtime began, team pride kicked in and each team scored only six points in five minutes, 136-136. This

was the seventh time a WBL game went to overtime and the first time it went to double overtime. The two teams matched efforts as they both scored 15 to raise the score to 151-151.

The third overtime continued in the same pattern as there were 19 ties and 18 lead changes until the Does fouled Szeremeta with under a minute left. Wicked Wanda hit the one-and-one to give the Gems a two-point lead, 161-159. When the Does were unsuccessful on their attempt, they were forced to foul to get the ball back. Szeremeta again canned both free throws for a 163-159 lead with 15 seconds left. A final Does' basket ended this 2 hour and 55-minute marathon with a New Jersey Gems victory, 163-161, to raise their record to 9-21.

Even though this was a meaningless game you can imagine that every free throw and every possession was important. Wanda Szeremeta led the Gems with 39 points, including 11 of 13 from the line. As a team, the Gems were 43 of 52 for 82.7% from the line. Gail Tatterson came through with 32, before she fouled out for the 13th time this season. Six others also scored in double figures for the Gems.

The Does' leading scorer was Cindy Ellis, who had 17 baskets and 38 points before she fouled out, followed by Brenda Chapman's 35 points. The Does also had six others with double figures and their 33 of 47 (70.2%) from the line was respectable, I'm sure one extra made free throw in regulation would have prevented this long game.

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		0	0			0						14
Burdick, Randi	21		1		2	2			0						4
Logan, Karen	4		7		4	5			0						18
Martin, Sue	13		7		3	3			0						17
Mason, Debbie	11		4		5	5			0						13
Nelson, Mariah	19		3		4	4			0						10
Peppler, Mary Jo	34		1		2	2			0						4
Solano, Cathy	20		3		6	9			0						12
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		14		11	13			0						39
Tatterson, Gail	33		13		6	9			0		6				32
Adjustment		315									27				
Totals		315	60	0	43	52	0	0	0	0	33	0	0	0	163
			FG%	#DIV/0!	FT%	82.7%		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		9		3	4			0						21
Chapman, Brenda	22		14		7	11			0						35
Decker, Patti	44		0		0	0			0						0
Dennis, Brenda	10		4		3	5			0		6				11
Ellis, Cindy	25		17		4	7			0		6				38
Fuller, Janice	28		4		2	3			0						10
Gehrke, Lynda	33		4		2	2			0						10
Hostert, Barb	6	Name Not in Newspaper							0						0
Koopman, Carol	13	Name Not in Newspaper							0						0
Prevost, Deb	32		5		9	11			0		6				19
Smith, Joanie	1		7		3	4			0						17
Wilson, Laurie	30	Name Not in Newspaper							0						0
Zweig, Doris	15	Name Not in Newspaper							0						0
Adjustment		315									20				
Totals		315	64	0	33	47	0	0	0	0	38	0	0	0	161
			FG%	#DIV/0!	FT%	70.2%		Team Rebs							
Special Notes:															
Technical: Coach Yeater (delay of game)															

After such a long emotional game it was fortunate that neither team had to play on Saturday March 31st. The Gems had another road game, but it was against the New York Stars, so New Jersey came home to recover.

They hopefully had an opportunity to see the large article in the Jersey City Journal. The writer, Larry Babich, gave a general history of the Gems and the WBL. He was also nice enough to not attack the WBL for struggling, because he compared it to the Knicks playing games in the 69th Street army barrack, or the New Jersey Nets playing at the Teaneck Armory, or the soccer stars, the New York Cosmos playing near a prison on Randall's Island. Any comparison to the NBA

involved simple things like shooting percentages and showing that the WBL's 43-44% shooting from the floor or 68-70% from the line was similar to the NBA numbers.

The writer then gave highlighted summaries on: Gail Tatterson, Susan Martin, Debbie Mason, Denise Burdick, Wanda Szeremeta, and Coach Don Kennedy. Overall, it was a very fair piece and it was summed up in a Tatterson quote:

"We are all pioneers in every way. I'm trying to keep a scrapbook, because 30 years from now I'll be watching girls play in this league and I'll know that I was there when it all started."

In the last set of the back-to-back games with the New York Stars, the Gems arrived at the Mulcahy Center on the Iona College campus for a Sunday April 1st game. The (17-13) Stars had secured their spot in the upcoming playoffs, because only the top two teams from each division made the playoffs.

Each team was coming off emotional wins on the 30th – the Gems' triple overtime thriller over the Does, and the Stars who beat their division rival, Houston 107-106.

The Stars attracted an unknown number of fans. There were only seven games of the WBL's first 136 regular season games where the attendance was unknown. Five of those seven games occurred at the Mulcahy Center in New York.

The Stars jumped out to a comfortable 24-14 1st quarter lead, but then went scoreless for 4:56, allowing the Gems to tie the score at 24 each. The Stars then applied their press which allowed them to run off 14 points for a 38-24 lead. But then the Stars backed off and the Gems came back to get within 44-40 at the half, Stars favor.

The Stars got their lead up to 10, before the Gems scrambled to close the gap to 72-70 at the end of the quarter. The Stars then rode Donna Geils' coat tails as she scored 12 points in a three-minute span to put the Stars up 88-76. The Stars' momentum continued as they got ready for the playoffs with a 108-95 victory.

Just like the missing people was missing information for some individual stats. Gail Tatterson had 29 points and 14 rebounds, while Wanda Szeremeta had 25 points. That left 41 points available for the rest of a team that had no turnovers, no steals, no assists, and no free throws to say the least.

The Stars were led by All-Star, Althea Gwyn's 25 points and 17 rebounds, along with All-Star Janice Thomas' 17 points. The last All-Star, Kaye Young also added 15 points.

New Jersey Gems																Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	
Burdick, Denise	35								0						0	
Burdick, Randi	21								0						0	
Logan, Karen	4								0						0	
Martin, Sue	13								0						0	
Mason, Debbie	11								0						0	
Nelson, Mariah	19								0						0	
Peppler, Mary Jo	34								0						0	
Solano, Cathy	20								0						0	
Szeremeta, Wanda	23								0						25	
Tatterson, Gail	33							14	14						29	
Adjustment		240													41	
Totals		240	0	0	0	0	0	14	14	0	0	0	0	0	95	
			FG%	#DIV/0!	FT%	#DIV/0!		Team Rebs								

New York Stars																Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	
Alt, Suzanne	13								0							
Arturi, Lynn	23								0							
Fletcher, Carmen	30								0							
Geils, Donna	21								0						13	
Gross, Maria	12								0							
Gwyn, Althea	31							17	17						25	
Melbourne, Mara	24								0							
Ransom, Gigi	25								0							
Thomas, Janice	10								0						17	
Young, Faye	22								0							
Young, Kaye	20								0						15	
Adjustment		240													38	
Totals		240	0	0	0	0	0	17	17	0	0	0	0	0	108	
			FG%	#DIV/0!	FT%	#DIV/0!		Team Rebs								

It would be three days before the Gems – Stars final game of the inaugural season. The Stars held the series lead 4-1 averaging 100 pts to the Gems 98. The Wednesday April 4th game attracted 1,126 fans for the last home game of the year.

(Ed: a last look at newspapers.com gave me 000 advertisements in New Jersey papers to let fans know who the Gems were, where they were, or when they played.)

After 17 home games the Gems drew 15,339, an average of 902.3. To owner Thomas Brennan it was close to the 1,000 figure he had projected, but overall he was just glad to make it all the way through the season. He hoped they would be able to average 2,000 next season.

The game began with the Stars taking leads of 29-25 and then 56-45. At halftime the Gems honored Paramus, New Jersey High School star 6’8” Anne Donovan as the Outstanding Girls’ High School Basketball Player of the Year.

The Gems took the lead after three quarters with a 36-22 effort at 81-78. The two teams battled as only rivals can as the Stars took the lead midway thru the 4th quarter, but the Gems came back and tied it again. With 1:10 left the Stars were up by six 111-105, but two layups by Gail Tatterson cut the lead to 111-109 with 37 seconds left. The Gems pressured Janice Thomas into a traveling violation and Karen Logan hit a 15 footed to tie the score with 13 seconds left. According to the newspaper:

The rest of the game was somewhat bizarre. First, New York center Althea Gwyn was fouled in the act of shooting by Tatterson, but hit on only one-of-three free throw attempts to lead the Stars ahead by one at 112-111, with six seconds to play.

Then Gems' sixth woman Debbie Mason put her team back in front at 113-112, when she sank two free throws following an unwise reach-in foul by New York's Kaye Young with four seconds remaining.

After a timeout, New York assumed possession at midcourt, and reserve guard Thomas simply drove through the Gems defense for a virtually unmolested layup less than one second before the buzzer sounded.

For the fifth time this season the Stars prevailed 114-113. The Gems dropped to 9-23, while the playoff bound Stars were now 19-13. Each team made 46 baskets and each team received almost the same number of free throws. The Stars were 22 of 33 (66.7%), while the Gems were 21 of 31 (67.7%). One free throw difference in a one-point loss.

The leading scorer was Gail Tatterson who had 28 points and 12 rebounds. The next highest was a Burdick, but it wasn't Denise. Randi Burdick hit 10 of 12 shots from the floor for 24 points. Karen Logan's eight of 11 from the field allowed her to score 19 points.

The Stars got 34 points from Althea Gwyn along with 18 rebounds. Donna Geils contributed 18 points to their winning cause.

New Jersey Gems															Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Burdick, Denise	35		1		0	0			0						2
Burdick, Randi	21		10	12	4	8			0						24
Logan, Karen	4		8	11	3	4			0						19
Martin, Sue	13		8		0	0			0						16
Mason, Debbie	11		2		6	8			0						10
Nelson, Mariah	19		1		2	2			0						4
Peppler, Mary Jo	34		1		0	0			0						2
Solano, Cathy	20		0		0	0			0						0
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		4		0	0			0						8
Tatterson, Gail	33		11		6	9		12	12						28
Adjustment		240		62			11	22					31		
Totals		240	46	85	21	31	11	34	45	0	0	0	31	0	113
			FG%	54.1%	FT%	67.7%	Team Rebs								

New York Stars															Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Alt, Suzanne	13		0		0	0			0						0
Arturi, Lynn	23		3		0	0			0						6
Fletcher, Carmen	30		2		2	4			0						6
Geils, Donna	21		9		0	1			0						18
Gross, Maria	12		3		0	0			0						6
Gwyn, Althea	31		14		6	11		18	18						34
Melbourne, Mara	24		3		0	2			0						6
Ransom, Gigi	25		0		1	2			0						1
Thomas, Janice	10		3		4	4			0						10
Young, Faye	22		3		5	5			0						11
Young, Kaye	20		6		4	4			0						16
Adjustment		240					22	8							
Totals		240	46	0	22	33	22	26	48	0	0	0	0	0	114
			FG%	#DIV/0!	FT%	66.7%	Team Rebs								

Friday April 6th was not originally on the Gems schedule, but neither was a snowstorm on February 19th. The (9-23) Gems flew out to Dayton for a game at the Dayton Arena on the campus of University of Dayton. The (11-21) Rockettes and 354 others watched the Gems take a 30-29 1st quarter lead. In the 2nd quarter Dayton held the Gems to 14 as they scored 30 to take a 59-44 halftime lead. A 32-27 Gems quarter only dropped the score to 86-76. The final score of 116-108 in Dayton's favor gave them a record of 12-21. The Gems record of 9-24 meant their next game against the 9-23 Milwaukee Does was another battle for respectability.

The Gems three All-Stars led the team in scoring with Wanda Szeremeta had 26, Gail Tatterson had 24, and Debbie Mason had 21.

For Dayton Angela Scott had 24 points on nine of 30 from the field, along with 18 rebounds and six fouls. Michelle McKenzie had 21 points and eight rebounds. 5'5" guard Vivian Greene also pulled down 11 rebounds, while scoring 19 points. The last of the double-digit rebounders was Denise Craig who had 13 rebounds and 16 points.

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						

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	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	
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, Vonnie	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							

The next day, Saturday April 7th, the Gems found themselves in Milwaukee at the Milwaukee Arena to take on the (9-23) Does. A Gems victory would conclude their season with double digit wins, 10-24. The Does at 9-24 would have to win their last game to match the Gems. But that was only if the Gems could win.

1,711 came out to cheer on their Does. Milwaukee took a 25-20 lead, but the Gems took a 42-41 half time lead into the locker room. In the 2nd half the Does came out strong and took a 73-61 lead and then finished the Gems' season with a 100-86 loss.

In other sports a last placed finish guaranteed you the first pick of the upcoming college draft. But women's college basketball was also an evolving sport with not a lot of hype or publicity, so having the number one pick didn't mean much.

The Gems' final leading scorers were Debbie Mason with 24, Gail Tatterson with 19 points and her 14th ejection of the season. The unrelated Burdick twins, Denise and Randi, had 19 and 15 points respectively.

The (10-23) Does in their next to last game had five players in double figures with the WBL's seasonal scoring champion, Brenda Chapman, scoring 18. All-Star Gerry Booker had 16, and Brenda Dennis contributed 15 points. Brenda would end up scoring 863 points in 31 games for a 27.84 average.

New Jersey Gems															Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Burdick, Denise	35		7		1	2			0						15
Burdick, Randi	21		3		6	7			0						12
Logan, Karen	4		0		0	0			0						0
Martin, Sue	13		0		0	0			0						0
Mason, Debbie	11		10		4	5			0						24
Nelson, Mariah	19		2		0	0			0						4
Peppler, Mary Jo	34		0		1	4			0						1
Solano, Cathy	20		1		0	0			0						2
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		3		3	7			0						9
Tatterson, Gail	33		7		5	12			0		6				19
Adjustment		240									22				
Totals		240	33	0	20	37	0	0	0	0	28	0	0	0	86
			FG%	#DIV/0!	FT%	54.1%	Team Rebs								

Milwaukee Does															Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Booker, Gerry	24		5		6	10			0						16
Chapman, Brenda	22		8		2	3			0						18
Decker, Patti	44		1		0	0			0						2
Dennis, Brenda	10		6		3	4			0						15
Ellis, Cindy	25		1		3	4			0						5
Fuller, Janice	28		7		0	0			0		6				14
Gehrke, Lynda	33		3		0	0			0						6
Hostert, Barb	6	Name Not in Newspaper							0						0
Koopman, Carol	13		0		0	0			0						0
Prevost, Deb	32		2		2	3			0						6
Smith, Joanie	1		6		2	3			0						14
Wilson, Laurie	30		0		0	0			0						0
Zweig, Doris	15		2		0	2			0						4
Adjustment		240									24				
Totals		240	41	0	18	29	0	0	0	0	30	0	0	0	100
			FG%	#DIV/0!	FT%	62.1%	Team Rebs								

As the Gems' season came to a close the Milwaukee Journal interviewed Karen Logan. Since the historical first game for women's pro basketball was played in Milwaukee and Karen Logan, who was not only on the opposing team, but was instrumental in the league's existence having a season ending interview was a wise move.

To Karen:

"I think we can call this season a success just because the league made it through," Logan said.

"But we've got a long way to go. Right now, the idea is basically more exciting than the reality."

"There have to be improvements made in coaching. I don't feel very many of the coaches in the league know how to work with women. Women, basically, have different competitive values and attitudes than men."

"I think we have to get quality women's coaches or we'll just have a cheap imitation of the men's game."

Logan started the season with the Chicago Hustle, but was traded in midseason to the Gems. She's unhappy with New Jersey and plans to be elsewhere by next season, probably as a player-coach with one of the proposed West Coast expansion franchises.

"I feel, in the right situation, I can play four or five more years," Logan said. "I've found that I've compromised my values this season. It's the first and last season that I'll do that."

The newspapers obligations to the New Jersey Gems dried up as soon as the last game was played. In April there were no newspaper articles for the rest of the month of April. Therefore, we will call this the conclusion of the first year.

Statistically the Gems regular season results were as follows:

	At Home			On Road			TOTALS		
Dayton	2-1	326	320	0-3	301	335	2-4	627	655
Houston	1-2	284	303	0-3	298	329	1-5	582	632
New York	1-2	321	314	0-3	283	302	1-5	604	616
Chicago	1-1	230	232	0-2	217	238	1-3	447	470
Iowa	0-2	196	251	0-2	174	206	0-4	370	457
Milwaukee	2-0	262	255	1-1	179	191	3-1	441	446
Minnesota	1-1	191	186	0-2	175	223	1-3	366	409
	8-9	1,810	1,861	1-16	1,627	1,824	9-25	3,437	3,685
	.471	106.5	109.5	.059	95.7	107.3	.265	101.1	108.4

Player	No.	GP	Min	M.p.G	FGM	FGA	FG %	FTM	FTA	FT %	Off Reb	Def Reb	Tot Reb	Reb Avg	Asst	Ast Avg	PF	PF Avg	Stl	TO	TO Avg	BS	PTS	Avg	Eff. Rat.	College	Ht.	
Bistromowitz, Jo-Ellen	3	13	244	18.77	18	48	0.375	20	49	0.408	13	36	49	3.77	14	1.08	39	3.0	4	23	1.77	8	56	4.31	0.467	Montclair State Univ.	6'0"	
Browning, Pam	22	1	28	28.00	2	7	0.286	1	2	0.500	9	3	12	12.00	0	0.00	4	4.0	2	3	3.00	2	5	5.00	0.571	Univ. of Kentucky	6'0"	
Burdick, Denise	35	20	505	25.25	99	227	0.436	40	49	0.816	32	115	147	7.35	25	1.25	61	3.1	17	32	1.60	14	238	11.90	0.832	Montclair State Univ.	5'6"	
Burdick, Randi	21	34	789	23.21	112	261	0.429	81	108	0.750	24	29	53	1.56	125	3.68	84	2.5	60	144	4.24	3	305	8.97	0.664	Montclair State Univ.	5'6"	
Canning, Peggy	12	7	32	4.57	4	11	0.364	6	10	0.600	1	1	2	0.29	1	0.14	2	0.3	0	3	0.43	0	14	2.00	0.469	Jersey City State	5'5"	
Fitzgerald, Kathy	4	7	42	6.00	5	20	0.250	5	7	0.714	2	4	6	0.86	2	0.29	8	1.1	0	8	1.14	0	15	2.14	0.405	William Patterson	5'8"	
Hayek, Mary Jean	19	8	57	7.13	6	18	0.333	0	7	0.000	7	15	22	2.75	3	0.38	8	1.0	3	8	1.00	1	12	1.50	0.614	Montclair State Univ.	6'2"	
Johnson, Tanya	22	11	121	11.00	7	24	0.292	11	18	0.611	12	33	45	4.09	3	0.27	20	1.8	2	12	1.09	0	25	2.27	0.545	Ferris State Univ.	6'1"	
Logan, Karen	14	21	685	32.62	69	169	0.408	33	41	0.805	15	76	91	4.33	83	3.95	47	2.2	18	89	4.24	10	171	8.14	0.521	Pepperdine College	5'7"	
Manning, Sharon	24	1	8	8.00	0	1	0.000	0	0	0.000	0	0	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.0	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0.000	Queens College	5'8"	
Martin, Sue	13	33	799	24.21	158	318	0.497	76	95	0.800	55	112	167	5.06	40	1.21	88	2.7	36	91	2.76	15	392	11.88	0.731	Immaculata College	5'10"	
Mason, Debbie	11	34	951	27.97	153	328	0.466	175	232	0.754	60	81	141	4.15	120	3.53	75	2.2	79	134	3.94	20	481	14.15	0.849	Queens College	5'5"	
Nelson, Mariah	19	8	148	18.50	28	56	0.500	11	14	0.786	14	23	37	4.63	1	0.13	23	2.9	8	16	2.00	3	67	8.38	0.662	Stanford	6'2"	
Peppler, Mary Jo	34	16	195	12.19	12	36	0.333	13	25	0.520	19	27	46	2.88	4	0.25	25	1.6	9	27	1.69	6	37	2.31	0.374	Sul Ross State	6'0"	
Roelich, Debra	15	21	340	16.19	35	90	0.389	24	43	0.558	9	12	21	1.00	28	1.33	64	3.0	19	63	3.00	1	94	4.48	0.374	Queens College	5'7"	
Solano, Kathy	20	31	1,035	33.39	114	316	0.361	65	103	0.631	28	95	123	3.97	158	5.10	94	3.0	79	123	3.97	7	293	9.45	0.665	Cortlandt State	5'6"	
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	28	1,056	37.71	191	464	0.412	136	194	0.701	51	164	215	7.68	106	3.79	81	2.9	47	177	6.32	26	518	18.50	0.772	Montclair State Univ.	5'10"	
Tatterson, Gail	33	34	1,185	34.85	267	413	0.646	177	267	0.663	115	234	349	10.26	44	1.29	179	5.3	49	148	4.35	21	711	20.91	0.885	Salisbury State	6'1"	
Wasmsus, Gail		2	15	7.50	1	3	0.333	1	2	0.500	1	1	2	1	0	0	2	1	0	1	0.5	0	3	1.5	0.267	Ashland College		
		34	8,235		1,281	2,810	0.456	875	1,266	0.691	467	1,061	1,528	44.94	757	22.26	904	26.6	432	1,102	32.41	137	3,437	101.09	0.705			
		34	x240	8,160																								
																												Game totals =3,437

YEAR TWO of the New Jersey Gems 1979-1980

For the newspapers of the New Jersey area, once the Gems' season ended, so did any effort to keep women's basketball fans informed. Even though the rest of the WBL continued, you'd never know it in New Jersey.

The papers fulfilled this nicely in that there were no clippings about the playoff series that was taking place in the East and Midwest Conferences. In the East Houston defeated New York 2-0 and in the Midwest Iowa beat Chicago 2-1. Houston then went on to beat Iowa to win the 1st WBL Championship series, 3-2.

In New Jersey, the month of April had no information and the month of May had no information. Finally, on June 1 a Passaic Herald-News article wrote that a tv group (Wometco) was trying to get the tv rights to the Gems, along with Rutgers and Seton Hall women's basketball.

A June 8th clipping proposed something used by NBA from 1948 to 1965 called the "territorial pick", or what the ABA used called a "hardship choice." Using the words, "Draft Rights in the Women's Basketball League are Permanent" the clipping hinted that the Gems might use a draft pick to get the rights to a high school star named Anne Donovan of Paramus, N.J. Anne, at 6'8" was dominating everyone she played against and the Gems believed she should be allowed to play in her home state.

Before the 2nd Annual WBL draft took place the Montclair State University Squaws seemed to be a feeding ground for the league. Of course, it was Carol Blazejowski's presence that made people look at Montclair State, and one player who desired to be drafted by the Gems was Janice (Jan) TERNYK. The 6'0" center, who many said could get a job as a model, wanted to stick around the Jersey area.

On Tuesday June 12, 1979 in the Oval Room of the Roosevelt Hotel in New York City the draft was held and a Montclair State University player was selected first. Pat Colasurdo, who would get married over the summer and be known in the league as Pat Mayo, was picked number one. Jan TERNYK was not chosen by any of the 14 teams over a 10-round draft.



Over the 3-year history of the WBL Montclair State would provide the most professional players with 10. Wayland Baptist of Plainview, Texas was the next highest with eight.

Yet, the Gems who had the worst record in the WBL in 1978-79 did not have the number one pick in the draft. Instead, the six new expansion teams (and one relocated team) were given priority over the current teams. The new teams selected in the order they were accepted (or when their franchise checks cleared): San Francisco, California, Dallas, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Washington, and New Orleans.

This meant the best player the New Jersey Gems could only pick the 8th best player in the country. But, New Jersey had another problem. The Gems didn't have a first-round pick.

On November 30th, 1978 the Gems traded with the New York Stars for Debbie Mason, the 5'5" guard from Queens College. The trade was made for Future Considerations. When Debbie was selected to be a part of the 1st WBL All-Star game and was recognized as a quality player her value became worthy of a number one draft pick.

The Gems didn't get to pick until the 2nd round and with the 23rd overall pick they chose Donna Simms, a 6'0" forward from Queens College. New Jersey continued their favoritism for local East Coast talent.

These were the Gems selections

1. TRADED to NEW YORK for Debbie Mason

2. Donna Simms	6'0"	Forward	Queens College	played 2 years
3. Diane Lyons	6'1"	Center	Southern Mississippi	
4. Lauriece Jenkins	5'7"	Guard	Winston-Salem College	
5. Debbie Comerie	6'2"	Center	William Paterson College	played 2 years
5. Peg Schwinge	6'2"	Center	Penn State	
6. Denise Kenney	5'7"	Guard	Rutgers University	
7. Stephanie Roche	5'8"	Guard	Towson State Univ.	
8. Leslie Chavies	5'4"	Guard	Seton Hall University	
9. Margaret Hamilton	5'7"	Guard	Allen University	
10. Jean Zalorsky	5'9"	Forward	St. Francis University	

The WBL draft wasn't necessarily a comedy of errors, but keeping track of players and trades was difficult. Let's look at the following sequence for the Gems:

July 18, 1978 – Chicago Hustle selected Mary Sue Garrity, a St. Joseph (Philadelphia) graduate in the 4th round.

September 16, 1978 – Chicago traded Garrity to the New Jersey Gems for a 1979 2nd Rd pick. Smart move for the Gems, because it brought Garrity back closer to her college home.

November 17, 1978 – Suzanne Wera, a 4th round New Jersey draftee in the 1978 draft was traded to the Dayton Rockettes for a 1979 5th Rd pick. Suzanne, who is from Olivet, Michigan never played for Dayton.

Sept. 1978 to May 1979 – Garrity didn't report or play for the Gems in the first season, but she was still the Gems' property.

May ??, 1979 – Garrity was traded to the California Dreams, who used to be the Dayton Rockettes, for a 1979 5th Rd pick. THIS 5th rd pick, didn't exist, because it had already been sent to New Jersey for Suzanne Wera.

The WBL office should have voided this trade or found a different compensation. Either way the Gems were screwed out of a pick. They did select Debbie Comerie in the 5th round with one of the Dayton/California picks, so at least they got a high quality player from it.

As for Mary Sue Garrity, she didn't show up in California either.

While the New Jersey world was focused on draft picks, the owners of the Gems quietly asked Coach Don Kennedy to step down and become the team's general manager. Kennedy declined the offer, so he was told to hit the road and his one year as a pro coach ended with a 9-25 record. Tom Brennan, president of the Gems, began his pursuit of a coach with four candidates in his cross hairs.

The Jersey City Journal did a great job of giving details on the Gems draft selections and why they were chosen. Four of the first five choices were to strengthen the team's rebounding problem.

2nd Rd pick Donna Simms, 6'1", power forward, avg. 18.4 points & 9.0 rebounds at Queens College

4th Rd pick, Lauriece Jenkins, Winston-Salem's all-time leading scorer

6th Rd pick, Denise Kenney, a local from Rutgers, scored over 1,000 points and led team in assists & steals.

All ten picks received some kind of recognition by the paper.

The reality of the draft hit home for Jan Ternyik, whose agent said he wouldn't accept anything less than \$10,000 a year for Jan's services, as she waited and waited. But the newspapers' headline said it all: *Ternyik's Telephone Was Silent*.

Jan was not drafted, which surprised her when she later saw the full draft list in the papers. She knew she was better than some of the other players drafted. Yet deep down she had to wonder if playing in the shadow of Carol Blazejowski didn't allow others to see her skills.

Yet, by not being drafted she could go to whatever team she wanted and try out. Overall, nine players from the New Jersey area were chosen within the 10 rounds.

The hunt for WBL coaches took a positive turn when two former NBA personalities, Dean Meminger, a former New York Knicks guard, and Butch vanBreda Kolff, a coach with several teams, agreed to coach the New York Stars and the New Orleans Pride teams respectively.

In the past the idea of coaching a women's team elicited the following response:

"When (team tri-owner) Steve Brown came to me with this, I had the normal reaction. I started laughing," vanBreda Kolff said. "Then I started thinking about it, and thought I might enjoy it."

Recognition and respectability took a big step forward for the league and America took notice. Think of how a company adds a well-known person to their board for the sake of association. The WBL, as a league, was now getting tied to the NBA, and being noticed.

With the addition of Meminger and VBK, coaches who had rejected the WBL previously began to reconsider. One such person was Coach Howie Landa, who was a New Jersey legend, with his Mercer Community College program. His back-to-back (1973 & 1974) Junior College National Championships put Mercer on the map. The Gems had approached him before the first season, but Howie was satisfied with his position. He was approached again after Don Kennedy was disposed of. But he still didn't think the time was right – until people with national names started getting involved. Coach Landa was now reconsidering his choice.

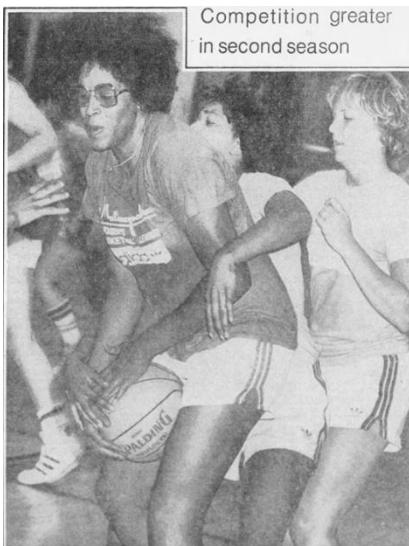
June 22nd the Newark Star-Ledger had the following to report:

The New Jersey Gems of the Women's Professional Basketball League are close to finalizing negotiations which will bring them a new coach and a television contract.

The television package is with WTVG which broadcasts over Channel 68. The plan calls for a weekly program, Mondays between 6-8 PM of the previous Saturday's game. Such an arrangement would bring additional revenue and exposure for the fledgling team which averaged crowds of less than 1,000 per game last year.

The June 29th Trenton Times let everyone know that Coach Howie Landa, who had taken a year's sabbatical from Mercer College, needed to make a decision about his future. Mercer was giving him two weeks to return to school or sign a contract with the Gems. Again, the vanBreda Kolff factor was making Landa's decision more difficult, because VBK was giving the league an aura of stability.

While the Gems were working on securing a coach, they also were looking for a new place to play. They were already willing to wait for the completion of the Meadowlands Arena, but that wouldn't be until 1980, so they needed a place better than Elizabeth, N.J. With the drafting of Denise Kenney, the idea of Rutgers hosting the Gems was being bandied about.



Competition greater
in second season

Another sign of growth for women's basketball, in general, was the creation of quality summer basketball leagues. In New Jersey it was the Metropolitan League. In 1978 they had two divisions – college and high school with six teams of 10 player in each division. As word got out to its quality and success, the league had expanded to eight teams on both levels.

Director Maureen Wendelken, the coach at Montclair State, said that 160 girls tried out for the high school teams 80 spots and 110 for the college level. Several WBL players, including Wanda Szeremeta, took advantage of the opportunity and improved over the summer.

The Gems' 5th round pick, Debbie Comerie, was averaging 18 points and 18 rebounds as she led her summer team Nets to a 7-2 record. She was looking ahead to playing forward in the WBL, because she wanted to be a defensive stopper for the Gems. She knew there were other players bigger than her, so moving from center to forward would be a necessity, and this was the summer league was the place to learn that.

As of July 13, 1979 Howie Landa informed the president of Mercer College that he was not interested in returning to the school. Had he made a decision to coach the Gems? Not as of July 13th, he said he wanted to remain retired.

In the WBL it was not unusual, after the league draft, for a team to have an open try-out camp for players that weren't drafted – think of Jan Terynik. Yet without a coach the Gems were floundering. On top of that, former coach Don Kennedy was suing the team for breach of contract. This surprised owner Tom Brennan, because he said the team never had a contract with Kennedy. Yet there was going to be a meeting of lawyers to resolve the issues. It wasn't until August 21st that the team gave a hint to who their future coach was going to be. The Gems were going to hold a pre-season basketball camp on August 30th in the Poconos. The owner of this camp was Howie Landa. So, in order to accommodate him and kill two birds with one stone the Gems went to Pennsylvania.

To Landa the professional additions of vanBreda Kolff (New Orleans), Meminger (New York), and Dave Wohl (Philadelphia) stimulated his competitive juices and he liked the challenge. Landa also believed he had an advantage over the pros, because several of the first-round draftees had attended his camps. Therefore, there were many undrafted players who he had a relationship with who would want to play for him. His contacts were world-wide and he wasn't afraid to use them.

On a personal note, Howie would continue to keep his teaching job at Mercer College, even though he may have to occasionally pay someone to cover a class or two while he was on the road.

By Sunday August 26th the Gems had still not signed Landa, even though there was going to be a try-out camp in four days on August 30th.

Was the delay caused by another change by the Gems? The current owners of the Gems wanted to either get out completely from owning the team or sell major interests to others. Supposedly three groups wanted to buy the Gems, while two others just wanted a part of the team.

Coach Landa was perfect for a New Jersey team, but who was he negotiating or signing with? An opinion piece by a Trenton Times writer, Bus Saidt, said the following:

A man had better be sure he has an ironclad, bonafide, unbreakable, guaranteed contract if he intends to make his living coaching in that girls' professional basketball league. I can't believe Butch vanBreda Kolff would lend himself to such a farce. Say it ain't so, Howie Landa, you're much too good and too qualified for that.

The Gems were going to invite 34 players including veterans, draft selections and free agents to their try-out camp. The 15 survivors would be a part of the pre-season camp that would begin in October. Exhibition games were scheduled for mid-October and the regular season would begin on November 17th.

All of these plans would be solidified after a press conference when new ownership and a contract with Coach Landa are formalized. Otherwise, camp went on with Landa leading the way, even though he wasn't the coach yet. Landa's desire was to bring a positive winning attitude, but he realized that usually took money to accomplish. To assure his, and the team's future, he wanted a two-year contract.

How was the try-out camp? Who attended? Who made it? Who got cut? – The newspapers provided nothing. Yet they may not be entirely to blame, because with a change of ownership is also a change in front office personnel, including the public relations department. It was possible the papers were never informed there was a camp.

In an era of changes in the sports scene the battle to gain recognition was important. The late 70's saw the merger of the upstart, exciting, superior ABA into the 30-year old, tired, boring NBA in 1976. One of the four "new" teams was the Indiana Pacers, a three-time league champion. Yet because of the huge price the NBA demanded from the new teams, the Pacers were very close to folding in 1977. The coach's wife, Nancy Leonard, put together a telethon with the theme of "Save the Pacers," with a goal of 8,000 season tickets to keep the team alive.

It worked. The city responded and the team survived. Yet it is with this background that in September 1979 the Pacers became national news. Again. The Pacers offered a try-out opportunity to the best player in women's college basketball, Ann Meyers.

Who was Ann Meyers? In the initial WBL draft in 1978 the very person player selected was Ann Meyers, of UCLA, by owner Hugh Sweeney of the Houston Angels. Ann, like Blazejowski, did not sign a contract as she wished to play in the Olympics. Yet Houston retained her rights through the first season.

On September 5th, 1979 the Pacers signed Ann Meyers to a \$50,000 NBA contract. She was the first woman to be given a legitimate shot at making an NBA team.

Other women before her were also involved with the NBA.

1969 – the San Francisco Warriors drafted an Iowa high school star named Denise Long in the 13th round. Owner Franklin Mieuli was planning to create a 4-team women's league in the Bay area with Denise as the focus. The NBA voided that pick – but they didn't say whether it was because she was a girl or she hadn't gone to college yet.

1976 – the New Orleans Jazz drafted 6'3" superstar Lusia Harris of 3-time champion Delta State. She was drafted in the 7th round (137th overall). The NBA voided that selection as well. Lucy wasn't interested and she knew her skills couldn't match the NBA players.

The offer to Ann Meyers, who had a brother, David, playing for the Milwaukee Bucks, got the Pacers a lot more than \$50,000 worth of free publicity. They were national news for several weeks.

One respected person connected with college women's basketball had the following reaction:

Some people think the Indiana Pacers signing and Meyers is a circus. Include Marianne Stanley among the worriers.

"I hate to see her used as a sideshow, or any woman used for a sideshow for that matter," said Stanley, coach of Old Dominion's national champions. "I don't understand her intentions and I don't understand the Pacers intention," said the former Immaculata College star. "I think they both have to be realistic, and I don't know how realistic this is."

To Ann's credit she didn't plan to back down to anyone. Even though she stood only 5'9", a reasonable size in women's basketball, but a rare size in men's pro basketball, she was going to give it her all. Her knowledge, skills, and strong fundamentals impressed a lot of people.

A 2015 Indy Star article stated: "I tell you one thing. She was better. We had a bunch of guys come in trying out and she was better than a whole bunch of them," then Pacers Coach Slick Leonard told the Indy Star in 2015.

The first three days came and went. Meyers received no special treatment. Leonard made some cuts, and Meyers wasn't among them. She practiced for a few more days. Then another round of cuts came.

Like many former college stars, the NBA just wasn't in the cards for Meyers. "I cut her just like any other player," Leonard said. "I felt bad when we started the cut down. I felt bad about it. She really did a great job. I was proud of her."

Yet the team liked what they had seen with her and wanted to make her a radio commentator.

To the WBL, the publicity surrounding Ann Meyers was more than the whole league could ask for. Her name was now known by any casual sports fan and her presence in the WBL was a necessity.

The Houston Angels, who were the WBL champions the first year, would have loved to add her to their squad, but they knew they could never pay her what she deserved.

Yet in New Jersey there was a "new sheriff in town." Robert Milo, a Chatham advertising executive, and a small group of New Jersey businessmen absorbed the debts of the previous Gems' owners and purchased the team for an undisclosed price. The old debts were in the \$200,000 range. The former owners were also given some stock in the team. Tom Brennan would stay on as vice-president and director of operations.

What was it that convinced a quiet, jovial, businessman to get involved? The Meadowlands.



Ann Meyers, with Pacers coach Bobby Leonard, says, "I'm very happy with myself."

Milo had seen how a New Jersey swamp became a sports mecca with the Cosmos soccer and the horse track. He went from being a tv watcher, to an advertiser, to a Cosmos season ticket holder, to a horse owner. When he saw the Gems and he saw the future with the Meadowlands new arena, it all made sense. He, along with about 12 others, invested in something that would take three years before turning a profit.

New Jersey's future was huge – the new Arena, the 1980 Olympic exposure, and Carol Blazejowski in a Gems' uniform.

While Coach Landa was still unofficially the head coach his signing was a priority for Milo.

It didn't take long for the Trenton Times to ask new Gems' coach, Howie Landa, if he would tone down his blistering assaults on his new players? Of course, the answer was no.

Around September 18th the Houston Angels gave the New York Stars 10-days to negotiate a contract with Ann Meyers. To have the brightest shining star in the mecca of advertising and publicity could really establish the league and possibly push forward any TV contracts that were in the works.

The Pacers offer of \$50,000 was the figure Ann had in mind for her worth. Yet in a league where the highest paid player might have been receiving \$20,000 and the rest between \$4,000-\$9,000 this figure was out-of-this-world.

When Meyers refused the Stars offer and their 10-day window expired her rights reverted back to the more-than-broke Houston Angels.

One owner of the Stars had an "out-of-his-mind" reaction to Meyers signing with the Pacers. Edward G. Reisdorf, president of the Stars, honestly believed every NBA team was going to sign one female player for the purpose of diluting the talent pool and therefore disrupting the WBL's ability to survive. To Reisdorf the NBA was threatened by the WBL.

With two new WBL teams on the West Coast the league should have worked out a way for Meyers to be a part of the California Dreams. Yet this wasn't the case as the next team to get a shot at signing Meyers was the New Jersey Gems. New owner, Robert Milo, wanted to make a big splash and establish his presence for both this year and the future. To have Meyers and Blaze in the new 20,000 seat arena in 1980 was a vision Milo couldn't pass up.

Most teams took between 5-6 weeks of training camp to get themselves ready for the season. With the Gems' regular season beginning on November 17th, training camp should have been taking place by at least October 1st. On October 3rd the papers noted that Howie Landa signed up to be a speaker at a California basketball clinic on October 13th. Not exactly the schedule of a focused pro coach.

When a team finishes 9-25 and in last place, the front office, the team and the fans need some reason to hope.

The story of Ann Meyers had not taken on any kind of New Jersey flair. No reason to hope.

The confirmation of a legendary coach like Howie Landa was still up in the air. No reason to hope.

The team under a new ownership was a done deal. Some reason for hope.

Advertisements of the Gems' schedule, or training camp info, or signings, or trades were non-existent. No reason for the fans to look forward to the next season.

October 11th – about one month before the home opener, the Gems have some major news about their only All-Pro, Gail Tatterson. Gail, who in June was named one of the top 12 players (an All-Pro), decided to defect from New Jersey to New York. When the Gem's leading scorer (20.9 & 6th in the league) and league leader in field goal percentage (64.6%) couldn't negotiate a new contract, she became a free agent and was allowed to legally contact other teams. The winner was the New York Stars.

Interestingly, Tatterson's agent was her former assistant coach, George Kennedy, who recommended that she not attend the opening of training camp – the first week of October. The same article that announced Tatterson's departure provided hope in that a press conference was being set-up at Giants Stadium to announce the signing of Coach Howie Landa.

There were also at least two exhibition games scheduled. One against the Stars in Madison Square Garden as a preliminary to a Knicks-Nets game and also in Atlantic City against the expansion Philadelphia Fox.

With the Howie Landa news there was also confirmation of a radio-tv contract in the NJ area. A name and voice familiar to NJ sports residents, Scott Morrison, was named as director of broadcasting. As the voice of the popular New York Cosmos, soccer team, Scott knew what his audience needed and expected to make the Gems accepted in NJ.

With the addition of the new expansion teams the 14 teams were divided into the following divisions:

EAST

New Jersey Gems
New York Stars
Philadelphia Fox
Washington Metros

MIDWEST

Chicago Hustle
Iowa Cornets
Milwaukee Does
Minnesota Fillies
St. Louis Streak

WEST

California Dreams
Dallas Diamonds
Houston Angels
New Orleans Pride
San Francisco Pioneers



As Bob Milo began to get more involved he had big plans for the area. He wanted to be heavy on promotions, because he wanted a family-oriented place to go. His emphasis was going to be looking for grass-roots support by having the players go to schools, malls, and conduct clinics. Milo had seen the growth and acceptance of the Cosmos and he wanted to build the same kind of base. He also promised that he would be sticking around for several years, even after the team became profitable.

The advertising expert now had himself as a client with the purpose of making the Gems a household word. His 10 game TV package with channel 68, a UHF station, and three radio stations picking up the rights to broadcast games helped.

Milo also plans an advertising blitz of the area, with posters, bumper stickers, buttons, calendars, and other gimmicks. If certain deals go through, Milo promises that the Gems' logo will also appear on bags of ice cubes and milk cartons and even some women's cosmetic products.

The campaign's biggest gimmick, however, is a one-day statewide tryout October 27th at the Dunn Sports Center in Elizabeth, where the Gems play their home games. Milo said, "We realize there are probably a lot of young girls in the state who didn't get a chance to go to college that might have the talent to play pro basketball. This is their opportunity to make the team. Anyone interested should call our office.

October 18th was the Gems' press conference and the official signing of Howie Landa. His two-year contract allowed him to develop and turn around his team and have the benefit of Carol Blazejowski and Tara Heiss in the 1980-1981 season.

Landa gave the following assessment of his new team:

"We're small compared to some of the teams in the league," Landa said, "but, then, Houston won last year and they were small too. We're going to have to do it with finesse and speed and by being a little smarter."

"We'll try to press and to run and when we can't fast break, then we'll try to settle down and use some set plays."

While Landa was quick with the one liners – On being named the Gems new coach: "We all have goals in life. After 15 years, I've fulfilled one of mine – I'm making more money than my wife." - he also gave a great insight to why he wants to work with women. "They try harder – you don't have any problems. They can pick up every move. Some of these girls commute *two* hours to get to practice."

Even though Landa claimed that the team was small before the day was over they traded their first choice in the 1979 draft, 6'1" Donna Simms, to the St. Louis Streak for 5'8" guard Joan Van Ness and a 3rd pick in the 1981 draft.

By this time Joan was a very well-travelled commodity. As the 6th round pick of the Washington Metros she was signed to a pro contract on August 26th. Before she could get herself settled and fighting for a spot on the Metros she was traded to the St. Louis Streak on September 8th (13 days later) for a 1980 3rd rd pick and a 1981 3rd rd pick.

A month later, October 15th, the Streak regained a 1981 3rd rd pick when they traded Joan to the New Jersey Gems. Three teams in 50 days, but Joan continued to persevere. She along with the following names were all part of the current Gems training camp:
Guards – Debbie Mason, Randi Burdick, Sheilah Collins, Debbie Roelich, and Leslie Chavies.
Forwards – team captain Wanda Szeremeta, Peggy Schwinge
Center – Debra Comerie.

After finally securing the coach they wanted, the Bob Milo-led front office began to pursue their next target. By acquiring the negotiating rights from the Houston Angels, the Gems could legally talk to Ann Meyers. Just like with the Stars, the Angels gave the Gems 10 days to come to terms.

On the 19th the team unveiled their new logo and they announced the appointment of veteran newsman and publicist, Ron Phillips, as the Director of Public Relations.



On the basketball court, which is where we usually focus our attention, the Gems had a pre-season game against the expansion Washington Metros in Ft. Belvoir, Virginia on Wednesday October 24th. The Gems took a 44-43 lead into the locker room at the half, before they fell 89-82. Former Rutgers star guard Sheila Collins led the Gems with 13 points. The Metros were led by Vivian Greene's 31 points.

If the Gems were looking for recognition their attempt to sign Ann Meyers gave them publicity all across the nation. No less than 46 papers from El Paso to Miami, from Montana to New England carried the name Ann Meyers as a headline.

In each case the meeting between Ann's agent, Jim Griffin, and Bob Milo painted the picture of an imminent signing. Only the Monroe, Louisiana Morning World said that the asking figure by Ann was \$35,000. The New York Stars' owners claimed to have offered her \$20,000 as their top price. \$20,000, in a league where the average is about \$7,500 seemed generous to them.



When the \$35,000 figure was publicly presented Milo's response was:

"I don't want to erode the integrity of the payroll structure in the league," Milo said.

"Yes, it's a lot of money to spend on a player and we didn't consider spending as much so soon, but the people of New Jersey deserved to see Ann Meyers play."

On Saturday the 27th the Gems open tryout camp attracted so much response that an additional hour had to be added to the 10-12 time frame. The new time was now 10 am to 1 pm.

While the "wanna-be"s were in Elizabeth, NJ showing their stuff the current team of Gems were walking into Madison Square Garden for the first time to take on their cross-river rivals, the New York Stars.

Each team had a new coach and each team was returning only 3-4 players from the previous season. The Stars were now led by former New York Knicks guard Dean Meminger. He brought his winning pedigree as both a Marquette Warrior, under Al McGuire, as well as his Red Holzman influence from the Knicks.

The Stars had a 5-1 record over the Gems last season and with the Stars victory 92-85 last week over the Minnesota Fillies, the Stars were ready to keep their dominance. The Gems needed to bounce back from their loss to the expansion Metros to know they had improved.

Each team was influenced by the other areas' college players. The Gems had three players from Queens College, before their trade of Donna Simms, while the Stars had two New Jersey college stars along with Gail Tatterson's defection.

Only about 200 people could be counted in the 19,500 seat arena as the game got underway. The Stars had a 26-20 first quarter lead, but when Peg Schwinge (pronounced like ring) from Penn State came in and hit two side jumpers, the Gems only trailed 26-24. The Gems stayed within two at 38-36 with 2:05 remaining when the Stars pulled ahead to 42-38 with 1:32 left. New York then tried their full-court press, which allowed them to score seven straight points to go into the half with a 49-38 lead.

In the 2nd half the Stars began to slowly pull away, until the 4th quarter. Their defensive pressure caused the Gems to go 1 for 20 (5%) from the field to complete the 98-67 blowout. For the Gems Wanda Szeremeta had 13 points, and Debra Comerie had 11. For the Stars 1st round pick Pearl Moore had 20 points, while former Montclair State star, Karen Smith had 15, Althea Gwyn had 15 and Gail Marquis had 12 points.

Maybe the most entertaining part of the game was the chatter, especially from the coaches. Dean Meminger seemed to approach the game with a must-win attitude. He directed his troops from tip-off to final buzzer. Any premonition that Meminger was coaching for a lark was shattered. He hawked his players to play a tight defense and controlled offense and never cracked a smile.

Gems mentor Howie Landa is from the school of "basketball is fun." Everyone on his team played. Landa is the former coach of the Mercer Community College's two-time small college national championship team. He was doing plenty of smiling and yelling, usually at the officials

For the New Jersey fans it was good they had something else to focus on other than the last drubbing. The newspapers across the country had Ann Meyers signing a contract, except they forgot to tell Ann. When she returned to Indianapolis and was questioned about her contract she admitted to being confused. Her agent and the Gems had worked late on a contract, but

she hadn't heard from Mr. Griffin. Therefore, she couldn't agree to something she hadn't seen or heard about. The other problem was she like the people of Indiana and was getting used to "Hoosier Hospitality."

By the end of October the contract with Ann Meyers had most of the loose ends figured out and that included the agreement with the Indiana Pacers. After all, Ann had signed a contract with the Pacers to be commentator, so she was not free to leave. Pacers' owner Sam Nassi allowed her to leave with no known compensation from the Gems.

While most people thought Ann's contract with the Gems' was not going to match the \$50,000 offered by the Pacers, Robert Milo summed it up this way:

"Obviously, if Ann Meyers comes to New Jersey, she won't be working for less than the \$50,000," said Milo, who took over ownership of the club 10 days ago. "I know the state of New Jersey will do well by her and that corporations will give her endorsements."

Yet earlier Robert Milo said, "Obviously she'll be getting a lot less than \$50,000 if she comes here." So, which is it? Probably both!

"We are in agreement on most issues," said Milo, "but there are still a few things that have to be ironed out. In an agreement of this magnitude, the options are numerous. We want to be sure we've covered all of them in the best interest of all parties involved."

For a 3-4 day period the four time All-American received more nationwide publicity than she had as a UCLA basketball player. Literally hundreds of papers from cities that had no reason to cover a women's basketball transaction had 3-4 column articles on the Gems' negotiations with Meyers.

The November 1st Gloucester County Times of Woodbury, NJ brought attention to the trade that New Jersey made with Chicago. The Gems acquired 6'5" Candace "Candy" Rangler for a 1980 9th Rd draft pick. Coach Landa liked the idea of having height in the middle.

After four hours of negotiations the Gems, led by Bob Milo and James Griffin who represented Ann Meyers agreed to terms. But would Ann agree to the contract. Finally on November 2nd, Ann agreed to a three-year contract well into the six-figure range. Over time speculated numbers would appear, but for now the good news was Ann Meyers was a Gem.

In order to expose the Gems to other areas of New Jersey they scheduled a game on November 9th against the expansion Philadelphia Fox at Bergen County Community College.

Slowly the pieces were coming together for a positive future. A new enthusiastic owner, a legendary coach, a TV contract, and the best female player in the country.



Gems Make Plans — Dr. Rose Marie Battaglia, highly-successful coach of the Paramus Catholic girls and Bergen Community College women's basketball teams, is shown with New Jersey Gems owner Robert J. Milo (center) and coach Howie Landa at press conference announcing plans of women's professional team. Rose will do color commentary on WWHT-TV, Channels 68 (Newark) and 60 (New York). The Gems' fortunes were buoyed Friday with the announcement they had signed former UCLA star Ann Meyers to a multi-year pact. She had been cut in training camp by the Indiana Pacers of the NBA. (Photo by Don Summers)

Was all of this big news? Here are some of the newspapers that reported this:

Harrisburg, Pa.	Phoenix, Az	Houston, Tx.
Wilmington, De.	Philadelphia, Pa.	Columbia, S.C.
Pensacola, Fl.	Reno, Nv.	Columbia, Mo.
Everett, Wa.	Coeur d'Alene, Id.	Waukesha, Wi.
Martinsville, Va.	Indianapolis, In.	Syracuse, N.Y.
Portland, Or.	Torrance, Ca.	Staten Island, N.Y.
Nashville, Tn.	Kalamazoo, Mi.	Bend, Or.
Jersey City, N.J.	Trenton, N.J.	Sarasota, Fl.
Cocoa, Fl.	Rochester, N.Y.	Asbury Park, N.J.
Pittsburgh, Pa.	Camden, N.J.	Minneapolis, Mn.
Greenville, S.C.	Salem, Or.	Battle Creek, Mi.
Port Huron, Mi.	Shreveport, La.	Bridgewater, N.J.
Oshkosh, Wi.	Richmond, In.	Muncie, In.
Binghamton, N.Y.	Honolulu, Hi.	Elmira, N.Y.
Hattiesburg, Ms.	Mansfield, Oh.	Santa Rosa, Ca.
Miami, Fl.	Davenport, Ia.	New Brunswick, N.J.
St. Petersburg, Fl.	Tampa, Fl.	Racine, Wi.
Missoula, Mt.	Baltimore, Md.	Chicago, Il.
Helena, Mt.	Twin Falls, Id.	Atlanta, Ga.
Madison, Wi.	Paducah, Ky.	Oklahoma City, Ok.
Columbus, In.	Ventura, Ca.	Winston-Salem, N.C.
+ 32 others		

On November 6th the Indianapolis News gave an update on Ann Meyer's departure and how in her heart she will always be a Pacer. During her brief time in Indiana she felt comfortable, but she was pleased when the Pacer's assistant coach gave her a thumbs up on Coach Howie Landa.

The Gems said good-bye to one of the team's original owners, Tom Brennan, on the 8th. The new Board of Directors wanted to clean house completely. His position as General Manager would be filled by Ed Kozma. Brennan would remain a minority stockholder, with the hope that he could recoup some of his lost funds. The assistant General Manager, Larry Babich, wasn't retained.

The Gems also made a deal for guard Donna Geils, who played with the New York Stars last year. But before that took place, on November 2, both Geils and Leanne Miner, the Stars 5th round pick in the 1979 draft, were traded to the St. Louis Streak for their 2nd round pick. 2 for 1. Donna, an East Coast Queens College grad and Miner, a West Coast grad, both refused to report to St. Louis. So, the trade was voided.

The Stars then offered Geils and Jennifer Savio, a 6'2" center who starred at New Jersey's Kean College, to the Gems on a Conditional Tryout Basis. This meant the team had until February 1st to see if Geils and Savio stuck with the team. At that point compensation with the Stars could be worked out.

Another trade involving the Gems that was never completed was the Donna Simms to St. Louis for Joan van Ness and a 1981 3rd Rd pick. Simms refused to report to the Streak. Yet van Ness played on the Gems and later, around game five, Donna Simms was a Gem. Maybe van Ness, who was a Metro, never reported to the Streak, so that trade was also voided. Did Van Ness come from Washington to the Gems with compensation due to the Metros? Who knows?

Northern New Jersey was looking forward to seeing the Gems and the Philadelphia Fox battle it out in Bergen County on November 9th. While the Gems were 0-2 in the pre-season the Fox were 0-3 with losses against Chicago (94-115), St. Louis (85-100), and Washington (97-104).

The 9th was also going to be the official signing of Ann Meyers. WBL credibility was continuing to build as the press conference was set-up. Yet the most prominent female in the world, Mother Nature, made her presence known:

"When I picked my staff, I left one person out - a staff weather person," Milo said.

"If I had known this, I would never have let Annie go out to Seattle."

Yes, Annie was a no-show for her signing as she was held up in Seattle by being fogged in.

Not only was the front office deflated from the postponement of the Ann Meyers signing, but the players who should have been fighting for positions on the team also displayed no energy. They went out and lost to the expansion Fox 72-66. This was their 2nd game in a row with a 48-minute total in the 60's.

With the score tied at 51 in the 4th quarter, the Fox went on an 11-4 run to take a 62-55 lead. The Gems closed the gap, when with the score 68-64, Joan Van Ness hit a jumper with 1:09 left to get within 68-66. A basket and free throws by the Fox closed out the 72-66 Gems loss.



Ann Meyers

Wanda Szeremeta led the team with 17 points, while Linda Matthews also had 17, yet hers was because she was 13-15 from the free throw line.

The day after the Fox game, November 10th, the Gems released their All-Star, Debbie Mason. After a disastrous 9-25 season the Gems were down to only one player worthy of playing in an All-Star game, Wanda Szeremeta.

The current Gems team was made up of only Wanda and Denise Burdick from last year. Gone were players like Karen Logan and Mary Jo Pepler, along with Randi Burdick. Logan did get another chance in New Orleans and Randi found a spot in Minnesota – for a while.

The speculated terms of Ann's contract became public news around the 13th of November. It would be for \$130,000 over 3 years. The first year of \$50,000 matched the Pacers' offer and the other \$80,000 was divided over the other two years. Owner Milo said that Ann was also looking for advertising possibilities, so signing with the Gems was the only hope the whole WBL had in signing Ann Meyers. Neither the Houston Angels nor the New York Stars could provide the salary and the opportunities.

After weeks of negotiating and all the days of trying to secure a press conference, the Morristown Daily Record wrote it up this way:

Maybe it was appropriate that it happened this way. After weeks of waiting, Ann Meyers was introduced to a New Jersey audience.

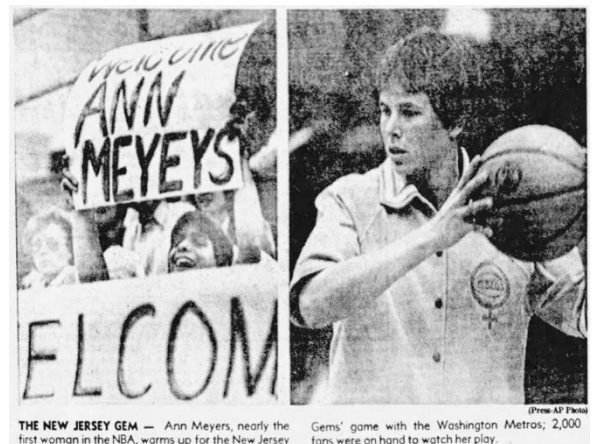
But it did not come at the Meadowlands. It was not in front of television cameras. Instead, Meyers walked into Charlie's Aunt, a restaurant-bar in this Morris County town last night.

Just one newspaper reporter was there to greet her, along with her new team, the New Jersey Gems of the Women's Basketball League. Nevertheless, Meyers realized she had been the focus of the press the past few days.

While all these extra-curricular activities were going on the team was getting ready to host the expansion Washington Metros. The opener set for Saturday November 17 at the Dunn Sports Complex would give the Gems a chance to avenge their pre-season 89-82 loss to the Metros.

The Gems were excited to see 2,754 people in the Dunn Complex, as they all waited to see Ann Meyers. Also in attendance were WBL Commissioner Bill Byrne and the mayor of Elizabeth, Thomas Dunn – who the sports complex was named after.

With all the coast-to-coast travel Coach Landa wasn't sure Ann was in playing shape for the game. She had a 2 ½ hour workout on Friday night, but even that was disrupted by newspaper writers and player introductions.



Most people in the arena waited in anticipation for the moment that Ann Meyers would hit the floor. People who sat wherever they wanted last year for \$3, were willing to sit in their assigned seats for \$6 this year. They understood the price hike was to pay for a superstar. With the Gems leading 14-13 and 4:35 on the clock, Meyers joined her team. She began with a missed lay-up and then two missed free throws as the Gems ended the quarter trailing 20-16. The Gems forged ahead and had a 44-39 lead with 3:17 remaining when Meyers re-entered the game. The Gems went into the locker room with a 48-47 lead.

As the 2nd half began the Metros took over and had a 61-54 lead, when Landa put Meyers back into the game and every time she touched the ball the fans applauded. Over the next several minutes Meyers led the Gems to an 81-78 lead. But that didn't stop the Metros from scoring the next 12 points to take a 90-81 lead. Meyers then went and scored eight of the next nine Gems points to tie the score at 90. Yet with 1:19 remaining a Cathy Shoemaker jumper gave the Metros a 92-90 lead. They then added six more for a 98-90 Metros victory.



Meyers finished the game with 16 points on 6 of 18, and 4 of 8 from the line. She also added 10 rebounds, two assists, and two steals. Since she only played 24 minutes Ann had a high Efficiency Rating (E.R.) of 1.250 for the game. This is something we are going to display a lot for Ann this year.

The Efficiency Rating (E.R.) is a way to measure a player's positive impact while on the floor. Like a school grade (1.000 excellent, .900 great, .800 good, .700 average, .600 & below poor) it is created in the following way: PTS + REBOUNDS + STEALS + 2*ASSISTS - TURNOVERS divided by MINUTES PLAYED. Without minutes, there can be no E.R.

For the Gems the high scorer was Donna Geils, their newest acquisition, who had 25 points. Also making an impact with 44 minutes on the floor and grabbing 12 rebounds, while scoring 13 points was Debbie Comerie.

For the winning Metros, Bertha Hardy had 31 points and 14 rebounds in 39 minutes.

New Jersey Gems																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Browning, Pam	22		3				5	7			0						11
Burdick, Denise	35		2				4	5			0						8
Collins, Sheila	6		0				0	0			0						0
Comerie, Debra	34	44	4				5	7		12	12						13
Dalrymple, Dale	3										0						0
Geils, Donna	4		10				5	6			0						25
Hastings, Martha	24	Name Not in Box Score									0						0
Meyers, Ann	14	24	6	18	0	2	4	8	2	8	10	2		2	2		16
Rangler, Candy	5		0				0	0			0						0
Savio, Jennifer	12	Name Not in Box Score									0						0
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		3				7	15			0						13
Van Ness, Joan	21		2				0	2			0						4
Adjustment		172															
Totals		240	30	18	0	2	30	50	2	20	22	2	0	2	2	0	90
			FG%	#####			FT%	60.0%	Team Rebs								

Washington Metros																	Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Bender, Evelyn	4		11				3	4			0						25
Brewer, Lisa	5										0						0
Caudle, Diane	13		1				0	0			0						2
Cooper, Accronetta	14		0				0	0			0						0
Fletcher, Carmen	22										0						0
Gault, Jodi	2										0						0
Greene, Vivian	1		4				3	4			0						11
Hardy, Bertha	15	39	12	18			7	8	4	10	14						31
Harris, Willodean	21		3				2	5			0						8
McWhorter, Charlene	20		2				2	2			0						6
Schlesinger, Lisa	11		0				0	0			0						0
Shoemaker, Cathy	12		7				1	1			0						15
Adjustment		201															
Totals		240	40	18	0	0	18	24	4	10	14	0	0	0	0	0	98
			FG%	####			FT%	75.0%	Team Rebs								

The WBL was very favorable for the Gems as they had a week off before their next game, which was also at home. This gave Coach Landa a chance to work Ann into the Gems' patterns and schemes. Plus it also gave the team time to get ready for their new uniforms. In the powder-blue jerseys they were a woeful 1-17 according to the newspapers. (Which is odd, because they were 1-16 on the road last year, but this was a home game. So, for their home opener they must have worn their road uniforms!)

The next game was Saturday November 24th, two days after Thanksgiving, and one day after the Black Friday sales. This was a great opportunity for those 2,754 people to come back with a friend to see the real Ann Meyers after a week of practice. Plus they were playing one of the WBL powerhouse teams, the Chicago Hustle.

A five-day search of New Jersey newspapers turned up NO advertising for the next game. They were dependent on the newspapers to create articles, about Ann, about the past game, or about local players with an insert of the next game. Only the die-hard fans would read the article to find out the next game. I can only hope there was radio advertising.

Therefore, was it a surprise that only 1,138 came out on a Saturday for the next game? It seemed like the Gems were letting an opportunity to create a powerful fan base slip through their fingers. Only time would tell.

A survey of the next three Gems' games had 1,050 on a Saturday, 887 on a Saturday, and 938 on a Sunday. Excellent family days and really miserable attendance figures.

The Hustle came to town with a 2-0 record, which included a home overtime win in front of 3,708, and another home win against the San Francisco Pioneers. Chicago brought with them the reigning MVP Rita Easterling, and the reliable Liz, "The Bandit" Galloway, along with rookie Adrian Mitchell.

The Hustle ran into a team very unlike the Gems they played last year. In the first 3:40 of the game the Gems took an 11-0 lead. This was with balanced scoring from Browning, Szeremeta, Geils, and Meyers. After Chicago's basket to make it 11-2, the Gems kept the pressure on and led 35-21 after one quarter.

As a team the credit for this new attitude and work ethic was because of both Coach Landa and Ann Meyers. Ann's intensity was rubbing off on the other players and they were all benefiting from her all-around play. Coach Landa's positive attitude made the players want to learn more and do more for him.

The Hustle cut off two points from the lead as they went into the locker room trailing 63-51. The Gems made sure they didn't develop any bad habits as they came out and outscored the Hustle 21-18 in the 3rd quarter. The 84-69 lead seemed safe, but Coach Landa continued to stick with his starters. By game's end Meyers played 47 minutes, Comerie 45 minutes, and Szeremeta 38 minutes. The Gems came away with a 114-95 victory. This 19-point victory topped their 11-point victory they had over New York last year.

As expected Ann Meyers led the way with 28 points, 13 rebounds, eight assists, and five steals. (Her E.R. was 1.170). These stats allowed her to be voted WBL Player of the Week the following week. Debbie Comerie had 21 points and nine rebounds, while Wanda Szeremeta had 20 points, six rebounds, and six assists.

The (2-1) Hustle were led by Easterling's 27 points and eight assists. Adrian Mitchell finished with 19 points and 10 rebounds, while Liz Galloway had 18 points and 13 rebounds, but only two steals.

New Jersey Gems																		Team Game #
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Browning, Pam	22	31	3	9			2	3	1	10	11	4	4	1	3	5	8	0.806
Burdick, Denise	35	24	4	8			4	5	3	2	5	2	4	1	2	0	12	0.833
Collins, Sheila	6	1	0	0			0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2.000
Comerie, Debra	34	45	8	13			5	7	3	6	9	3	5	4	5	0	21	0.778
Dalrymple, Dale	3	2	0	0			0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0.000
Geils, Donna	4	30	6	19			1	2	3	1	4	6	4	6	5	0	13	1.000
Hastings, Martha	24	17	5	6			2	3	0	1	1	0	3	0	0	0	12	0.765
Meyers, Ann	14	47	11	26			6	8	2	11	13	8	5	5	7	2	28	1.170
Rangler, Candy	5	2	0	0			0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0.500
Savio, Jennifer	12	2	0	0			0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0.000
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	38	7	10			6	8	1	5	6	6	4	1	4	0	20	0.921
Van Ness, Joan	21	1	0	1			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	-2.000
Totals		240	44	92	0	0	26	36	13	37	50	30	32	18	28	7	114	0.892
			FG%	47.8%			FT%	72.2%	Team Rebs	15								

Chicago Hustle																		Team	Game #
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat	
Caldwell, Breena	30	14	2	4			1	2	0	2	2	0	1	0	2	0	5	0.357	
Digitale, Sue	21	38	5	11			2	3	3	5	8	0	2	0	3	0	12	0.447	
Easterling, Rita	15	36	9	16			9	11	2	3	5	8	3	3	9	0	27	1.167	
Fincher, Janie	10	20	2	8			1	2	3	2	5	1	4	2	5	0	5	0.450	
Galloway, Liz	31	44	7	18			4	7	5	8	13	3	5	2	3	0	18	0.818	
Hileman, Vicki	22	7	1	4			3	4	0	1	1	2	1	4	5	0	5	1.286	
Kennedy, Peggy	11	6	0	2			0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0.167	
Mitchell, Adrian	26	36	6	12			7	10	3	7	10	0	3	2	4	0	19	0.750	
Rajcula, Jody	24	17	0	3			0	0	1	1	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0.118	
Thomas, Lisa	41	1	0	0			1	3	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	2.000	
Travnik, Mary Pat	12	6	0	0			0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0.000	
Waddy-Rossow, Debra	25	15	1	8			1	2	2	1	3	0	1	0	1	0	3	0.333	
Totals		240	33	86	0	0	29	44	20	30	50	15	24	14	34	0	95	0.646	
			FG%	38.4%			FT%	65.9%		Team Rebs	10								

With a new energy and confidence the Gems had a southern road trip to New Orleans and Houston coming up. The game against the Pride was Tuesday November 27th at Tulane University. The expansion Pride were 2-1, with victories over Dallas and St. Louis, after an opening day loss to New York in front of 8,452 New Orleans fans.

New Jersey had a bone to pick with the expansion Pride, because around mid-September a number of newspapers across the country carried the following story:

Steve Brown, general manager of the New Orleans Pride, has telegraphed a \$5,000 challenge to the Indiana Pacers that a member of his Women's Professional Basketball League team can beat Ann Meyers in a one-on-one game. Meyers, originally drafted by the Houston Angels of the WBL, recently became the first woman to sign a contract with a member of the National Basketball Association, but Brown insists, "There are four or five players on our team who could beat her in a one-on-one match. I doubt that she'd be able to make the Olympic team, based on her performance in the Pan-American Games. She averaged about two points a game and sat on the bench quite a bit. We have nothing against Ann. We wish her the best of luck. But, we feel that she's received a disproportionate amount of publicity for all the wrong reasons."

A total of 1,710 fans came out to see if Ann Meyers was as poor a player as Steve Brown thought she was or as good as the Indiana Pacers thought she was. In this case the Gems took an 18-8 lead in the first seven minutes, but the Pride tied it up at the 3:10 mark. By the quarter's end the Gems led, 26-24. This lead then became a 44-43 deficit at half time.

The Gems fell behind 72-63 after three quarters and became 11 in the 4th quarter. When the team lost Wanda Szeremeta and Denise Burdick to fouls things didn't look good. But Ann Meyers came through with 10 of her game high 34 points in the 4th quarter to finally take an 87-86 with 3:02 remaining. After a Comerie layup tied the score at 89 and then a free throw the Gems were on top. Later Joan Van Ness' free throw with 1:30 left gave the Gems the 91-90 lead. Sheila Collins then hit 1 of 2 free throws and Sandra Smallwood shot at the buzzer, fell off the rim to complete a 92-90 road victory.

This road win would match their total from all last year. It also gave them a record of 2-1, which was the first time the team had ever been above .500.

New Jersey Gems																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Browning, Pam	22		2				2				0						6
Burdick, Denise	35		4				0				0		6				8
Collins, Sheila	6		0				1	2			0						1
Comerie, Debra	34		3				3				0						9
Dalrymple, Dale	3	Name Not in Newspaper									0						0
Geils, Donna	4		7				4				0						18
Hastings, Martha	24		1				0				0						2
Meyers, Ann	14		12	30			10	11		13	13	3					34
Rangler, Candy	5		1				0				0						2
Savio, Jennifer	12	Name Not in Newspaper															
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		5				0				0		6				10
Van Ness, Joan	21		0				2				0						2
Adjustment		240		51				20									
Totals		240	35	81	0	0	22	33	0	13	13	3	12	0	0	0	92
			FG%	43.2%			FT%	66.7%	Team Rebs								
Special Notes:																	
Technical: Coach Howie Landa (argued with 24 second clock operator)																	
Meyers WBL Player of the Week (78 pts 3 games) - 1st Gem to win this Award																	

New Orleans Pride																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Ard, Wanda	15		2				6				0						10
Blalock, Sybil	10		1				0				0						2
Bloom, Coretta	12		2				4				0						8
Brumfield, Queen	32		7				4				0						18
Dean, Paula	30		8				4				0						20
Duckworth, Tesa	24	Name not in Box Score									0						0
Forest, Augusta	31		4				5				0						13
Smallwood, Sandra	34		3				9				0						15
Swilley, Kathy	5	Name not in Box Score									0						0
Williams, Cindy	11		1				2				0						4
Adjustment		240		72				52									
Totals		240	28	72	0	0	34	52	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	90
			FG%	38.9%			FT%	65.4%	Team Rebs								
Special Notes:																	
Technical: Coach vanBreda Kolff (hitting a chair)																	

While the team was away the Paterson Morning News published an interview they had with Carol Blazejowski, who was still preparing for the Olympics. She was currently with the US team playing international games. She was looking forward to the Olympics and the future in the WBL, if she received the right kind of contract.

The question and answer style allowed for some insight.

Have you seen many WBL games? Have you been impressed with the quality of play?

I was disappointed with every game I saw last year. I saw a few games this year. There's a lot of talent. I think there's a couple of places for improvement. For instance, the coaching. I think the coaching just isn't good. A lot of the coaches are men- not to say that men can't coach women- it's just that women play a different game and a lot of these guys are used to coaching men. I don't think you can coach women the same way you coach guys. They're fundamentally sound, but they

just can't do the things men, can do- they're not as quick. So, I think you have to go to a more disciplined approach. For example, as far as the offense is concerned, you have to go back to the basics- like in college, because I've seen a big difference between college women and the pros I think the game is too long, which hurt spectator interest there are 12 minute quarters, just like the NBA.

Ironically, many of these words were the same as Karen Logan's end of the year assessment that she gave the Milwaukee newspaper. Each person recognized that men and women play a different kind of game and there needs to be more female coaches in the WBL.

The Gems continued their road trip for a Thursday November 29th game against the (3-0) Houston Angels. The game was played at The Summit, the 16,000 seat home court of the NBA Houston Rockets, instead of the 6,000 seat Astro Arena.

While the World Champions were doing well on the court, the big news out of Houston was the reported sale of the team for \$1 million. As of November 22, an Ohio investor purchased the \$50,000 franchise for an even \$1,000,000.

The league was basking in the nation's light of scrutiny of where women's pro basketball was going. The Houston Angel players were still sorting through the news as they got ready to host the Gems. This would be the first game for Ann Meyers against the team that chose her as the #1 overall pick in the 1978 draft. With Ann's arrival, advertising paid for by the new owners, and the most professional arena in town everything pointed toward excitement.

A mere 1,106 (less than average) came out for this Thursday game. They saw the Angels take a small 25-23 1st quarter lead. The Angels' defense then tightened as the Gems could only score 10, while Houston scored 22 themselves to take a 47-33 lead into the locker room.

The Gems turned the tables in the 3rd quarter as they outscored the Angels 29-17 to only trail 64-62 going into the 4th quarter. The Gems fell to 2-2 as they lost 97-87 to the 4-0 Angels.

The leading scorer for New Jersey was Wanda Szeremeta with 26 points, while Ann Meyers had 21 points and 12 rebounds. Center Debbie Comerie finished with 17 points and 13 rebounds.

The Angels had six players with double figures with reserve Jessie Kenlaw's 19 points, including 12 in the 4th quarter, leading the way. The second high scorer, Pat Johnson, who had 18, was also a non-starter. As opposed to the last game when the opposing head coaches, Landa and vanBreda Kolff each had technicals, this time only the Angels' coaches accumulated three techs.

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New Jersey Gems																	Team Ga
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Browning, Pam	22		0				2	2			0						2
Burdick, Denise	35		2				3	4			0						7
Collins, Sheila	6		0				0	0			0						0
Comerie, Debra	34		8				1	3		13	13						17
Dalrymple, Dale	3		0				0	0			0						0
Geils, Donna	4		5				4	4			0						14
Hastings, Martha	24		0				0	0			0						0
Meyers, Ann	14		8				5	6		12	12						21
Rangler, Candy	5		0				0	0			0						0
Savio, Jennifer	12		0				0	0			0						0
Szeremeta, Wnda	23		10				6	7			0						26
Van Ness, Joan	21		0				0	0			0						0
Adjustment		240											26				
Totals		240	33	0	0	0	21	26	0	25	25	0	26	0	0	0	87
			FG%	#####			FT%	80.8%		Team Rebs							

Houston Angels																	Team Ga
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Auhlenbacher, Karen	11		3				2	2			0						8
Candler, Belinda	24		5				1	2		16	16						11
Chapman, Vicky	22		5				2	5			0						12
Durham, Gwen	3		0				0	0			0						0
Johnson, Pat	45		8				2	2			0						18
Jones, Belinda	23		3				4	6			0						10
Kenlaw, Jessie	40		7				5	7			0						19
Kuhl, Nancy	13		3				0	0			0	5					6
Mayo, Paula	10		5				3	10			0						13
Prince, Sandra	25	Name not in Newspaper															
Washington, Cynthia	15		0				0	0			0						0
Adjustment		240											26				
Totals		240	39	0	0	0	19	34	0	16	16	5	26	0	0	0	97
			FG%	#####			FT%	55.9%		Team Rebs							
Special Notes:																	
Technical: Coach Knodel & Coach Williams (2) 0:38 3rd Qtr - Ejected																	

As most the Gems returned north to 44° in New Jersey, Ann Meyers had to suffer with 80° in the Bahamas. As per a contractual agreement, Ann was allowed to participate in the Women’s Superstar Competition, which began in 1975. The first winner, Mary Jo Peppler, would later become a New Jersey Gem, so now it was Ann’s turn to try her hand.

Even with a 2-2 record they now were about to test themselves, without Ann, against the 0-4 St. Louis Streak. The Saturday December 1st crowd of 1,050 included a person who thought she would be out on the floor playing. Peg Schwinge, the 6’1” 5th Rd draft pick had been practicing with the team, but was never officially on the roster. She was ready to don a Gems uniform and fulfill her dream of being a pro, but as the game approached Coach Landa told her not to bother dressing.

The previous week Peg had been put on waivers and became a free agent when no team claimed her. She was planning to re-sign with the Gems, but the front office did not offer her a contract. She was now in the stands and wondered what her future looked like.

Out on the floor the Gems fell behind 12-6, but then forced the Streak into a series of turnovers that allowed them to tie the score at 22. The quarter ended with the Gems trailing 27-25, but they did force the Streak to commit nine turnovers.

Part of that Streak problem may have been the players getting use to who would become the greatest one-on-one player in WBL history, Liz Silcott. Liz was returning from a four-game suspension where she wasn't able to work out with the team. The Streak obviously did better in the 2nd quarter as their spread opened up to 47-38.

Even though the deficit got to 11 points, the Gems got it together and just like they did against the Angels their 22-17 3rd quarter advantage made the score 64-60.

New Jersey showed they were not an all-Ann team as they went ahead 80-79 deep in the 4th quarter. A Silcott jumper made it 81-80, and a Comerie free throw tied it again at 81. A Coco Daniels' jumper was answered with a Donna Geils' drive to the hoop for an 83-83 tie. Then with 30 seconds left Tonyus Chavers' three-point play gave the Streak the 86-83 lead.

The Gems were going to take advantage of the WBL's new three-point line as they set up a play for Denise Burdick. She got off a clean shot, but it hit the front of the rim and bounded away giving St. Louis the 86-83 victory.

The Gems were led by Donna Geils who had 26, while Joan Van Ness had 13, and Wanda Szeremeta had 12. The Streak's Liz Silcott showed what they were missing as she had 25, while Sheila Patterson had 13.

New Jersey Gems																	Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Browning, Pam	22		1				4				0						6
Burdick, Denise	35		4			1	0				0						8
Collins, Sheila	6		0				0				0						0
Comerie, Debra	34		2				5			10	10						9
Geils, Donna	4		10	22			6				0						26
Hastings, Martha	24		1				0				0						2
Meyers, Ann	14	Did Not Play - at Superstars competition in Bahamas															0
Rangler, Candy	5		3				0				0						6
Savio, Jennifer	12		0				1				0						1
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		3				6				0						12
Van Ness, Joan	21		5				3				0						13
Adjustment		240		60							32						
Totals		240	29	82	0	1	25	0	0	10	42	0	0	0	0	0	83
			FG%	35.4%			FT%	#DIV/0!	Team Rebs								

St. Louis Streak																	Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Chavers, Tonyus	6		3				1				0						7
Daniels, Coco	1		4				1				0						9
Griffey, Venita	11		5				0				0						10
Loyd, Jeanie	10		3				2				0						8
Patterson, Sheila	33		4				5				0						13
Platte, Ann	23		1				2				0						4
Plice, Darla	20		2				0				0						4
Silcott, Liz	22		9				7				0						25
Tomich, Vonnie	5		1				1				0						3
Washington, Debbie	31		1				1				0						3
Adjustment		240		82							56			1st Qtr>>	9		
Totals		240	33	82	0	0	20	0	0	0	56	0	0	0	9	0	86
			FG%	40.2%			FT%	#DIV/0!	Team Rebs						1st Qtr only		

Before the next scheduled game the Gems released Dale Dalrymple, who appeared in two pro games picking up a personal foul in her 2 minutes of play. Dale later became an assistant coach at Madison High School in Hanover Township, N.J.

Originally Coach Landa was expecting Ann Meyers to be back joining the team in Washington for their Wednesday December 5th game. But whether there was a miscommunication or another kind of problem, the Gems were about to play their 2nd game in a row without their star. The (2-3) Gems were riding a two-game losing streak as they travelled to the Capital Center in Landover. A decent crowd of 1,500 came out to watch their (2-4) Metros. This game was actually a preliminary game to the New York Knicks vs Washington Bullets NBA game.

The Metros last played three days earlier in Iowa, but their 11 1st quarter points as compared to the Gems' 20 showed they were not ready to play. But former Knicks' assistant coach and current Metros' coach, Nat Frazier, got on their case as they put together a 31-13 2nd quarter. Now it was the Gems' turn to look bad as they went into the locker room trailing 42-33.

The Gems did cut two points off the lead as they went into the 4th quarter trailing 61-54. But the Gems kept chipping away until it became a back-n-forth affair. It eventually became tied at 79 with 2:53 remaining after a Lisa Brewer jumper from the top of the circle. Denise Burdick countered with a rebound put back to finally give the Gems a lead at 81-79. The Metros fouled the right person as Joan Van Ness missed four free throws in a row, but in the meantime all the Metros could get out of it was one free throw from Vivian Greene for an 81-80 Gems advantage.

The Metros took an 82-81 lead on a Bertha Hardy jumper, but a Comerie layup put the Gems up 83-82. Each team scored, then with seven seconds remaining the Gems had a slight 85-84 lead, when Donna Geils was fouled and sent to the free throw line for a one-and-one. With a miss the Metros had a chance to steal this victory. But Geils hit both shots and the Metros failed in their attempt to tie the game. The Gems came through with an 87-84 victory and a 3-3 record.

Without Meyers the Gems had a balanced attack with five players in double figures. Geils led the way with 20 and nine rebounds, while Szeremeta and Comerie had 16 points each. Denise Burdick grabbed nine rebounds to help the cause.

For the (2-5) Metros Cathy Shoemaker had 21, while Vivian Greene added 16. Bertha Hardy who had 31 in their previous game was held to 10 points.

New Jersey Gems																	Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Browning, Pam	22		1				1				0						3
Burdick, Denise	35		5				2			9	9						12
Collins, Sheila	6		1				0				0						2
Comerie, Debra	34		7				2				0						16
Geils, Donna	4		8				4			9	9						20
Hastings, Martha	24		1				0				0						2
Meyers, Ann	14	Did Not Play - at Women's Superstars in Bahamas															
Rangler, Candy	5		1				0				0						2
Simms, Donna	17	Name not in Newspaper															
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		5				6				0						16
Van Ness, Joan	21		5				4		8 << At Least		0						14
Adjustment		240						26									
Totals		240	34	0	0	0	19	34	0	18	18	0	0	0	0	0	87
			FG%	#####			FT%	55.9%	Team Rebs								

Washington Metros																	Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Bender, Evelyn	4		3				1				0						7
Brewer, Lisa	5		4				0				0						8
Caudle, Diane	13	Name not in Newspaper															
Cooper, Accronetta	14		0				0				0						0
Greene, Vivian	1		8				0				0						16
Hardy, Bertha	15		4				2				0						10
Harris, Willodean	21		7				1				0						15
McWhorter, Charlene	20		2				1				0						5
Schlesinger, Lisa	11		1				0				0						2
Shoemaker, Cathy	12		9				3				0						21
Adjustment		240															
Totals		240	38	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	84
			FG%	#####			FT%	#DIV/0!	Team Rebs								

On the 7th the Gems announced the signing of Donna Simms and Sue Martin. Simms was their 1st choice, 2nd round, in the 1979 Draft and Sue played with the team last year.

The Gems returned home for a three-game homestand over the next week. Their first game on Saturday December 8th was against the winningest team in the WBL, the 7-1 San Francisco Pioneers. Yet the Pioneers were going to be without their best player, Cardie Hicks, as she had fractured her leg against Chicago four days earlier. This New Jersey trip was also a homecoming for Montclair State's Pat Colasurdo Mayo, who was the number one pick in the 1979 draft.

In some ways it was also a return home for Ann Meyers, as she finished fourth in the Superstars competition. And unlike Carol Blazejowski, Ann was allowed to cash her check for \$8,400.

This coast-to-coast trip for the Pioneers was not part of a road trip, but more like a one and done. Therefore, when they came out and took a 29-21 1st quarter lead it was not surprising.

The Gems closed the gap to 50-47 at the half. The Pioneers upped their lead to 72-67 and then closed the Gems out with a 30-22 4th quarter and a 102-89 victory.

The time away from the basketball court caught up with Meyers as she shot a poor 9 of 27 and had 11 turnovers. She did finish with 23 points, 12 rebounds and five assists. Wanda Szeremeta tried to show up her ex-Montclair State teammate when she added 18 points and 11 rebounds.

The Pioneers were led by Anita Ortega who had 29 points, also on 27 shots. She added seven assists as well. Musiette McKinney was one assist away from a Triple-Double with 21 points, 12 rebounds, and nine assists. And what might be more rare than a Triple-Double was having three unrelated players with the last name Martin (Sue, Brenda, and Pam) all playing in the same game!

New Jersey Gems																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Browning, Pam	22		1				0				0						2
Burdick, Denise	35		2				3			10	10						7
Collins, Sheila	6		1				5				0						7
Comerie, Debra	34		7				3				0						17
Geils, Donna	4		4				2			7	7						10
Hastings, Martha	24		0				0				0						0
Martin, Sue			0				0				0						0
Meyers, Ann	14		9	27			5			12	12	5			11		23
Rangler, Candy	5		0				0				0						0
Simms, Donna	17		0				3				0						3
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		6				6			11	11						18
Van Ness, Joan	21		1				0				0						2
Adjustment		240		59				37			15		26		23		
Totals		240	31	86	0	0	27	37	0	40	55	5	26	0	34	0	89
			FG%	36.0%			FT%	73.0%	Team Rebs								

San Francisco Pioneers																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Hansen, Barbara	42		1				3				0						5
Hansen, Kim	32		8				1			6	6	4					17
Hicks, Cardie	10	Did Not Play - Injured Leg Fracture															
Martin, Brenda	45		0				0				0						0
Martin, Pam	12		0				0				0						0
Mayo, Pat	13		7				4			8	8						18
McKinney, Musiette	33		5				11			12	12	9					21
Ortega, Anita	11		12	27			5			4	4	7					29
Ricketts, Debbie	8		4				0				0						8
Ternyik, Jan	22		1				2			7	7						4
Adjustment		240		61				40			4		27		15		
Totals		240	38	88	0	0	26	40	0	37	41	20	27	0	15	0	102
			FG%	43.2%			FT%	65.0%	Team Rebs								

The next day, Sunday December 9th the Gems' cross river rivals, the (3-2) New York Stars came to the Dunn Sports Complex. This included a former Gem, Gail Tatterson, who was recovering from a toe injury.

The game was going to be telecast locally, but not in its entirety, in that it would be picked up "in progress" after the previous show ended. A crowd of 938 came and saw the Stars go on an 8-0 streak after a 10-10 tie, to go ahead 18-10. The Gems responded with an 11-5 run to tie the score at 25, with Donna Geils scoring six and Ann Meyers scoring five. In the last 1:25 the Stars outscored the Gems 7-4, with Kaye Young scoring four of the seven, to complete a 32-29 1st quarter lead.

With 9:52 remaining the Gems went ahead 35-34, and after an exchange of baskets Meyers scored four straight points to give the Gems a 41-38 lead. This would be their last lead of the game. The Stars went on a 9-0 stretch with Janice Thomas scoring five to give the Stars a 58-50 half time lead.

The Gems came out and started making a difference as they got within five at 62-57. But the Stars went on an 11-5 run to take a 73-62 advantage. The Stars then added another 11-6 to end the quarter with an 84-68 lead.

In the 4th quarter the Gems cut the score to 86-73 when Ann Meyers picked up her 6th foul. A minute later Coach Landa picked up his 2nd technical. He didn't get to join Ann on the bench, because he was required to go to the locker room.

The Stars went ahead 90-73, before the Gems put together an 11-0 run to bring the score to 90-84. But then in the last few minutes Denise Craig got four of her nine steals and disrupted the Gems' momentum. The final score of 108-92 meant the Gems were on another two-game losing streak.

After the game a Coach Landa spoke with his players for a longer time than usual.

Perhaps he heard the rumors of a major shakeup in the Gems organization floating around the Dunn Sports Center last night.

"We turned the ball over much too often," he said. "When you get close and need a goal, you can't turn the ball over. We were forcing the ball too much."

"I used to think it was my fault if the girls didn't play well. But now I don't think it's me. I can't put the ball in the basket for them. I can't block out for them. When you give up four or five shots a clip, you're not going to beat anybody."

"We're playing like we belong in last place. I've got to keep from being frustrated."

The (3-5) Gems were led by Donna Geils who had 24 points and six assists. Meyers had 20 points, seven rebounds, and four assists before she fouled out. Finally, Wanda Szeremeta had 18 points and 10 rebounds.

The (4-2) Stars had five players in double figures with their number 1 draft pick (the New Jersey pick for Debbie Mason), Sharon Farrah, scoring 20 points. All-Pro guard Janice Thomas and All-Star Denise Craig each scored 17.

New Jersey Gems																	Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Browning, Pam	22		2				3	5			0						7
Burdick, Denise	35		3				2	3			0						8
Collins, Sheila	6		0				0	0			0						0
Comerie, Debra	34		4				4	6			0						12
Geils, Donna	4		8				8	10			0	6					24
Hastings, Martha	24		0				0	0			0						0
Martin, Sue			0				0	0			0						0
Meyers, Ann	14		6				8	12		7	7	4	6				20
Rangler, Candy	5		0				1	3			0						1
Simms, Donna	17		1				0	2			0						2
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		7				4	4		10	10						18
Van Ness, Joan	21		0				0	0			0						0
Adjustment		240		84											36		
Totals		240	31	84	0	0	30	45	0	17	17	10	6	0	36	0	92
			FG%	36.9%			FT%	66.7%		Team Rebs							
Special Notes:																	
Technical: Coach Howie Landa (2) - EJECTED																	

New York Stars																	Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Craig, Denise	13		7				3	5			0			9			17
Farrah, Sharon	11		8				4	5			0						20
Gwyn, Althea	31		4				2	2			0						10
Marquis, Gail	6		4				2	3			0						10
Moore, Pearl	12		2				0	0			0						4
Sanborn, Kathy	32		2				2	6			0						6
Smith, Karen	24		1				0	0			0						2
Tatterson, Gail	33		4				4	5		9	9						12
Thomas, Janice	10		5				7	7			0						17
Young, Faye	22		1				0	2			0						2
Young, Kaye	20		2				4	4			0						8
Adjustment		240															
Totals		240	40	0	0	0	28	39	0	9	9	0	0	9	0	0	108
			FG%	#####			FT%	71.8%		Team Rebs							

With Coach Landa's reference to last place let's take a look at the standings as of December 9th.

<u>EAST</u>				<u>MIDWEST</u>				<u>WEST</u>			
New York	4	2	.667 ---	Iowa	5	0	1.000 ---	San Francisco	8	1	.888 --
Philadelphia	2	3	.400 1.5	Minnesota	5	1	.833 0.5	Houston	6	1	.857 1.0
Washington	3	5	.375 2.0	Chicago	4	4	.500 2.5	New Orleans	3	5	.375 4.5
New Jersey	3	5	.375 2.0	St. Louis	3	4	.429 3.0	California	1	7	.143 6.5
				Milwaukee	2	5	.286 4.0	Dallas	1	7	.143 6.5

On the 11th the "shakeup" that was mentioned earlier took place as the Gems fired their publicity director, Ron Phillips, and replaced him with WRAN Radio sportscaster, Earl Booth.

It didn't take the Gems long to depart with Sue Martin as she was waived on December 12th, along with ex-Rutgers star Sheila Collins. Unfortunately, both Sue and Sheila's stats are too incomplete to be presented here.

The next game on the original WBL schedule had the Gems going down to Washington D.C. to play the (3-5) Metros. But that game was postponed and re-scheduled for March 5th. December 13th was not a good day for the WBL as the game between the New Orleans Pride against the Houston Angels in The Summit was also cancelled.

The Gems' next game was on Saturday December 15th with a 2 pm start and it was against the last place (2-5) Milwaukee Does. At one time last year these two teams were 8-21 and trying to avoid being classified as the worst team in the WBL. They then played an epic three overtime game, before the Gems prevailed 163-161.

This time the Saturday crowd to the Dunn Sports Complex was a lowly 675. At this point the Gems were averaging just 938 in the last five games, if you take away the season opener of 2,754. Again, finding any newspaper ads for upcoming games was proving to be a dead end.

Milwaukee came to town not only enduring a four-game losing streak, they had also been destroyed, 115-67, in Madison Square Garden just two days earlier. The 48-point loss was two points shy of the 50 point drubbing the Dayton Rockettes felt against the Iowa Cornets (131-81). The Does were now under the guidance of a new coach, Larry Costello. Larry was another in the WBL's upgrade as he was a former NBA Coach of the Year with the Milwaukee Bucks.

New Jersey took a 19-17 1st quarter lead on a Meyers' 22-footer to break the 17-17 tie. The Gems quickly put together an 11-3 run to take a 30-20 lead. A few minutes later the Does scored eight straight to make the score 34-31, behind four points from Heidi Nestor and three points from Brenda Chapman. The Gems responded with three baskets to bring the lead back to 40-31. By the end of the 2nd quarter the score was 46-39 in favor of the Gems.

Within the first 30 seconds of the 2nd half Pam Browning became the first of three Gems to foul out. The Does went on a 7-2 run at one point to make the score 63-62. The Gems closed out the 3rd quarter with a 10-4 run to make the score 73-66 going into the 4th quarter. The Gems had control as they widened the lead to 11 early in the 4th quarter.

Yet the Does didn't quit and with 19 seconds remaining they only trailed 95-94. They then fouled Meyers, who had three chances to make two free throws. Her two shots made the score 97-94, but the Does scored in six seconds (:13) to make it 97-96. As the Gems came up court Meyers lost the ball to Ethel White, which gave the Does a chance at the last shot.

The play, as drawn up by NBA coach Larry Costello, was designed to give Heidi Nestor an open shot, but a Does player mistakenly popped out and brought her defender, Ann Meyers, with her. Meyers was able to knock the ball away, but Nestor recovered and her 16-footer hit the rim and bounded away. When Donna Geils recovered the ball and was fouled her free throw made the final margin 98-96.

The Gems were led by Ann Meyers' 24 points, 11 rebounds, eight assists, and seven steals in 46 minutes. Yet Ann was struggling getting into a shooting rhythm, as in two of her last three games she was 17 of 53 for 32%. Donna Geils played 45 minutes and had 23 points, five rebounds, and six assists. The third player with over 40 minutes, 41, was Wanda Szeremeta who had 19 points and 11 rebounds before she fouled out.

With Debbie Comerie logging 36 minutes before she fouled out there was an indication that Coach Landa didn't believe he had a bench he could trust.

For the (2-9) Does' Brenda Chapman showed why she was last year's scoring champ as she had 33 on 11 of 20 from the floor, along with seven rebounds and five assists. As the lone Milwaukee player to foul out in a two-point game who knows what their outcome could have been with her on the floor. Ann Meyers' former UCLA teammate Heidi Nestor played all 48 minutes and finished with 26 points and nine rebounds.

New Jersey Gems																	Team Game #	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Browning, Pam	22	17	2	6			1	2	0	2	2	2	6	2	0	0	5	0.765
Burdick, Denise	35	31	4	7			0	0	1	5	6	2	4	1	1	0	8	0.581
Comerie, Debra	34	36	5	8			2	2	7	6	13	1	6	2	1	3	12	0.778
Geils, Donna	4	45	8	21			7	12	4	1	5	6	2	1	5	0	23	0.800
Hastings, Martha	24	Name Not in Newspaper																
Meyers, Ann	14	46	8	26			8	13	6	5	11	8	4	7	3	0	24	1.196
Rangler, Candy	5	5	0	0			0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	-0.200
Simms, Donna	17	9	2	2			0	0	1	3	4	0	2	1	1	1	4	0.889
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	41	7	23			5	6	7	4	11	0	6	4	2	0	19	0.780
Van Ness, Joan	21	10	0	3			3	5	0	1	1	0	1	2	0	0	3	0.600
Totals		240	36	96	0	0	26	40	26	27	53	19	32	20	14	4	98	0.813
			FG%	37.5%			FT%	65.0%	Team Rebs									

Milwaukee Does																	Team Game #	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Carney, Mary	13	Injured - Strained Shoulder																
Chapman, Brenda	15	46	11	20			11	18	1	6	7	5	6	0	7	0	33	0.935
Dennis, Brenda	10	17	2	5			0	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	3	0	4	0.118
Ellis, Cindy	25	24	3	9			4	6	3	5	8	1	1	0	1	1	10	0.792
Gamble, Carolyn	8	15	1	5			0	0	2	3	5	0	2	1	1	0	2	0.467
Griffith, Denise	6	18	2	4			1	2	2	3	5	1	1	3	1	0	5	0.778
Morales, Diane	22	33	2	9			0	0	3	2	5	1	5	2	4	0	4	0.273
Nestor, Heidi	28	48	12	24			2	2	2	7	9	1	4	0	3	0	26	0.708
Prevost, Deb	32	22	3	7			2	2	2	3	5	2	4	2	3	0	8	0.727
Smith, Joanie	1	DNP - Injured																
White, Ethel	30	18	1	1			2	2	0	1	1	0	2	3	2	0	4	0.333
Adjustment		-1																
Totals		240	37	84	0	0	22	32	16	30	46	11	27	11	25	1	96	0.625
			FG%	44.0%			FT%	68.8%	Team Rebs									

The Gems were about to go on a four-game road trip. So, they took their 4-5 record and their one game winning streak and were thankful this game had started at 2 pm. Why? Their next game was the next day, Sunday December 16th in Des Moines, Iowa with a 2 pm starting time. The (7-1) Cornets were still smarting from an embarrassing loss just three days before.

The 6-0 Cornets went to Dallas to take on a poorly performing 1-8 Diamonds team. The Convention Center crowd of 607 saw the Diamonds get their 2nd win with a 107-99 victory. The Cornets returned to Cedar Rapids for a game two days later, December 15th. Instead of a weak Dallas team now they were hosting the 8-2 San Francisco Pioneers.

The Cornets allowed their newest offensive weapon, Molly Bolin, free range and she exploded with 37 points. Iowa won an easy 107-81 game to raise their record to 7-1.

While this was Iowa's third game in four days, in three different cities, they felt they were back to being themselves. A crowd of 1,921 came out to the Veterans Memorial Auditorium as they were curious to see who this Ann Meyers was. They had read that the Cornets' General Manager, Katie McEnroe, believed that Meyers couldn't even make the Cornets roster.

They watched as the Cornets took a commanding 32-23 1st quarter lead as Meyers was struggling with her shooting. She would finish the first half with three free throws and nine points on 3 of 13 from the floor.

The Gems chipped away and closed the gap to 52-48 at the half, though Meyers, as the point guard, also had only one assist. Even though she grabbed seven rebounds the general consensus by the Iowa fans was that Meyers was "overrated" and not worth the money she was being paid.

Whatever adjustments the Gems made after the 1st quarter continued into the 3rd quarter. By the end of the 3rd quarter the Gems led 80-78, despite a scoring onslaught by Molly Bolin who would end the game with 42 points. Over the next eight minutes the Gems went ahead 99-90. Yet the Cornets flipped a switch and scored the next eight points and used the crowd to change the momentum. At 99-98 the Gems were in trouble, but an Ann Meyers steal and a twisting layup squashed the comeback with 1:40 remaining. At 101-98 Meyers put in another shot to raise the score to 103-98. The Cornets got a basket from Sister Green to make the score 103-100, but a Connie Kunzmann elbow to the nose of Meyers gave Ann two more free throws for a 105-100 lead. Meyers had six points in the final two minutes. The Gems finished the job with a 108-100 victory and their third road victory. They also evened their record at 5-5.

The general consensus by the Iowa fans changed from overrated to all the teams in the league wished they had an Ann Meyers.

Coach Landa felt good with his player rotation as only Ann Meyers played over 40 minutes, 41. The next highest player played 34 minutes. Meyers finished with 29 points and 13 rebounds and seven steals. Pam Browning came through with 17 points and 15 rebounds and a 1.065 E.R. in 31 minutes.

The (7-2) Cornets got 42 points from Molly Bolin in 38 minutes (1.211 E.R.), along with 17 points and 17 rebounds from Doris Draving before she fouled out.

New Jersey Gems																		Team Game #
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Browning, Pam	22	31	4	13			9	12	7	8	15	0	5	1	0	0	17	1.065
Burdick, Denise	35	16	1	3			0	0	0	2	2	1	0	1	2	1	2	0.313
Comerie, Debra	34	29	7	9			0	0	4	6	10	0	5	1	2	2	14	0.793
Geils, Donna	4	30	6	15			1	2	2	3	5	2	4	0	5	0	13	0.567
Hastings, Martha	24	Name Not in Newspaper																
Meyers, Ann	14	41	10	28			9	11	2	11	13	1	5	7	7	0	29	1.073
Rangler, Candy	5	25	0	0			1	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.040
Simms, Donna	17	9	3	4			2	2	0	2	2	0	1	0	0	1	8	1.111
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	34	3	12			3	8	3	2	5	2	4	0	1	0	9	0.500
Van Ness, Joan	21	25	7	11			1	5	5	3	8	3	2	2	2	0	15	1.160
Totals		240	41	95	0	0	26	42	24	37	61	9	26	12	20	4	108	0.746
			FG%	43.2%			FT%	61.9%	Team Rebs	1								
Special Notes:																		
Technical: Wanda Szeremeta																		

Iowa Cornets																		Team Game #
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Bolin, Molly	30	38	18	35	0	1	6	8	1	2	3	1	4	2	3	0	42	1.211
Crevier, Tanya	24	Did Not Play																
Draving, Doris	50	42	4	9			9	14	4	13	17	0	6	1	0	2	17	0.833
Green, Anita	12	26	6	14			0	0	1	0	1	6	2	1	8	0	12	0.692
Hodgson, Pat	34	32	2	8			0	0	4	4	8	0	5	0	1	0	4	0.344
Kunzmann, Connie	44	42	1	3			4	7	1	10	11	0	4	4	3	3	6	0.429
Lewis, Charlotte	52	Injured - Knee																
Penquite, Rhonda	32	4	0	0			0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	-0.250
Sharps, Denise	20	23	3	11			1	1	1	2	3	0	6	0	2	0	7	0.348
Thomas, Debra K.	40	10	3	7			0	0	1	1	2	0	1	0	0	1	6	0.800
Tucker, Robin	10	22	1	3			4	4	0	0	0	4	1	2	3	0	6	0.591
Wellen, Nancy	14	1	0	0			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000
Totals		240	38	90	0	1	24	34	13	32	45	11	30	10	21	6	100	0.650
			FG%	42.2%			FT%	70.6%	Team Rebs	4								

Game two of the four game trip brought the team out to San Francisco to face the (8-3) Pioneers. While everyone knew that just because Iowa beat San Francisco by 26 and the Gems just beat Iowa by 8, that it was not a guaranteed victory. But the (5-5) Gems felt like they were ready for this Tuesday December 18th game.

A weekday crowd of 1,283 came out to watch the Pioneers take a 31-20 1st quarter lead. This was the 2nd game in a row the Gems found themselves in a hole. And just like the last game, after the lead got to 13, the Pioneers began to throw the ball away as they committed 14 turnovers and allowed the Gems to crawl back with a 30-20 run to trail 51-50 at the half.

Whatever half time inspiration Coach Landa presented didn't accomplish his goal as the team went ice cold as they only scored two points in the first 8:31 of the 3rd quarter. The deficit got up only 11 points as they fell behind 72-61 going into the 4th quarter. The Pioneers made sure there were no comebacks as they took care of business with a 103-80 victory.

The Gems were led by Wanda Szeremeta, who had 17, while Debra Comerie had 16 points and 15 rebounds. The focus of the Pioneer's defense, Ann Meyers, had 10 points at the half, but only three more the rest of the way. As Ann began forcing shots to try and carry the team her percentages suffered as she hit only 6 of 21, while committing 10 turnovers.

The Pioneers, who only had seven healthy players, were forced to play four of them over 43 minutes. The leading scorer was Musiette McKinney who had 28 points. Another ex-teammate of Meyers, Anita Ortega, came through with 23 points and seven assists. The surprise bonus for San Francisco was the 18 points from Debbie Ricketts who was averaging 6.2 points per game. Her 9 of 14 from the floor made the fans reconsider her nickname of "Bricketts."

There was one more name of interest on the Pioneers. Jan TERNYK, the undrafted player we highlighted earlier showed she belonged in the WBL with 11 points.

New Jersey Gems																	Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Browning, Pam	22		4				0	0			0						8
Burdick, Denise	35		5				0	0			0						10
Comerie, Debra	34		5				6	7		15	15						16
Geils, Donna	4		2				3	3			0						7
Hastings, Martha	24	Name not in Newspaper															
Meyers, Ann	14		6				1	3			0						13
Rangler, Candy	5	Name not in Newspaper															
Simms, Donna	17		2				3	3			0						7
Szeremeta, Wnda	23		6				5	7			0						17
Van Ness, Joan	21		1				0	0			0						2
Adjustment		240		82						35			28		33		
Totals		240	31	82	0	0	18	23	0	50	15	0	28	0	33	0	80
			FG%	37.8%			FT%	78.3%	Team Rebs								

San Francisco Pioneers																	Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Foley, Bonnie	14		1				1	1			0						3
Hansen, Barbara	42	Name not in Newspaper															
Hansen, Kim	32		4				1	2			0						9
Hicks, Cardie	10	Injured - Fractured Leg															
Martin, Brenda	45	Name not in Newspaper															
Martin, Pam	12	Name not in Newspaper															
Mayo, Pat	13		4				3	6		5	5		6				11
McKinney, Musiette	33		9				10	13		5	5						28
Ortega, Anita	11		9				5	9			0	7					23
Ricketts, Debbie	8		9				0	0			0						18
Ternyik, Jan	22		4				3	4			0						11
Adjustment		240		77						19			20		27		
Totals		240	40	77	0	0	23	35	0	29	10	7	26	0	27	0	103
			FG%	51.9%			FT%	65.7%	Team Rebs								

Two days later, December 20th, the Gems found themselves in Dallas to take on the (3-9) Diamonds. The Diamonds were coached by the middle America college equivalent of Howie Landa, Dean Weese. The same way that Landa was a successful women's coach at Mercer, Weese had a record of 193-30 at Wayland Baptist in Plainview, Texas. Wayland's program provided eight players to the WBL over the league's three-year history.

As a whole the WBL was adding quality coaching from all levels, but currently Coach Weese was having trouble getting traction with his team. While the Diamonds had four players who were former Wayland Baptist Flying Queens (a name they earned because a college sponsor would fly the team to away games in his private airplane), they were led by 6'3" Alfreda Abernathy. As of 12 games into the season Fritz was averaging 26.3 points and 14.4 rebounds.

The 1,113 who came downtown to the Dallas Convention Center saw the Gems take a 27-24 1st quarter lead. The lead expanded to 54-46 at the half and then 81-71 after three quarters. The Gems evened their record at 6-6 with a 107-97 victory.

Ann Meyers led the way with 26 points and 12 rebounds in 44 minutes. Wanda Szeremeta came through with 21 points in 47 minutes, while Donna Geils and Denise Burdick each had 18 points.

New Jersey Gems																		Team Game #
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Browning, Pam	22	22	3	9			2	3	1	3	4	2	6	2	2	0	8	0.727
Burdick, Denise	35	36	5	13			8	8	2	4	6	0	6	2	1	0	18	0.694
Comerie, Debra	34	27	2	4			3	4	3	7	10	4	5	2	4	0	7	0.852
Geils, Donna	4	41	9	19			0	0	1	2	3	5	3	1	3	0	18	0.707
Hastings, Martha	24	7	0	1			0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	-0.143
Meyers, Ann	14	44	6	15			14	16	4	8	12	3	4	2	5	1	26	0.932
Rangler, Candy	5	Name Not in Newspapers																
Simms, Donna	17	6	2	2			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	4	0.333
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	47	5	11			11	12	2	1	3	5	0	2	2	0	21	0.723
Van Ness, Joan	21	10	1	1			3	4	0	3	3	2	1	1	3	0	5	1.000
Totals		240	33	75	0	0	41	47	13	28	41	21	26	13	24	1	107	0.746
			FG%	44.0%			FT%	87.2%		Team Rebs	8							
Special Notes:																		
Technical: Coach Howie Landa 1st Qtr																		
Joan Van Ness 4th Qtr																		

Dallas Diamonds																		Team Game #
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Abernathy, Alfreda	34	39	11	26			4	8	6	5	11	0	5	0	2	0	26	0.897
Baker, Janice	12	32	3	10			0	2	0	0	0	2	4	2	3	0	6	0.281
Bruton, Cindy	20	23	2	4			1	2	1	1	2	1	2	0	1	3	5	0.348
Bush-Roddy, Carolyn	40	27	3	6			2	2	3	4	7	0	4	1	5	2	8	0.407
Cooper, Shena	11	DNP - Coach Decision																
Earnhardt, Christy	42	11	1	4			2	3	1	2	3	0	6	1	1	0	4	0.636
Goodwin, Valerie	22	40	9	15			0	0	2	3	5	3	5	1	3	1	18	0.675
John, Jeriann	44	41	5	14			2	2	2	4	6	2	6	1	6	0	12	0.415
McLannahan, Sharon	21	18	6	11			2	3	4	3	7	1	1	1	1	0	14	1.278
Rutter, Nancy	14	9	2	4			0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	4	0.667
Tomich, Vonnie	32	DNP - Coach Decision																
Totals		240	42	94	0	0	13	22	20	23	43	9	33	7	22	6	97	0.596
			FG%	44.7%			FT%	59.1%		Team Rebs	11							

The (3-10) Diamonds were led by Alfreda Abernathy's 26 points and 11 rebounds, while ex-Flying Queen Valerie Goodwin had 18 points.

As this game concluded the official word out of the WBL office was that the Philadelphia and Washington franchises had both disbanded. Neither team had a definite owner and the league had been trying to operate both franchises since early December.

The Fox were 2-8 and suffering with a seven-game losing streak. The Metros, who were trying to get a commitment from Baltimore businessmen, folded with a record of 3-7.

The next day, December 21st, the WBL held a dispersal draft of the players under contract from the two franchises. The order of selection was supposedly based on the standings as of December 20th. With their victory against the Diamonds the Gems were dead center of the draft, #7.

Here is the order of selection, the player chosen, the team, and when they reported

1. Milwaukee	3	10	.231	Charlene McWhorter – Washington Metros	12/28
2. California	2	9	.182	Linda Matthews - Philadelphia Fox	1/8
3. Dallas	3	10	.231	Cathy Shoemaker – Washington Metros	12/30
4. Chicago	5	6	.455	Traded to Iowa for Denise Sharps	
	Iowa (w/Chicago pick)			Willodean Harris – Washington Metros	12/30
5. St. Louis	5	5	.500	Janie Fincher – Washington Metros	12/27
6. New Orleans	6	6	.500	Bertha Hardy – Washington Metros	12/28
7. New Jersey	6	6	.500	Peggy Vincent – Philadelphia Fox	1/12
8. Iowa	7	2	.778	Winsome Davidson – Philadelphia Fox	12/27
9. Houston	7	2	.778	NO PICK - League Didn't Contact a Rep	
10. San Francisco	10	3	.769	Lisa Brewer – Washington Metros	1/6
11. New York	9	2	.818	Evelyn Bender – Washington Metros	1/1
12. Minnesota	10	2	.833	Accronetta Cooper – Washington Metros	No Show

Ok, how many anomalies did you find?

1. Why wasn't California #1
2. Why didn't Chicago choose Janie Fincher if she was so popular with their fans?
3. Why didn't Houston get a pick?
4. Why wasn't San Francisco #8

There was a 2nd round, but only five players were chosen. Of the players chosen in the dispersal draft the first one to suit up and play for their new team was on December 27th -

1. Winsome Davidson reported to the Iowa Cornets who were playing in St. Louis with a 7:30 CST game.
2. Janie Fincher returned to her original team, after being traded from St. Louis to Chicago.



The (6-6) Gems had one more game on this road trip and a last game for 1979. The team had a Saturday December 22nd 2pm game in Chicago at Alumni Hall. The (5-6) Hustle were having a topsy-turvy season as they were having difficulty winning two games in a row, other than their first two games of the year. 2-0 had become 5-6 over the first 11 games.

A poor Chicago crowd of only 1,102 came out, which was far below the average of 2,528 they had achieved over their first four home games.

The Hustle began the game with a strong 28-23 quarter, which became 56-53 at the half. Star guard Rita Easterling was still recovering from a gimpy knee and was limited to five first half minutes and scored 0 points.

Her replacement, Vicki Hileman, filled in well enough to keep the Hustle ahead.

Early in the 2nd half Ann Meyers picked up her 4th and 5th fouls, which limited her aggressiveness. Chicago built up their lead to 92-84, as Easterling was able to feed Debby Waddy-Rossow in the post, where she felt most comfortable. Easterling finished the game with five assists.

In the 4th quarter Meyers picked up her 6th foul with 3:22 remaining. To Chicago coach Doug Bruno this was significant as he was very impressed with Ann Meyers overall game and the way she could control her team and the game. The Gems eventually lost 116-108, to watch their record drop to 6-7.

The Gems finished with six players in double figures with Ann Meyers scoring 22 points before fouling out. Pam Browning came through with another solid game as she had 20 points, while Donna Geils had 18.

For Chicago they also had six with double figures with Waddy-Rossow's 34 leading the way. Liz Galloway had 19 points and a Liz-like six steals. In the 2nd half Rita Easterling came through with 17 points.

New Jersey Gems																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Browning, Pam	22		6				8				0						20
Burdick, Denise	35		2		1	1	2				0						7
Comerie, Debra	34		5		At Least		0			13	13						10
Geils, Donna	4		7				4				0						18
Hastings, Martha	24		1				0				0						2
Meyers, Ann	14		7				8				0		6				22
Rangler, Candy	5	Name Not in Newspapers															
Simms, Donna	17		6				2				0						14
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		3				6				0						12
Van Ness, Joan	21		1				1				0						3
Adjustment		240															
Totals		240	38	0	1	1	31	0	0	13	13	0	6	0	0	0	108
			FG%	#####			FT%	#DIV/0!	Team Rebs								

Chicago Hustle																	Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Caldwell, Breena	30		7				2				0						16
Digitale, Sue	21	DNP - Broken Nose															
Easterling, Rita	15	5	5	<<At Least 5 Mins			7				0	5					17
Galloway, Liz	31		5				9				0			6			19
Hileman, Vicki	22		3				6				0						12
Rajcula, Jody	24		1				0				0						2
Stachon, Toni	14		2				2				0						6
Swindell, Retha	44		3				4				0						10
Waddy-Rossow, Debra	25		14				6				0						34
Adjustment		235															
Totals		240	40	0	0	0	36	0	0	0	0	5	0	6	0	0	116
			FG%	#####			FT%	#DIV/0!	Team Rebs								
Special Notes:																	
Rita played 5 minutes in 1st half & was scoreless																	
Box Score showed Hileman with 8-FG 6-FT = 20 Pts (would be 22) 20 Pts gives Hustle 126 - so 5 FGs subtracted from Hileman																	

While this was the last game of 1979 for the New Jersey Gems there was still more than a week remaining for the rest of the league. With the folding of the two Eastern Division teams the WBL went through a realignment.

These are the standings as of December 31st, which shows the new division format:

EAST

New York	10	2	.667	---
St. Louis	8	5	.615	2.5
New Jersey	6	7	.462	4.5
New Orleans	6	7	.462	4.5
Philadelphia	2	8	.200	Disbanded
Washington	3	7	.300	Disbanded

MIDWEST

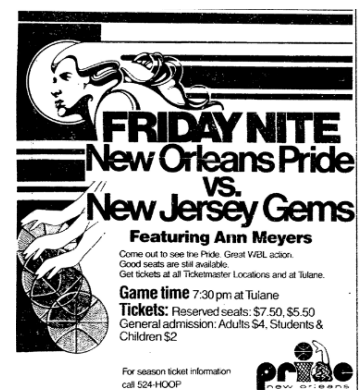
Minnesota	11	2	.846	---
Iowa	8	3	.727	2.0
Chicago	8	7	.522	4.0
Milwaukee	3	13	.188	9.5
St. Louis	- Midwest to East			
New Orleans	- West to East			

WEST

Houston	7	2	.777	0.5
San Fran.	11	5	.688	---
Dallas	3	11	.214	7.0
California	2	10	.143	7.0

Before the Gems took off for their road game they put 6'5" Candace Rangler on waivers. Again, Candace's stats are too incomplete to present here.

The first game of 1980 was on Friday January 4th at Tulane University against the (6-7) New Orleans Pride. For two days (1/2 & 1/4) the Pride had the type of newspaper ads that the Gems needed for New Jersey. The crowd of 2,117 showed the ads were at least working. I don't know if advertising guru Bob Milo was doing another type of promotion, but it was obvious there were no newspaper ads.



The Pride, who last played on December 28th, came out and got ahead 30-25, with Wanda Ard scoring 11 points by herself. In the 2nd quarter Queen Brumfield scored 15 of the Pride's 32 points as they took a 62-48 lead at the half.

The Pride lead got as high as 79-59, before the Gems responded with eight straight points to close the gap to 79-67. In the fourth quarter the Pride used their whole bench and still added to their score. The onslaught finally ended with the Gems losing by 30, 126-96.

Overall, between the two teams there were 65 fouls called and the Gems had three players foul out. But the really unusual thing was that the Gems had FIVE technicals called on them during the game by refs Don Durr and Al Link.

The Gems were also forced to play Donna Geils who was injured. As for Ann Meyers, she was held to 22, yet she had a leg injury in the 3rd quarter and was unable to play the rest of the game. Even though she sat quite a bit Ann Meyer's 22 led the Gems, followed by Donna Simms' 19.

The winning Pride were led by Augusta Forest's 24 and Paula Dean's 21. Four other players had double figures for the Pride.

New Jersey Gems																	Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Browning, Pam	22		2				9				0		6				13
Burdick, Denise	35		4		1		3				0						12
Comerie, Debra	34		0				2				0						2
Geils, Donna	4		4				1				0						9
Hastings, Martha	24		1				2				0						4
Meyers, Ann	14		8				6				0						22
Simms, Donna	17		6				7			13	13						19
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		4				2				0						10
Van Ness, Joan	21		2				1				0						5
Adjustment		240											29		10	<at least	
Totals		240	31	0	1	0	33	0	0	13	13	0	35	0	10	0	96
			FG%	#####			FT%	#DIV/0!	Team Rebs				3 Fouled Out				
Special Notes:																	
Technical: 5 called on New Jersey																	

New Orleans Pride																	Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Anderson, Katrina	22		1				4				0						6
Ard, Wanda	15		5				5				0						15
Blalock, Sybil	10		6				1				0						13
Bloom, Coretta	12		1				2				0						4
Brumfield, Queen	32		4				8				0						16
Dean, Paula	30		6				9				0						21
Duckworth, Tesa	24		1				1				0						3
Forest, Augusta	31		8				8				0						24
Hardy, Bertha	33		6				4				0						16
Smallwood, Sandra	34	Name not in Box Score										0				0	
Swilley, Kathy	5		1				2				0						4
Williams, Cindy	11		2				0				0						4
Adjustment		240											30		5	<at least	
Totals		240	41	0	0	0	44	0	0	0	0	0	30	0	5	0	126
			FG%	#####			FT%	#DIV/0!	Team Rebs								

The original schedule did not have the Gems playing five road games in a row. Yet with the demise of the two teams, the schedule had to be adjusted. Therefore, a December 29th home game was cancelled and the New Orleans game on the 4th, took the place of a Washington vs New Orleans' game. Therefore the (6-8) Gems had to hurry back to New Jersey for a Saturday January 5th game against the Minnesota Fillies.

The Fillies just lost a game to the New York Stars four days earlier, which always begs the question, "With East Coast games on the 1st and 5th does a Midwest team stick around the East or travel back home and then back east again?" Beats Me!

In the very least the Fillies had the advantage of rest, because the Gems had an overnight flight from New Orleans to get back in time for their own home game.

The only good news for the Gems might have been they were blown out 126-96 in New Orleans, so their starters were probably rested.

The Saturday January 5th game at the Dunn Sports Complex drew a crowd of 1,428 (or was it 825 as reported in the Newark Star Ledger?) as Minnesota took a slight 23-21 lead. They held on to keep the lead at 45-44 at the half. The Gems took the lead at 73-67, but after Ann Meyers fouled out with 6:44 left the Gems knew they had to buckle down.

With three minutes remaining the Gems held a 99-90 lead. Over the next two minutes Patty Montgomery scored seven of the Fillies 10 points to take a 100-99 lead. Donna Geils then broke the Gems' scoreless drought with four free throws and a 103-100 lead. Minnesota's Janet Timperman got the benefit of the doubt from the refs as she knocked over Pam Browning on a drive to the basket and made the subsequent free throw for a 103-103 tie with :33 left.

Then in the last four seconds somebody on Minnesota was fouled and had two free throws. The Newark Star Ledger said it was Janet Timperman, the Minneapolis Star Tribune said it was Kathy Hawkins – either way both shots were missed and the game went to overtime tied at 103.

The Gems came through with an 11-6 overtime for a 114-109 victory. Even though she fouled out, Ann Meyers had 34 points, while Donna Geils had 24. For the Fillies Pat Montgomery had 20 points, while Marie Kocurek had 19 before she fouled out.

New Jersey Gems																Team G	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Browning, Pam	22									12	12						12
Burdick, Denise	35										0						14
Comerie, Debra	34										0						9
Geils, Donna	4										0						24
Hastings, Martha	24	Name not in Newspaper															
Meyers, Ann	14										0		6				34
Simms, Donna	17										0						6
Szeremeta, Wanda	23										0						9
Van Ness, Joan	21										0						6
Adjustment		265											21				
Totals		265	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	12	0	27	0	0	0	114
			FG%	####			FT%	#DIV/0!	Team Rebs								

Minnesota Fillies																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Booker, Gerry	55	7	1	2			1	2	0	2	2	1	0	0	1	0	3
Burdick, Randi	25	Name not in Newspaper															
DeBoer, Kathy	21										0	6					8
DeLorme, Scooter	32										0	6					10
Hawkins, Kathy	13	16	0	0			0	0	1	0	1	0	4	1	1	0	0
Keeley, Marguerite	45										0						14
Kocurek, Marie	42										0	6					19
Montgomery, Pat	53										0						20
Timperman, Janet	12										0						8
Wahl-Bye, Susan	24	32	4	10			1	2	0	2	2	0	1	1	0	0	9
Wilson, Donna	11										0						17
Adjustment		265											17				1
Totals		320	5	12	0	0	2	4	1	4	5	1	40	2	2	0	109
			FG%	#####			FT%	50.0%		Team Rebs							

The Gems only had a day off before they had to hit the road again as they went to Milwaukee. The Monday January 7th game drew a crowd of 1,732 as the (7-8) Gems took on the (3-14) Does. The Milwaukee papers made sure that everyone knew that Ann Meyers' brother, David, played with the NBA Bucks and her father played ball at Marquette.

The Gems were taking no chances as they jumped ahead 24-13. But the Does weren't going to roll over and quit as they turned the tables with a 29-17 2nd quarter to take a 42-41 lead into halftime. The Does added to their lead as the score became 65-59. With 1:15 remaining Denise Griffith put back a Does' miss to give the Does a 79-77 lead. Wanda Szeremeta then tied the score at 79. As the Does went for the lead an Ann Meyers steal and three-point play gave the Gems a 82-79 lead with 51 seconds left. The Does were forced to foul after an unsuccessful attempt and the Gems closed out their effort with an 84-79 victory.

To secure the victory the Gems needed to play their starters an excessive amount. Wanda Szeremeta played 45 minutes and scored 23 points. Ann Meyers also played 45 minutes and she scored 19 points, on 8 of 26 from the field, while pulling down 14 rebounds, handing out six assists, and getting six steals. Donna Geils played 42 minutes and scored 16 points. Two other Gems were forced to play over 36 minutes. One of those players was Debra Comerie who added 12 points and 18 rebounds.

The Gems were fortunate to win, because their back court of Meyers and Geils had 17 of the team's 36 turnovers.

The Does Denise Griffith had 25 points and 12 rebounds and Charlene McWhorter had 14 points and 10 rebounds. Mysteriously Brenda Chapman, who had 33 the last time they played, had only four points on five shots in 22 minutes.

New Jersey Gems																		Team Game #
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Browning, Pam	22	37	1	4			1	2		7	7	1	6	3	6	2	3	0.243
Burdick, Denise	35	21	1	6			0	0		1	1	1	4	0	1		2	0.190
Comerie, Debra	34	36	6	14			0	1		18	18	3	4	2	2	3	12	1.000
Geils, Donna	4	42	7	13			2	2		4	4	4	3	1	8		16	0.500
Hastings, Martha	24	Name not in Newspaper																
Meyers, Ann	14	45	8	26			3	6		14	14	6	4	6	9	1	19	0.933
Simms, Donna	19	5	2	2			0	0		0	0	0	0	1	2		4	0.600
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	45	9	17			5	6		8	8	2	5	3	5		23	0.733
Van Ness, Joan	21	9	1	1			3	4		0	0	3	0	0	3		5	0.889
Adjustment									15	-15								
Totals		240	35	83	0	0	14	21	15	37	52	20	26	16	36	6	84	0.650
			FG%	42.2%			FT%	66.7%	Team Rebs									
Special Notes:																		
Donna Simms was #17 in 1st 15 games - have a Dallas box score game 12 says #17																		

Milwaukee Does																		Team Game #
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Chapman, Brenda	15	22	1	5			2	5		2	2	2	1	5	5		4	0.455
Ellis, Cindy	25	3	0	3			0	0		2	2	0	0	0	1		0	0.333
Gamble, Carolyn	8	1	0	0			0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0.000
Greene, Vivian	10	8	0	5			0	0		0	0	0	2	0	1		0	-0.125
Griffith, Denise	6	35	10	19			5	10		12	12	0	5	2	6		25	0.943
McWhorter, Charlene	24	36	6	17			2	2		10	10	2	2	4	2	1	14	0.833
Morales, Diane	22	27	1	8			5	8		4	4	2	3	1	2		7	0.519
Nestor, Heidi	28	25	4	7			2	2		10	10	2	2	0	2		10	0.880
Prevost, Deb	32	26	3	6			3	4		1	1	4	1	2	1		9	0.731
Smith, Joanie	1	17	1	7			0	0		6	6	3	1	1	4		2	0.647
White, Ethel	30	40	2	6			4	7		1	1	1	3	2	6		8	0.175
Adjustment									20	-20								
Totals		240	28	83	0	0	23	38	20	28	48	16	20	17	30	1	79	0.608
			FG%	33.7%			FT%	60.5%	Team Rebs									

Before the next game on January 9th the Gems finally signed Peggy Vincent, who was their pick, from Philadelphia, in the dispersal draft. No one had to be released as the team was only carrying 10 players at the time. Peggy had the distinction of being the LAST player chosen in the dispersal draft to report to her new team.

Even though there were more ads in the New Orleans newspaper the Wednesday January 9th crowd of 647 was disappointing. The (8-8) Gems on a two-game winning streak were about to play their 4th game in six days, with three of them on the road.

As additional bench support the Gems brought in Lynn Arturi, who was chosen in the 2nd round of the dispersal draft off of the Philadelphia Fox. Lynn would historically be one of only 31 players who was on a team through all three WBL seasons.

The (7-8) Pride took a slight 23-21 1st quarter lead, which grew to 44-38 at the half. Ann Meyers was harassed into a 3 of 15 shooting in the first half. The Gems could never catch up, even though Ann Meyers poured in 16 of the team's 28 points in the 3rd quarter. They fell behind even further 74-66 and then finally succumbing 100-85. The Gems took no solace in knowing they had cut their last 30-point loss in half to just 15.

Ann Meyers shooting woes continued as she was 9 of 31 from the floor, though she did finish with 30 points in 46 minutes before she fouled out. Debra Comerie kept up her rebounding flurry as she pulled down 15, while she was scoring 21 points.

The (8-8) Pride were led by Augusta Forest who had 25, while four others had double figures.

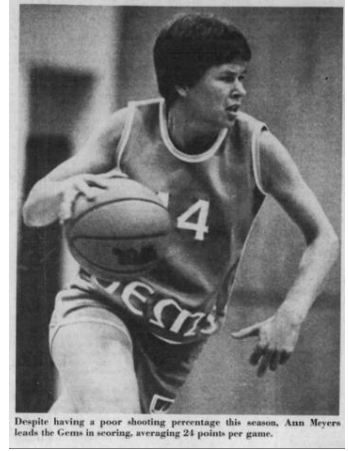
Arturi, Lynn	20		0		0	0		0		0		0								0
Browning, Pam	22		3		4	5		0		0										10
Burdick, Denise	35		2		2	4		0		0										6
Comerie, Debra	34		6		9	9		15		15										21
Geils, Donna	4	Name not in Newspaper																		
Hastings, Martha	24		1		0	0		0		0										2
Meyers, Ann	14	46	9	31				12	14										6	30
Simms, Donna	19		0		0	0		0	0											0
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		4		2	2		0	0											10
Van Ness, Joan	21		3		0	0		0	0											6
Adjustment		194		49																
Totals		240	28	80	0	0	29	34	0	15	15	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	85
			FG%	35.0%			FT%	85.3%		Team Rebs										

New Orleans Pride																		Team Ge		
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts			
Anderson, Katrina	22		0				3	5			0						3			
Ard, Wanda	15		1				0	0			0						2			
Blalock, Sybil	10		4				4	5			0						12			
Bloom, Coretta	12		6				2	2			0						14			
Brumfield, Queen	32		1				2	3			0						4			
Dean, Paula	30		0				1	1			0						1			
Duckworth, Tesa	24	Name not in Box Score																		
Forest, Augusta	31		11				3	4			0						25			
Hardy, Bertha	33		8				0	0			0						16			
Smallwood, Sandra	34		6				5	11			0						17			
Williams, Cindy	11		3				0	0			0						6			
Adjustment		240																		
Totals		240	40	0	0	0	20	31	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100			
			FG%	#####			FT%	64.5%		Team Rebs										

Somehow the Gems' schedule was playing cruel tricks on them as they again had a one game home respite before they would be traveling again. The (8-9) Gems were about to take on the (8-4) Angels who were themselves about to play their 4th road game since the beginning of the year.

The Angels were having front office problems ever since the million-dollar sale fell through. They travelled to New Jersey with just seven viable players, because their All-Star guard Karen Auhlenbacher was out with a sprained ankle. The Angels were trying to convince their number one 1979 draft pick, Nancy Kuhl, to travel to New Jersey and help the team. Kuhl, who lived in the Pittsburgh area, had bolted from the team in late December because of lack of payment. Kuhl said she wasn't interested in playing.

The Saturday evening crowd of 1,040 came out to the Dunn Sports Complex for a January 12th game. The Gems fell behind 22-20, but in the 2nd quarter they put it all together as they outscored the Angels 33-7 to take a 53-29 half time lead. The Gems lost only three points of their lead in the 3rd quarter, but gained two of them back in the 4th quarter for a 107-84 victory.



With the season halfway over the team's 9-9 record gave them as many victories as all of last year. The Gems had three players with over 20 points as Donna Geils had 29, Ann Meyers had 23, and Wanda Szeremeta had 21. Meyers also grabbed 13 rebounds, handed out eight assists, and garnered eight steals. The leading rebounder was Debra Comerie who had 14 to go with her 12 points.

The Angels had five players with double figures with Paula Mayo's 17 points and 15 rebounds leading the way.

New Jersey Gems																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Arturi, Lynn	20		2				1	3			0						5
Browning, Pam	22		1				0	0			0						2
Burdick, Denise	35		3				2	2			0						8
Comerie, Debra	34		4				4	7		14	14						12
Geils, Donna	4		14				1	2			0			8			29
Hastings, Martha	24		1				0	0			0						2
Meyers, Ann	14		11				1	1		13	13	8		8			23
Simms, Donna	19	Name not in Newspaper									0						0
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		8				5	5			0						21
Van Ness, Joan	21		1				0	0			0						2
Vincent, Peggy			1				1	2			0						3
Adjustment		240		79									25	6			
Totals		240	46	79	0	0	15	22	0	27	27	8	25	22	0	0	107
			FG%	#####			FT%	68.2%		Team Rebs							

Houston Angels																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Auhlenbacher, Karen	11	Injured - Injured - Sprained Ankle															
Candler, Belinda	24		4				0	0			0						8
Chapman, Vicky	22		3				4	6			0						10
Durham, Gwen	3		2				3	7			0						7
Johnson, Pat	45		5				3	3			0						13
Jones, Belinda	23		7				1	2			0						15
Kenlaw, Jessie	40		1				2	6			0						4
Mayo, Paula	10		6				5	13		15	15						17
Washington, Cynthia	15		2				6	9			0						10
Adjustment		240											14				
Totals		240	30	0	0	0	24	46	0	15	15	0	14	0	0	0	84
			FG%	#####			FT%	52.2%		Team Rebs							
Special Notes:																	
Nancy Kuhl was a possible Auhlenbacher replacement - she lived in Pittsburgh area																	
Kuhl was available, but would not return to play with Houston																	

With the next two games on the road in Minnesota and California the Gems would have played five of seven games on the road over an 11 day period (1/4 to 1/15). Not only that, these two games were going to be back-to-back on the 14th & 15th. By my calculations the Gems flew over 10,000 miles over those 11 days.

The Monday January 14th game against the (11-5) Minnesota Fillies drew a crowd of 2,122 to the Metropolitan Sports Center. The Fillies took a quick 31-24 1st quarter lead, which dropped to 52-47 at the half. The Gems fell further behind 75-66 after three quarters, which eventually became a 98-95 loss and a 9-10 record.

**ANN MEYERS (NBA)
and New Jersey Gems**
vs.
FILLIES

Mon. Jan. 14th 7:30 P.M.
MET CENTER

Ann Meyers, who was averaging 24.1 before the game, led the way with 25 points on an improved 7 of 17 from the field. Her running mate, Donna Geils, came through with 23 points before she fouled out. Debra Comerie had at least her 4th game in a row with double digit rebounds with 14, along with 13 points.

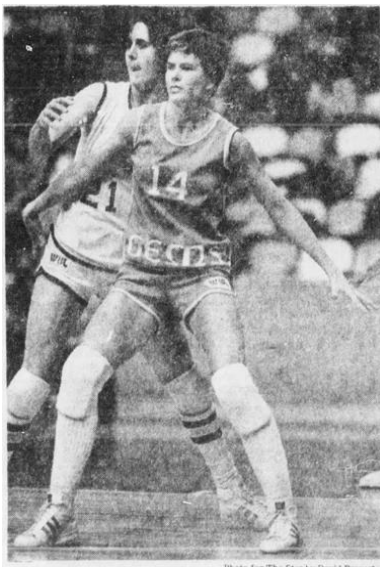
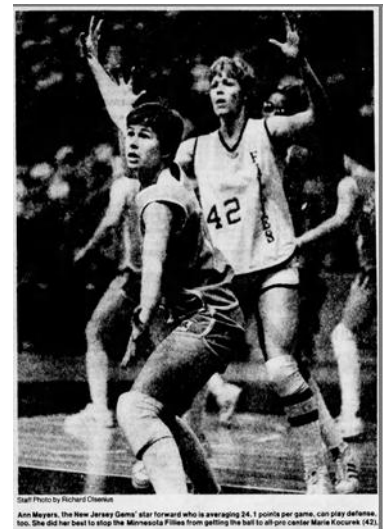


Photo for The Star by David Brewster
Ann Meyers of Gems guarded Fillies' Kathy DeBoer

The (12-5) Fillies stayed within one game of the (13-4) Cornets in the Midwest Division. Marie Kocurek and Patty Montgomery each had 21 points, while Donna Wilson came through with 20.



Staff Photo by Richard Owsen
Ann Meyers, the New Jersey Gems' star forward who is averaging 24.1 points per game, can play defense. Here she did her best to stop the Minnesota Fillies from getting the ball to all-pro center Marie Kocurek (42).

This match-up was a kind of reunion as former Gems Debbie Mason and Sheila Collins were both dressed in the Fillies navy and gold.

New Jersey Gems																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Arturi, Lynn	20		1				0				0						2
Browning, Pam	22		0				2				0						2
Burdick, Denise	35		0				0				0						0
Comerie, Debra	34		4				5			14	14						13
Geils, Donna	4		7				9				0		6				23
Hastings, Martha	24	Name not in Newspaper															
Meyers, Ann	14		7	17			11	15			0						25
Simms, Donna	19		5				5				0						15
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		3				1				0						7
Van Ness, Joan	21		3				2				0						8
Adjustment		240		53				30					16				
Totals		240	30	70	0	0	35	45	0	14	14	0	22	0	0	0	95
			FG%	42.9%			FT%	77.8%	Team Rebs								

Minnesota Fillies																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Collins, Sheila		Name not in Newspaper															
DeBoer, Kathy	21		1				0				0		6				2
DeLorme, Scooter	32		4				4				0						12
Keeley, Marguerite	45		1				4				0						6
Kocurek, Marie	42		10				1				0						21
Mason, Debbie	13	17	1	6			0	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	1	2	2
Montgomery, Pat	53		8				5				0		6				21
Owens, Katrina	33		2				1				0						5
Sharps, Denise	10	Name not in Newspaper															
Timperman, Janet	12		4				1				0		4				9
Wahl-Bye, Susan		Name not in Newspaper															
Wilson, Donna	11		10				0				0						20
Adjustment		240		82				24					14				
Totals		257	41	88	0	0	16	24	2	0	2	0	32	0	1	2	98
			FG%	46.6%			FT%	66.7%	Team Rebs								



A 7:30 pm game which ends around 9:30 pm usually means rushing out to the airport for a red-eye flight to California. An 11:30 pm flight (9:30 PST) means a 4:30 am (2:30 PST) arrival and a trip to the hotel to try and rest.

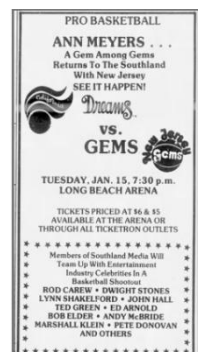
Or there is an overnight stay in Minneapolis and an early morning five-hour flight to California for a game the next day January 15th.

This was the Gems first game against the Dreams, who were the Dayton Rockettes last season. The tired (9-10) Gems against the fresh (3-11) Dreams, who hadn't played in a week, seemed like a mismatch. Yet California was playing their fifth game under their second head coach.

The original coach, Mel Sims, had lasted 10 games earning a record of 2-8. Unfortunately, and unfairly, seven of the Dreams first eight games were on the road. So, Sims was fired on December 15th, which allowed his assistant Artie Blouin to take over. The Dreams were 1-3 under Artie, but overall they were struggling.

Southern California had not accepted the team. The Dreams chose to play in both Long Beach and Anaheim. Their only Anaheim game by this point in the season drew only 238. The four Long Beach games attracted a total of 1,588 (397 avg) and that included a home opener of 928. Therefore, the other three games were averaging 189.

With the return of Ann Meyers to Southern California the Dreams placed a newspaper ad to let all the UCLA fans know she was back. A Tuesday crowd of 601 would normally sound really bad, except it was three times their average.



The Dreams were also battling the newspapers, as there was very little coverage and support. Therefore, the score at the end of the 1st quarter is unknown. The half time score is unknown. At one point during the 3rd quarter the Gems trailed by 27 points. In the 4th quarter the Gems

trailed 90-84 with 2:00 remaining. Meyers then hit an 18-footer to make it 90-86 and stole a Dreams' pass and fed a teammate who was fouled. The unknown player's two free throws made it 90-88. The Dreams raised the score to 92-88, when Meyers had another steal and another jumper to make it 92-90.

But with so much energy trying to comeback from such a large deficit the Gems finally fell 99-94. Donna Geils led with 20 points, while Wanda Szeremeta had 18. Ann Meyers' nine steals were becoming routine as she scored 16.

The Dreams were led by 16 points from Linda Matthews, who was the 2nd player chosen in the dispersal draft. This was her 3rd game with the Dreams. Jane Ellen Cook and Mary Scharff both had 15 for the 4-11 Dreams.

New Jersey Gems																	Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Arturi, Lynn	20										0						6
Browning, Pam	22										0						7
Burdick, Denise	35	Injured - Stitches over her Eye															
Comerie, Debra	34									12	12						15
Geils, Donna	4										0						20
Hastings, Martha	24	Name not in Newspaper															
Meyers, Ann	14		6	21			4				0	1 At Least		9			16
Simms, Donna	19										0						6
Szeremeta, Wanda	23										0						18
Van Ness, Joan	21										0						6
Adjustment		240											24				
Totals		240	6	21	0	0	4	0	0	12	12	1	24	9	0	0	94
			FG%	#####			FT%	#DIV/0!		Team Rebs							

California Dreams																	Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Bucklew, Patti	40										0						4
Cook, Jane Ellen	7										0						15
Dunkle, Nancy	15										0						6
Matthews, Linda	50							4 << 4th Qtr Fts			0						16
McGraw, Muffet	10							4 << 4th Qtr Fts			0						6
McKenzie, Michelle	20										0						4
Melbourne, Mara	24	Name not in Newspaper															
Rhoades, Stacy	17										0						11
Scharff, Mary	11							2 << 4th Qtr Fts			0						15
Scott, Angela	23										0						14
Shirley, Pam	12	Name not in Newspaper															
Uhl, Joan	22										0						8
Adjustment		240											19				
Totals		240	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	19	0	0	0	99
			FG%	#####			FT%	0.0%		Team Rebs							

While the Gems were traveling around the country and owning the most publicized player in the WBL, the Gems' front office placed some advertising in the Morristown Daily record.



Yes, this was what the Gems were offering the New Jersey fan base and curiosity seekers.

The Gems finished their crisscrossing the country tour and returned to New Jersey for three days of rest. Their next game wouldn't be until Saturday January 19th against the (14-4) Iowa Cornets.

The team was also looking forward to meeting their new teammate, Peggy Vincent, who was selected in the dispersal draft. Yet, instead of meeting Peggy they were introduced to Drema Greer, who was a 5'4" guard who played her college ball at Clemson.

Well Gollee! Surprise, surprise, surprise – what do we have here? The day before the Gems' Saturday game a really good-sized eye-catching ad. The Gems benefitted from the ad with a Saturday crowd of 1,629 who came out for the Iowa game. This was a large improvement over last week's 1,040 against Houston, and slightly better than the 1,428 two weeks ago against Minnesota.

For the Cornets this would be game two of a month-long road trip. Between January 17th and February 17th Iowa would play 0 games at home, with nine games on the road.



Yet their trip started out very positively as they went to Houston and completely destroyed the Angels, 132-108. This included two new WBL records as they had a 50-point 3rd quarter and an 83 point second half.

With a 14-4 record, which was just two games behind the New York Stars 16-2 record, the Cornets were ready to face the 9-11 Gems who were on a two-game losing streak.

The 1,629 fans were pleased as the Gems took an 8-0 lead, which became 18-4 after six minutes, because the Cornets turned the ball over several times. By the game's end Iowa would cough up the ball 28 times. Eventually the Gems held the 28-21 1st quarter lead.

Even though the Gems had a 54-49 half time lead they had to be aware of what Iowa could do in the 3rd quarter. While Doris Draving added six points, Molly Bolin found the basket for 12 3rd quarter points. At the end of the quarter the score was tied, 79-79.

With the score tied at 81, the Gems defense caused the Cornets to miss eight straight shots, while they were running off 14 points in a row. With the score 95-81 the two teams played evenly as Ann Meyers scored 11 of her 19 points in the 4th quarter. In the end the Gems walked away with a 111-95 victory.

The Gems' Ann Meyers almost had a Quadruple-Double as she finished with 19 points, 10 rebounds, 10 assists, and nine steals. Yet she wasn't the leading scorer as Donna Geils came through with 29 and Wanda Szeremeta added 22 points. Another player who made a large contribution was Pam Browning who had 20 points and 10 rebounds.

For the (14-5) Cornets Molly Bolin had 34, which was close to her average, while Doris Draving had 21 points. One name the Cornets were hoping to add to their front court weaponry was 6'5" Willodean Harris. Harris, who was the 4th player chosen in the dispersal draft, was still unsigned as she was asking for more money. After a difficult experience with the Washington Metros, you couldn't blame her for wanting more assurances and guarantees.

New Jersey Gems																	Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Arturi, Lynn	20										0						0
Browning, Pam	22		9				2	2		10	10						20
Burdick, Denise	35		4				0	0			0						8
Comerie, Debra	34		3				3	4			0						9
Geils, Donna	4		14				1	1			0						29
Greer, Drema	7	Name not in Newspaper															
Hastings, Martha	24	Name not in Newspaper															
Meyers, Ann	14		8				3	3		10	10	10		9			19
Simms, Donna	19		2				0	0			0						4
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		8				6	9			0						22
Van Ness, Joan	21	Name not in Newspaper															
Adjustment		240		107						37			34		17		
Totals		240	48	107	0	0	15	19	0	57	20	10	34	9	17	0	111
			FG%	44.9%			FT%	78.9%	Team Rebs								per Mad Seasons p.255
Special Notes:																	
Technical Fouls: Coach Howie Landa																	
Wanda Szeremeta																	

Iowa Cornets																	Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Bolin, Molly	30		13				8	10			0						34
Davidson, Winsome	20		2				4	9			0						8
Draving, Doris	50		7				7	10			0						21
Eckroth, Mo	22		1				0	0			0						2
Green, Anita	12		3				0	2			0						6
Hodgson, Pat	34		3				1	2			0		6				7
Kunzmann, Connie	44		2				7	14			0						11
Penquite, Rhonda	32	Name not in Newspaper															
Thomas, Debra K.	40		3				0	0			0						6
Tucker, Robin	10	Injured									0						0
Adjustment		240		80						54			20		28		
Totals		240	34	80	0	0	27	47	0	54	0	0	26	0	28	0	95
			FG%	42.5%			FT%	57.4%	Team Rebs								

With a week off before the next game it was important to note that several things involving the Gems and the WBL took place. First on the 19th the Dallas Diamonds became the 3rd team to fold up and declare bankruptcy. Their owner, Judson Phillips, had spent his entire three year \$300,000 fund in a matter of three months. The other owners in the WBL all agreed to cover the expenses for Dallas while a new owner was sought. They were afraid of a domino effect with Houston following Dallas' lead.

Fortunately, because of the fast behind the scenes work of WBL Vice-President Dave Almstead no outsiders knew this collapse had taken place. In just a few days Almstead secured a new owner, Michael Staver, and the Diamonds did not miss any games.

As for the Gems on January 22nd Ann Meyers and Donna Geils had been named to the All-Star team. They would be representing the East along with players from the Stars, the Streak, the Pride, the Hustle, and the Does. The game was scheduled for Chicago on Wednesday January 30th. The Gems' owner also said that he sent a check for \$20,000 to the Houston Angels to cover the rights to negotiate with Ann Meyers.

The Gems were also making plans to have their game on February 3rd, against the Dallas Diamonds, to take place in Princeton. The location was in the central part of the state, so Bob Milo was hoping for greater exposure. With the Gems looking forward to a move to the Meadowlands for the 1980 season, there were no guarantees that the Arena would be ready. Therefore, this Princeton game was a test for next year. The team was willing to play their games in: Resorts International, Atlantic City; Princeton; Seton Hall; Bergen County; and have only two games in Elizabeth.



The other important announcement was the trade for 6'5" Willodean Harris, who was a part of the Iowa Cornets. Even though she was selected on December 21st as the 4th pick in the dispersal draft she refused to sign with Iowa. She played in only one game for Iowa. Therefore, she was traded to the Gems for future considerations.

For Willodean, after a difficult stint with the Washington Metros and being acquired by New Jersey via Iowa, she was being labelled as the Gems' "secret weapon." Her 6'5" frame and her hunger to prove herself was what the Gems were looking for.

Saturday January 26th, the 9th of 10 home games played on a Saturday, was against their cross river rival, the (17-3) New York Stars. The Stars' third loss was an overtime loss four days earlier in San Francisco. That loss ended the Stars' WBL record 14 game winning streak. It was also the 2nd loss to the Pioneers, with each loss being in overtime.

CATCH THE FEVER!
SPECIAL MORRIS COUNTY APPEARANCE



NEW JERSEY GEMS
VS.
NEW YORK STARS

Saturday, January 26th, at 8:00 P.M.
County College of Morris County
Rr. 10 and Center Grove Rd.
Randolph, NJ
Box office opens at 5 P.M.
For ticket information call Jack Martin
ATHLETIC DIRECTOR AT (201) 361-5000
Gems Home Office at (201) 635-1003 or
your local ticket agent.

Tickets available at box office
\$6.00 adults \$4.00 students

FREE 250 AUTOGRAPHS
GEMS CALENDAR POSTERS



The intensity of the rivalry may have been more in the minds of the owners of the two teams than the general public. Both Bob Milo (Gems) and Ed Reisdorf (Stars) live on the same street, Fairmount Ave in Chatham, NJ.

NO! Your eyes aren't deceiving you! We not only had another Gems AD, but a headline that probably shocked everyone!

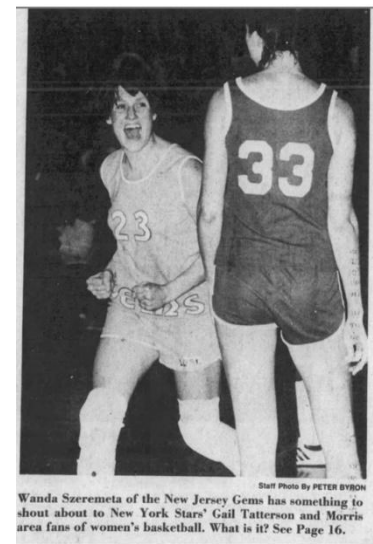
Gems-Stars Tix Hot Commodity

This game was played at the County College of Morris. The \$4 tickets allowed for an advance sale of 1,500 before Saturday. By game time the crowd of 2,317 was all the Fire Commissioner of Randolph Township would allow into the gym. This was an official sell-out, and it was noted in Newsday. Was this the 1st official sell-out in WBL history?

The Gems jumped out to a 28-25 1st quarter lead which ended up as a 50-50 half time score. After three quarters the Stars had a slim 75-74 lead. The Stars held the lead through most of the quarter and with under 30 seconds left, they led the Gems 91-89 and had the ball to add to the lead.

Denise Burdick tied up Gail Tatterson, the former Gems All-Star who jumped to New York. On the ensuing jump ball, Wanda Szeremeta grabbed the tip and flung it ahead to Donna Geils. With 19 seconds left Geils hit a cutting Meyers who was fouled on the play. Her two free throws tied the game, which eventually went to overtime.

In overtime with the Stars ahead 97-95, the Gems went on a 6-1 scoring spree in the final minute. This included a Donna Geils free throw on a New York technical of an unknown origin. The 101-98 overtime victory raised the Gems record to 11-11 and gave New York their first two-game losing streak.

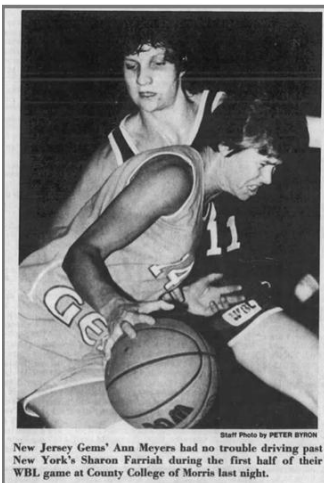


The 2,317 who were there were doubly satisfied. Not only was it an exciting Gems' victory, but

In honor of hitting 100 points, Gems' management invited back every last member of the audience to the team's next outing. This one's booked for Jadwin Gymnasium at 8:30 Sunday night. The Olympic torch - bound for Lake Placid - will be trotted into Jadwin around 7 to kick off a special ceremony at the tail end of the Princeton relays. When the mile relay is over, track fans will be quickly ushered out and Jadwin set up for basketball in a big rush.

"We think the torch will help us," said Gems' vice president Ernie Spinelli. He's hoping that torch fans will stick around for what he promises will be a hot basketball game.

The Gems were led by Ann Meyers 33 points and Donna Geils' 20 points. The Gems were also pleased with their "secret weapon" as Harris, who goes by either "Willodean," "Willow," or "Dean" came through with 12 points and nine rebounds in 23 minutes.



The Stars were led by Sharon Farrah's 22 points and Gail Marquis 16 points. Each team could claim the game didn't need to go to overtime if they had made their free throws. The Stars ended up 24 of 39 (61.5%), while the Gems were 19 of 28 (67.9%).

New Jersey Gems																	Team G	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	
Arturi, Lynn	20		1				0	0			0						2	
Browning, Pam	22	Name Not in Box Score																0
Burdick, Denise	35		1				4	4			0						6	
Comerie, Debra	34		5				4	6		10	10						14	
Geils, Donna	4		7				6	7			0						20	
Greer, Drema	7	Name Not in Box Score																0
Harris, Willodean	17	23	6				0	0		9	9						12	
Hastings, Martha	24	Name Not in Box Score																0
Meyers, Ann	14		14				5	9		10	10						33	
Simms, Donna	19		0				0	2			0						0	
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		7				0	0			0						14	
Van Ness, Joan	21	Name Not in Box Score																0
Adjustment		242																
Totals		265	41	0	0	0	19	28	0	29	29	0	0	0	0	0	101	
			FG%	#####			FT%	67.9%		Team Rebs								

New York Stars																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Craig, Denise	13		2				1	2			0						5
Farrah, Sharon	11		10				2	2			0						22
Gwyn, Althea	31		2				4	9			0						8
Marquis, Gail	6		5				6	8			0						16
Moore, Pearl	12		4				1	4			0						9
Sanborn, Kathy	32		1				0	0			0						2
Smith, Karen	24		0				0	2			0						0
Tatterson, Gail	33		4				4	5			0						12
Thomas, Janice	10		5				3	3			0						13
Young, Faye	22		1				2	3			0						4
Young, Kaye	20		3				1	1			0						7
Adjustment		265															
Totals		265	37	0	0	0	24	39	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	98
			FG%	#####			FT%	61.5%		Team Rebs							
Special Notes:																	
Technical: Unknown Origin																	

These last several days had many significant impacts on the new Jersey area. On the 24th, the Gems were recognized with a "Gems Day" as part of a "Salute to Women in Sports."

All of the changes made by Bob Milo, including uniforms, logo, coach, radio and tv contracts and the future move to the Meadowlands were acknowledged. The Gems' official mascot, Shag, the sheepdog of Bob and his wife Amy were also a part of the ceremony. The official presentation included captain Wanda Szeremeta and star Ann Meyers.

Milo also publicly announced that he thought County College of Morris (CCM) might be the place to play for the Gems. Milo always wanted to be in Morris County and especially to play in Mennen Arena (capacity 3,500), but they refused, so he had to look elsewhere. Right now, Milo was biding his time making sure that people all over New Jersey saw the Gems, so when they got to the Meadowlands (22,000 seats) they would come out. The front office understood that Elizabeth, New Jersey was not attractive to outsiders, so that was why they are experimenting with other places.

The team also traded their "lost" teammate, Peggy Vincent. Peggy played just one game with the Gems on January 12th against the Houston Angels where she scored three points. She was sent to St. Louis for a 1980 4th Rd draft pick.

As opposed to last year, the WBL set aside four days to have an All-Star break. It took place in Chicago on Wednesday January 30th in Alumni Hall. The Hustle front office were hoping for a sell-out, which would be 5,308. The announced attendance of 2,473 may have been affected by the 13 days in a row of single digit temperatures in Chicago. The 30th had a low of 5° and a high of 18°.

Yet that didn't affected the action on the court as the East, which was made up of two players from Chicago, Milwaukee, New Jersey, New Orleans, New York and St. Louis were coached by the Stars', Dean Meminger.

How players were selected from each team has been an unknown criteria. For some reason the Stars sent Althea Gwyn who was playing a limited amount of time for Dean Meminger, while players like Pearl Moore, Sharon Farrah, or Gail Marquis had far superior individual stats.

The West was made up of players from California, Dallas, Houston, Iowa, Minnesota, and San Francisco and was coached by Steve Kirk of Iowa.

The East squad took a 30-25 1st quarter lead, but the West grabbed a big lead of 52-40 with 4:47 left in the half. Then Meminger put Meyers and Chicago's Easterling together and the East put together 15 straight points to take a 55-52 lead. At the half the East led 57-56.

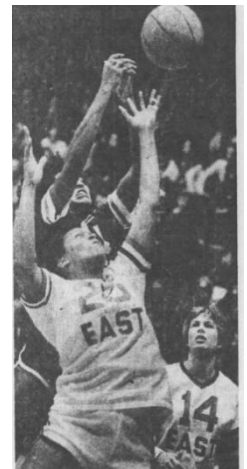


Photo by Phil Wallace
The Hustle's Dobra Wasidy-Rosow of the East team and the West's Anita Ortega of the San Francisco Pioneers tangle for a rebound during the Women's Professional Basketball League all-star game. Watching is Ann Meyers.



In the 3rd quarter the West took the lead with a 33-26 scoring spree which gave them an 89-83 lead going into the 4th quarter.

With 7:02 left in the game Milwaukee's Charlene McWhorter fouled out and the East fell behind by 12 points. The East used its quickness to get within 114-112 with :09 remaining.

As the ball went into the West's Alfredda Abernathy Meyers snuck around and went for the steal. As she took the ball, the whistle blew. Dean Meminger said it was a clean steal. The West was glad when Abernathy sank her free throw for the final score of 115-112 victory.

For the losing East squad Ann Meyers played 32 minutes (2nd most) and scored 15 points, grabbed seven rebounds and had six assists, along with five steals. Her 1.156 Efficiency Rating was the 2nd highest on the team. Yet it was her competitive drive that set the tone as she took this game seriously and took three charges during the game.

The highest honor went to the MVP of the game, Charlene McWhorter of Milwaukee, and formerly of the Washington Metros. Her 1.708 ER was based on 31 points and six rebounds in only 24 minutes. This was the 2nd year in a row the MVP award went to a player on the losing team.

As the Gems' other All-Star, Donna Geils, she played 14 minutes and scored nine points. Her 1 for 7 from the floor was offset by her 7 of 9 free throws.

For the winning West team, Coach Steve Kirk had four of his players play over 30 minutes. Anita Ortega played 41, Molly Bolin played 36, Alfredda Abernathy played 35, and Pat Mayo played 31. Bolin led the team with 25 points, while Abernathy had 22 points and 16 rebounds.

UCLA was well represented in this game as Ann Meyers had her great stats, Anita Ortega had 13 points and eight assists, and Heidi Nestor, who played 34 minutes, scored 17 points with 11 rebounds.

The other important trivia involves the coach of the Stars, who were 17-4 as of the All-Star break. Because the Stars had lost their last two games before the break and Meminger was the losing coach in this game, the future Coach of the Year actually had a personal three-game losing streak, as did Janice Thomas and Althea Gwyn.

Eastern Division All-Stars

Coach: Dean Meminger New York Stars 17 - 4

Team	No.	Name	Pos.	Min	2 FGM	2FGA	FTM	FTA	OF RB	DF RB	TOT RB	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat	
Chicago Hustle	15	Easterling, Rita	G	24	1	3	1	2	0	3	3	6	3	1	6	3	0.542	2nd yr 0 - 2	
Chicago Hustle	25	Waddy-Rossow, Debra	F	21	3	9	1	2	2	3	5	1	4	0	2	7	0.571	2nd yr 0 - 2	
Milwaukee Does	24	McWhorter, Charlene	F	24	12	17	7	8	2	4	6	1	6	3	1	3	31	1.708	fouled out 7:02 4th qtr
Milwaukee Does	28	Nestor, Heidi	C	34	7	15	3	5	4	7	11	0	2	1	0	17	0.853		
New Jersey Gems	14	Meyers, Ann	F	32	7	15	1	2	2	5	7	6	5	5	2	1	15	1.156	
New Jersey Gems	21	Geils, Donna	G	14	1	7	7	9	1	0	1	2	1	1	4	9	0.786		
New Orleans Pride	34	Smallwood, Sandra	G	9	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	3	0	1	0	0.000		
New Orleans Pride	32	Forest, Augusta	F	11	0	3	5	6	2	0	2	0	1	0	0	5	0.636		
New York Stars	10	Thomas, Janice	G	29	3	15	2	2	4	1	5	3	3	1	3	8	0.586	2nd yr 1 - 1	
New York Stars	31	Gwyn, Althea	C	14	1	3	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	3	2	0.071	2nd yr 1 - 1	
St. Louis Streak	7	Silcott, Liz	G	14	4	8	3	4	0	0	0	2	3	1	1	11	1.071		
St. Louis Streak	35	Mitchell, Adrian	F	14	0	0	4	4	1	2	3	0	0	1	2	4	0.429		
Adjustment																			
					240	39	96	34	44	19	27	46	21	31	14	25	4	112	0.788
							40.6%		77.3%										

Western Division All-Stars

Coach: Steve Kirk Iowa Cornets 15 - 5

Team	No.	Name	Pos.	Min	2 FGM	2FGA	FTM	FTA	OF RB	DF RB	TOT RB	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat	
California Dreams	7	Cook, Jane Ellen	G	8	2	3	4	5	0	0	0	4	0	0	2	8	1.750		
California Dreams	15	Dunkle, Nancy	C	10	1	2	0	0	1	1	2	0	3	0	0	2	0.400		
Dallas Diamonds	25	Shoemaker, Cathy	F	12	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	0.083		
Dallas Diamonds	34	Abernathy, Alfreda	C	35	8	16	6	9	6	10	16	2	3	3	4	22	1.171		
Houston Angels	10	Mayo, Paula	F	13	3	7	4	4	1	2	3	1	1	2	1	10	1.231	2nd yr 2 - 0	
Houston Angels	24	Candler, Belinda	F	5	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	2	0.200	2nd yr 2 - 0	
Iowa Cornets	30	Bolin, Molly	G	36	11	28	3	6	2	2	4	3	4	0	5	25	0.833	2nd yr 1 - 1	
Iowa Cornets	50	Drawing, Doris	C	14	1	4	2	2	1	3	4	0	4	0	2	1	4	0.429	2nd yr 1 - 1
Minnesota Fillies	53	Montgomery, Pat	C	9	4	5	0	0	1	2	3	0	0	0	1	8	1.111		
Minnesota Fillies	42	Kocurek, Marie	F	26	3	7	6	8	5	6	11	0	6	1	4	12	0.769	2nd yr 1 - 1	
San Francisco Pioneers	11	Ortega, Anita	G	41	3	8	7	10	2	3	5	8	2	4	9	13	0.707		
San Francisco Pioneers	13	Mayo, Pat	F	31	3	5	3	6	0	5	5	2	4	2	4	9	0.516		
Adjustments																			
					240	40	88	35	50	19	34	53	21	31	12	34	1	115	0.783
							45.5%		70.0%										

Let's look at the standings as of January 31, 1980.

EAST

New York	17	4	.810	---
St. Louis	12	8	.600	2.5
New Jersey	11	11	.500	4.5
New Orleans	12	10	.545	5.5
Philadelphia	2	8	.200	Disbanded
Washington	3	7	.300	Disbanded

MIDWEST

Iowa	15	5	.750	---
Minnesota	14	6	.700	1.0
Chicago	10	13	.435	6.5
Milwaukee	5	17	.294	11.0

WEST

San Fran.	14	9	.609	---
Houston	8	9	.471	3.0
California	6	13	.316	6.0
Dallas	6	15	.286	7.0

As the 2nd half of the season resumed it was now time to start jockeying for playoff positions. The playoffs would have six teams participating. The three divisions winners were guaranteed a spot. Earlier on, before teams disbanded and there was a balanced schedule the next three teams with the best records would have been in. But with the re-scheduling, the change to the playoff format switched to the top two teams in each division.

At the break the playoffs looked like this: New York & Iowa earned byes. San Francisco and Houston qualified, along with St. Louis and Minnesota. Minnesota would play Houston and St. Louis would play San Francisco. Then New York would play Houston or St. Louis, while Iowa took on Minnesota or San Francisco.

In order to kick off the rest of the season the Gems scheduled a press conference in Princeton to promote their next game. Yet the owner, the coach, nor the star player were able to attend, because of illnesses or prior commitments. The event was pleased to have the only original New Jersey Gem remaining, Wanda Szeremeta.



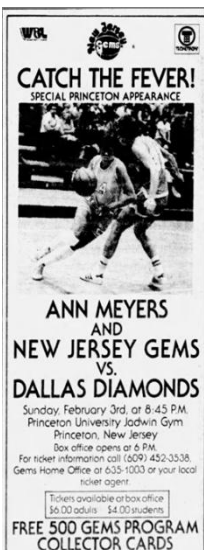
Despite all the front office changes, coaching changes, and player changes one New Jersey favorite came through as she always had. Whether she was diving after loose balls or complementing her teammates, Wanda was the backbone of the team. Even though she was an All-Star last year with an 18.6 scoring average and she was playing better this year, she understood when Ann Meyers and Donna Geils were chosen for this year's game.

"I'm a better player than last year. But face it, half the players in the league last year didn't make teams this season even with expansion, and next year half of this year's players won't make it. The pool of good players grows all the time."

Wanda had had the misfortune of playing in the shadow of Carol Blazejowski at Montclair State, and now with Ann Meyers. Yet she realized the future for the WBL looked promising, especially with all the future stars coming into the league.

Wanda's life could be summarized by:

"This is my life. Basketball. I love it," the missionary says. "There isn't anything in the world I'd rather do. I can worry later about teaching or anything else. This is me, now, 12 months a year, full time. I'm still thrilled by the opportunity."



As you may remember the Gems invited CCM fans to attend their next home game. Of which 221 did. Therefore, the Sunday February 3rd, game against the (6-16) Dallas Diamonds drew a crowd of 2,836 to the Jadwin Gym on the campus of Princeton University. The 6,854 seat arena was much larger than the County College of Morris, but still a respectable size for an up-and-coming team. While the new location was exciting, it caused Ann Meyers to be late for the game. It seems she got lost trying to get to Princeton. The major cause for concern was Ann was scheduled for a TV interview at 5:00 and she didn't arrive until 8:20 for an 8:45 game.

The (11-11) Gems jumped out to a 21-17 1st quarter lead, even though Meyers sat out the first 10+ minutes of the game. The Gems had a slight 30-28 lead when they went on a 12-0 run to take their largest lead at 42-28. By the half the score was 44-34. The Gems made sure the Diamonds didn't mount a comeback as the lead increased to 72-57 after three quarters. In the end the Gems won 97-85 to get their heads above the .500 mark.

The new girl on the block, Willodean Harris, went head-to-head with All-Star Alfreda Abernathy and came away with 30 points and 11 rebounds. This almost doubled Abernathy's 16 points and six rebounds. Harris' stats were all accomplished in just 25 minutes, which gave her an E.R. of 1.720. Donna Geils came through with 19 points and five assists. While Ann Meyers shot a poor 4 of 12 her eight assists, probably to Harris, still allowed her to score 12 points.

The (6-17) Diamonds were led by Abernathy's 16 and Jeriann John's 15. Christy Earnhardt's 13 and Carolyn Bush-Roddy's 13 rebounds were also highlights for the team.

New Jersey Gems																	Team Game #	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Arturi, Lynn	20	6	1	2			1	2	0	2	2	0	0	1	1	0	3	0.833
Browning, Pam	22	34	5	8			0	0	1	6	7	3	2	3	4	4	10	0.647
Burdick, Denise	35	25	1	5			1	3	1	4	5	5	1	1	2	0	3	0.680
Comerie, Debra	34	23	3	6			0	0	1	3	4	1	2	0	1	2	6	0.478
Geils, Donna	4	37	7	13			5	7	0	4	4	5	4	3	1	0	19	0.946
Greer, Drema	7	5	0	3			0	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	1	0	0	0.400
Harris, Willodean	5	25	12	17			6	9	2	9	11	1	2	1	1	1	30	1.720
Hastings, Martha	24	5	0	0			2	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	2	0.200
Meyers, Ann	14	33	4	12			4	4	2	3	5	8	3	3	7	0	12	0.879
Simms, Donna	19	13	1	3			0	1	0	4	4	0	3	0	1	0	2	0.385
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	34	5	14			0	0	2	5	7	2	4	4	4	1	10	0.618
Totals		240	39	83	0	0	19	30	9	40	49	26	24	18	25	8	97	0.796
			FG%	47.0%			FT%	63.3%		Team Rebs	4							

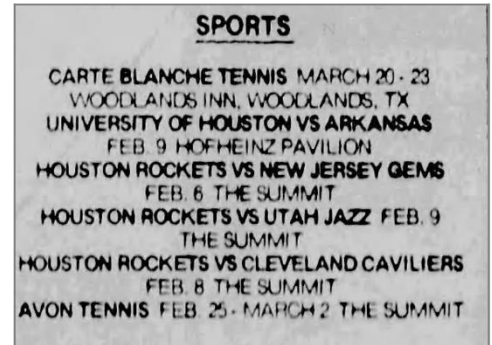
Dallas Diamonds																	Team Game #	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Abernathy, Alfreda	34	27	5	14			6	8	4	2	6	0	4	1	2	0	16	0.778
Baker, Janice	12	26	3	7			0	2	1	0	1	3	3	1	3	0	6	0.423
Bruton, Cindy	20	23	2	3			0	2	0	3	3	0	3	4	1	0	4	0.435
Bush-Roddy, Carolyn	40	32	3	12			4	8	5	8	13	1	2	3	3	1	10	0.781
Cooper, Sheena	11	7	1	1			0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0.286
Earnhardt, Christy	42	33	6	14			1	2	0	5	5	6	2	5	4	1	13	0.939
French, Joanie	30	26	2	11			1	2	0	1	1	2	1	1	1	0	5	0.385
John, Jeriann	44	24	6	14			3	6	4	3	7	1	0	2	2	0	15	1.000
Shoemaker, Cathy	24	24	3	11			2	2	0	2	2	2	2	1	3	1	8	0.500
Stewart, Debbie	33	18	2	6			2	2	2	2	4	0	2	1	4	1	6	0.389
Totals		240	33	93	0	0	19	34	16	26	42	15	21	19	23	4	85	0.638
			FG%	35.5%			FT%	55.9%		Team Rebs	5							

Either before or after the game the Gems waived Joan Van Ness.

Joan was a great example of the sadness of the information related the WBL. If someone owned a 1980-1981 WBL media guide, the team stats had the list of players. But then there is the No-Man's Land called NWT. This means "Not-With-Team." A NWT could have 1 name or lots more. For the 1979-80 New Jersey Gems eight names were NWT (Sheila Collins, Dale Dalrymple, Martha Hastings, Sue Martin, Candy Rangler, Jennifer Savio, Joan Van Ness, and Peggy Vincent.)

It is for the sake of these type of players that I dig to try and recreate their WBL existence. For Joan Van Ness she played in 20 games where she scored at least 101 points for a 5.0 average. All of her other stats were too incomplete to present here.

With New Jersey's recent success the Houston Chronicle were positive the Gems were going to jump leagues and play in the NBA. Therefore, before the Gems' next game on February 9th, they were scheduled to play the Houston Rockets on February 6th at The Summit. The Rockets' real opponent, the New Jersey Nets, were glad to get the night off.



It was a busy week of publicity before the Gems' next home game. With a 12-11 record the Morristown Daily Record felt that the playoffs were within reach. With Ann Meyers in the top 10 in five of six categories, the Gems had *the* person that could lead them there. Ann's 4.7 steals per game made her 1st, she was 5th in scoring at 23.3, 7th in assists, 7th in free throw percentage, and 9th in rebounding.

A big article in the Bernardsville News called *The Uphill Selling of Women's Basketball* gave two of the following conclusions:

The County College of Morris gymnasium was sold out – 2,317 fans. It was a very professionally run operation. There was an organ that played "Jesus Christ Superstar" every time Anne Meyers, a four time All-American from UCLA, hit a jumper, there was all the paraphernalia, the T-shirts and buttons that accompany such events, and there were PR men buttering up the press and telling them how great the Gems were. Ohh, and by the way, there was a women's basketball game in which the New Jersey Gems knocked off the league leading New York Stars.

The accolades toward Ann Meyers talent, ability, and court sense made people realize the best player in the WBL was in New Jersey. Yet,

with the exception of the appreciation of the play of Meyers, the crowd seemed bored by it all. One would expect that in a game which was close all the way and eventually went into overtime, the fans would be screaming throughout - but such was not the case. At times it was so quiet that from the sidelines the loudest noise was the bounce of the ball. More enthusiasm was shown by the support personnel of the Gems than by the fans; Which is not a good sign.

There was more publicity coming out of the Allentown Morning Call. A large article on Denise Burdick, who answers to the nickname "The Bird" is enjoying her second season with the Gems. As the 2nd Gems player drafted in 1978 she stayed with her construction job until she was sure the league would stick around. She played the last 20 games last season averaging 17 points and 10 rebounds a game. (Actually 11.9 and 7.4). Her \$10,000 a year salary was one of the higher ones on the team, but she realized that there were no guarantees in the pros. A former roommate Joan Van Ness was released by the team, which left just Pam Browning and Denise trying to afford a Northern Philadelphia apartment.

Denise enjoyed the physical play of the league

"I love it," admits the 6-1 power forward without hesitation. "The pros are not like high school or college," she explains. "It's more physical and they let you play tough."

Burdick has the scars to prove just how physical it is. She sustained a concussion recently when elbowed while driving the lane for a shot against Minnesota. A cut over the eye required 5 stitches and she was out of action for a week.

Bob Milo's advertising machine was working well as the Gems would have mini yearbooks available to the fans. 10 of these yearbooks would be autographed which would earn the purchasers various prizes, such as free season tickets, autographed basketballs, mugs, and other souvenirs.



The team had about a week off before their next contest against the floundering (10-14) Chicago Hustle. On Saturday February 9th the Gems found themselves back in Elizabeth, NJ at the Dunn Sports Complex. They were hoping that the last two crowds of 2,317 and 2,836 would show up at the Sports Complex.

A crowd of 1,210 came out to see the two teams fight to a 29-29 1st quarter tie. The Gems then put it together and made a run of 29-15 to take a 58-44 half time lead. The Hustle cut off five of those points to go into the 4th quarter trailing 80-71. The Gems put the hammer down with a 31-20 4th quarter and a 111-91 victory.

While it was a big victory to get the team to 13-11, it involved a big loss. With 2:29 left in the game Debbie Comerie was upended on a drive to the basket and fell on her wrist and tailbone. The wrist was fractured in four places. The timing of the injury was ironic because after the game against Dallas Comerie was found sulking about her lack of playing time. With Willodean Harris making a huge splash Comerie saw her starting position going down the drain.

This would be her last game of the season. Debbie was a workhorse, averaging 34.5 minutes per game, shooting 51% from the field, grabbing 10.3 rebounds and scoring 12.6 per game. The signing of Willodean Harris suddenly loomed large as a wise management decision.

Donna Geils led the way with 22 points and seven assists, while Ann Meyers had 20 points, eight rebounds, six assists, and six steals. Harris had another good shooting game of 9 of 13 and 20 points, which was almost as good as her last game where she shot 12 of 17. Therefore, she shot 21 of 30 (70%) over the last two games.

As a team the Gems shot 56.3% from the field (45-80), while holding the Hustle to 42.2% (38-90). The Hustle had five players in double figures with Liz Galloway's 25 points, nine rebounds, and six assists leading the team in all three categories. Rita Easterling was next high scorer with 16 points on 8 of 23 from the field. Rita took no free throws during this contest.

Curiosity made me wonder had that ever happened. In 1978-79, Rita had a 2-2 in Iowa, and a 1-1 in Milwaukee. The free throw difference when Chicago played Iowa was amazing. In three games in Chicago, she was 38-56, including a 22-33 game. In three games in Iowa, she was 13-20. Then the playoffs, where Rita shot 9-12 in Chicago, 0-0 in Iowa, and 5 of 6 also in Iowa. So, it had happened before when Rita took 0 free throws in a game.

New Jersey Gems																		Team Game #
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Arturi, Lynn	20	11	1	1			0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	2	0.364
Browning, Pam	22	33	2	4			2	2	0	10	10	7	1	1	2	1	6	0.879
Burdick, Denise	35	10	1	3			3	5	0	2	2	0	0	0	2	0	5	0.500
Comerie, Debra	34	24	5	11			6	7	4	3	7	2	1	1	3	0	16	1.042
Geils, Donna	4	43	9	20			4	4	1	2	3	7	3	3	3	0	22	0.907
Greer, Drema	7	4	0	0			1	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0.000
Harris, Willodean	5	24	9	13			0	0	2	6	8	1	4	1	3	1	18	1.083
Hastings, Martha	24	6	1	1			0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	0.833
Meyers, Ann	14	34	9	13			2	3	3	5	8	6	5	6	5	0	20	1.206
Simms, Donna	17	15	2	4			1	3	1	2	3	2	4	0	1	0	5	0.733
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	36	6	10			2	3	2	1	3	2	1	0	7	0	14	0.389
Totals	240	45	80	0	0	21	30	13	33	46	29	21	12	28	2	111	0.829	
			FG%	56.3%			FT%	70.0%	Team Rebs	2								

Chicago Hustle																		Team Game #
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Caldwell, Breena	30	17	3	7			0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	6	0.235
Digitale, Sue	21	32	3	9			4	6	1	1	2	2	3	0	7	0	10	0.281
Easterling, Rita	15	43	8	23	0	1	0	0	1	3	4	6	5	1	5	0	16	0.651
Fincher, Janie	10	31	4	10			1	2	1	5	6	3	4	1	2	0	9	0.645
Galloway, Liz	31	43	10	24			5	7	3	6	9	6	2	2	2	0	25	1.070
Rajcula, Jody	24	33	6	10			1	2	3	3	6	1	3	0	1	0	13	0.606
Sharps, Denise	20	2	0	1			0	3	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0.000
Swindell, Retha	44	34	4	6			4	8	3	4	7	1	4	3	5	1	12	0.559
Tomich, Vonnie	11	5	0	0			0	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	0	0.000
Totals	240	38	90	0	1	15	30	12	22	34	20	26	7	26	1	91	0.608	
			FG%	42.2%			FT%	50.0%	Team Rebs	3								
Special Notes:																		
Technical: Coach Doug Bruno 4th Qtr																		

The (13-11) Gems were riding a seven-game home winning streak and their first four-game winning streak in the team's history as they geared up to host the (19-6) New York Stars. So, while the Gems knew they weren't going to catch the Stars, they were now just one game behind the 2nd place 14-10 St. Louis Streak for the last playoff spot in the East.

The game on Monday was the 2nd game in a row back in the Dunn Sports Complex. Despite another large well-placed ad in the Newark Star Ledger the game only attracted 1,040. The weather for February 11th wasn't an excuse as it was in the 30's all day with no snow. The detriment was Monday's are a historically poor game day.

The Stars who were 2-4 since their historic 17-2 start took a 28-26 1st quarter lead. The Gems came back to take a 50-46 half time lead, despite turning the ball over 17 times. The Stars exploited the Gems weakness as they continued to apply pressure all over the floor. Their 29-18 3rd quarter gave the Stars a 75-68 as the turnovers kept piling up for the Gems.

Even though the Gems committed 19 turnovers in the 2nd half, in the last few minutes the Gems got within 98-94 after a Meyers' steal and layup. The Stars then coughed up the ball, but a 10-footer by Wanda Szeremeta missed. It completed a 0-9 evening for Wanda, as the Stars then scored the next five points. The final score was 103-96 for the 20-6 Stars.

The Gems' Ann Meyers had her second verifiable Triple-Double. With limited stats like assists, rebounds, and steals being available there may have been other games where she had double digits in a category. Her 30 points were on 13 of 20 from the floor, 11 rebounds, and 11 assists. Her backcourt mate, Donna Geils had 24, while newbie-Gem Willodean Harris had 20 points and 14 rebounds.

The Stars' back court of Sharon Farrah and Pearl Moore had 24 and 22 points respectively.

New Jersey Gems																	Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Arturi, Lynn	20		0				0	0			0						0
Browning, Pam	22		4				1	2			0						9
Burdick, Denise	35		1				0	0			0						2
Geils, Donna	4		11	20			2	3			0						24
Greer, Drema	7	Name Not in Box Score															
Harris, Willodean	5		8				4	10		14	14						20
Hastings, Martha	24		1				0	0			0						2
Meyers, Ann	14		13	20			4	6		11	11	11		4			30
Simms, Donna	19		4				0	0			0						8
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		0	9			0	0			0						0
Adjustment		240					1	2							36		1
Totals		240	42	49	0	0	12	23	0	25	25	11	0	4	36	0	96
			FG%	#####			FT%	52.2%	Team Rebs								17 1st half, 19 2nd half

New York Stars																	Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Bender, Evelyn	35	Name Not in Box Score															
Craig, Denise	13		6				1	3			0						13
Farrah, Sharon	11		10				4	6			0						24
Gwyn, Althea	31		2				0	0			0						4
Marquis, Gail	6		5				0	0			0						10
Moore, Pearl	12		7				8	13			0						22
Sanborn, Kathy	32		0				0	0			0						0
Smith, Karen	24		2				2	6			0						6
Tatterson, Gail	33		5				6	8			0						16
Thomas, Janice	10		4				0	2			0						8
Young, Faye	22		0				0	0			0						0
Young, Kaye	20		0				0	0			0						0
Adjustment		240															
Totals		240	41	0	0	0	21	38	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	103
			FG%	#####			FT%	55.3%	Team Rebs								



The best way to attract new fans was to get the games on tv. It didn't matter that the bottom left corner hid the fact that this game had already been played. Either way the Gems & Stars could be seen by hopefully more than 1,040 people.

In news about a former New Jersey Gem, Sue Martin, she was suing the WBL because the league conspired to violate antitrust laws by refusing to negotiate with her as a free agent. In 1978-79 Sue, who earned \$8,500, averaged 24 minutes a game, scored 11.9 points and grabbed 5 rebounds became a free agent in July. On October 30th she signed with the Minnesota Fillies, but was later waived on November 20th. She then

signed with the Gems again around December 1st. She appeared in two games with New Jersey scoring 0 points before she was waived again on December 12th.

Just like the last game against the Stars, the next game for the Gems was not on the original schedule. In fact, the Gems were originally scheduled to play on the 9th and then Feb. 17th. But for the league to provide enough games for every team extra games were added. With the close proximity of the Gems and Stars, they would play each other again on Friday February 15th in the Felt Forum of Madison Square Garden. This would be their third meeting 20 days.

A crowd of 1,292 came out to watch a spectacular double overtime game. This meant that two of their four meetings went to overtime.

Here is a summary of the game from all the newspapers in the New York and New Jersey area:

1st quarter – score unknown

2nd quarter - score unknown. Half time score unknown.

3rd quarter – Janice Thomas scores 18 of the Stars 23 points – otherwise unknown.

4th quarter – score unknown. Final score 107-107. 2 free throws by Ann Meyers with 9 seconds left tied the score.

1st Overtime – 117-117. Janice Thomas missed a shot at the buzzer that could have won the game.

2nd Overtime – Stars 140 Gems 129.

What do we know: Eight players fouled out and 93 fouls were called.

For the Gems – Ann Meyers had 30 points including 16 of 16 from the free throw line. Willodean Harris and Denise Burdick each scored 25 points, while Burdick pulled down 11 rebounds. 49 points are unknown.

For the Stars Janice Thomas had 33 points, 11 steals, and five assists. Sharon Farrah had 22 points and 12 rebounds. 85 points are unknown.

New Jersey Gems																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Arturi, Lynn	20										0						0
Browning, Pam	22										0						0
Burdick, Denise	35									11	11						25
Geils, Donna	4										0						0
Greer, Drema	7										0						0
Harris, Willodean	5										0						25
Hastings, Martha	24										0						0
Meyers, Ann	14		7				16	16			0						30
Simms, Donna	19										0						0
Szeremeta, Wanda	23										0						0
Adjustment		290															49
Totals		290	7	0	0	0	16	16	0	11	11	0	0	0	0	0	129
			FG%	#####			FT%	100.0%		Team Rebs			8 Players Fouled Out & 93 Fouls Callec				

New York Stars																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Craig, Denise	13										0						0
Farrah, Sharon	11									12	12						22
Gwyn, Althea	31										0						0
Marquis, Gail	6										0						0
Moore, Pearl	12										0						0
Sanborn, Kathy	32										0						0
Smith, Karen	24										0						0
Tatterson, Gail	33										0						0
Thomas, Janice	10										0	5		11			33
Young, Faye	22										0						0
Young, Kaye	20										0						0
Adjustment		290															85
Totals		290	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	12	5	0	11	0	0	140
			FG%	#####			FT%	#DIV/0!		Team Rebs			8 Players Fouled Out & 93 Fouls Callec				

The Gems record fell back to 13-13, while the Stars improved to 21-6.

With only 10 games remaining in the season and the Gems still in last place but within striking distance of 2nd place they finalized a big trade with the New York Stars. The Gems acquired the famous Dannon Twins, Faye and Kaye Young. The Young twins brought the WBL tremendous publicity when they were signed to advertise Dannon Yogart.

In 1979 Kaye was named an All-Star and each player had a significant impact on the team making the playoffs. Yet each of their stats were declining under Coach Dean Meminger. Kaye had gone from 12.4 points and 4.8 rebounds in 33.5 minutes down to 5.6 points and 2.6 rebounds in 16 minutes per game. Faye's stats went from 7.9 points and 4.6 rebounds in 23.6 minutes to 4.1 points and 2.3 rebounds in 14 minutes.

The Newark Star Ledger said the twins became free agents at 12:01 Saturday (16th) morning because of a breach of contract (failure to make salary payments and other conflicts). Somehow the Gems gave up a 3rd round and a 5th round pick in the 1980 draft for the two players. So, was it a trade or did the league require compensation for the loss?

On the same day the Gems also had to relinquish a 2nd round draft pick for signing Donna Geils. The "future considerations" took into account that Donna made the All-Star team, so the Stars now had the Gems 2nd, 3rd, and 5th round picks in the 1980 draft.

The Gems updated their newspaper ad as they prepared to play the (9-15) California Dreams at CCM. The Dreams were being led by their 3rd different coach this year. When they chose to fire Artie Blouin they selected one of their players, Nancy Dunkel, to act as player/coach. Both she and Mary Scharff had coaching experience, and the team was 3-2 under their guidance.



The crowd on this Sunday evening wasn't a sell-out but 2,010 was close to 90% of the gym's capacity. The Gems took a slim 24-23 1st quarter lead, which they expanded to 49-43 by the half. The Gems stayed in control in the 2nd half and came away with a 95-79 victory to raise their record to 14-13.

The Gems were led by Wanda Szeremeta, who scored 24 points while coming off the bench. Ann Meyers came through with 23 points and 13 rebounds and an unknown number of assists. But over the last two games Ann had 15 assists.

For the Dreams Stacy Rhoades had 28 points and 18 rebounds, while former Philadelphia Fox star Linda Matthews had 17 points before she fouled out.

The win put the Gems within 1.5 games of the 15-11 St. Louis Streak.

New Jersey Gems																		Team G		
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts			
Arturi, Lynn	20	Name not in Newspaper																		
Browning, Pam	22																0			16
Burdick, Denise	35																0			11
Geils, Donna	4																0			11
Greer, Drema	7	Name not in Newspaper																		
Harris, Willodean	5																0			8
Hastings, Martha	24																0			2
Meyers, Ann	14																13	13	15(NY+CA)	23
Simms, Donna	19	Name not in Newspaper																		
Szeremeta, Wanda	23																0			24
Young, Faye																				
Young, Kaye	20																			
Adjustment		240											18							
Totals		240	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	13	0	18	0	0	0	95		
			FG%	#####			FT%	#DIV/0!	Team Rebs											

California Dreams																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Bucklew, Patti	40										0						4
Cook, Jane Ellen	7										0						2
Dunkle, Nancy	15										0						2
Matthews, Linda	50										0	6					17
McGraw, Muffet	10										0						2
McKenzie, Michelle	20										0						6
Rhoades, Stacy	17		11	17							18						28
Scharff, Mary	11										0						6
Scott, Angela	23										0						11
Shirley, Pam	12										0						1
Uhl, Joan	22	Name not in Newspaper															
Adjustment		240											19				
Totals		240	11	17	0	0	0	0	0	18	18	0	25	0	0	0	79
			FG%	#####			FT%	#DIV/0!	Team Rebs								

It was a good week for the state of New Jersey as Ann Meyers and Pat Colasurdo of the Pioneers were named Co-WBL Players of the Week. Of course, Pat was a New Jersey product out of Montclair State and Ann was making the Gems respectable again.

There were more articles about the Gems wanting to move to Morris County which was the home of CCM. But their desire would be to play in the Mennen Arena which could seat 3,500. The only problem was that Mennen was set up as a hockey arena and making it functional for basketball may not be possible. If it were possible the Gems would have to provide the floor, the baskets, and the shot clocks.

The arena was specifically used for recreational and competitive purposes and the 18 Gems' dates would be lost revenue from the local people. Bob Milo felt that extra revenue would be generated through concessions, parking, and money spent by the visiting teams.

And speaking of moving the Gems were considering playing in Europe over the summer. They signed an agreement to play the Belgian National team in Atlantic City on May 3rd. The Belgians then wanted the Gems to come to Europe to play there, as well as West Germany, Italy, Sweden, and Yugoslavia. Atlantic City were courting the Gems to move their permanently, but Milo didn't want to leave northern New Jersey.

Then on February 21st the Gems traded Martha Hastings to the St. Louis Streak for a 7th round pick in the 1981 draft. (At least two newspapers included a 5th round 1980 pick in the deal – which was unlikely for a player with limited numbers.) While Martha was with the Gems, she was one of the players lost in the Not With Team category. It seems she appeared in 17 games and played at least 88 minutes scoring 32 points for a 1.9 average.

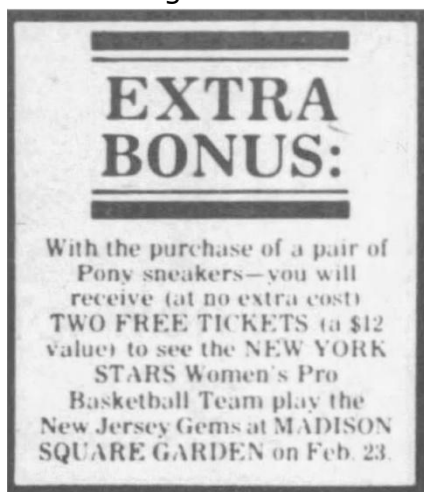


On February 22nd New Jersey's favorite female basketball star, Carol Blazejowski, appeared back in the news, because of the Olympic boycott that President Jimmy Carter made official. After being one of the last players cut for the 1976 Olympic team the Blaze avoided the WBL to be sure she was on the 1980 team.

"The first time I heard about a possible boycott, my reaction was just disbelief," Blazejowski said from her Fairview home. "I just shrugged it off and said there's no way. I'm opposed to a boycott. Things (the Afghanistan crisis) can be taken care of in other ways."

The Gems actually owned the rights to two potential Olympians. Tara Heiss and Blazejowski would both be reporting to Colorado Springs for the Olympic try-outs. Each was expected to make the team, and it was never the trip to Moscow that they were looking forward to. Both said the Olympics weren't just another world championship event. "It's the big one. How many times do you get to compete in the Olympics?" Blazejowski commented. They thought the opportunity to represent your country was a great honor.

Just as the Gems tried to get some momentum they were scheduled against the best team in the league, the New York Stars, again. For the fourth time in less than a month, and the third time in 12 days, the Gems and Stars met. This was not a rescheduled game but an originally scheduled game at Madison Square Garden.



This game was part of a women's doubleheader with Montclair State facing Queens College at 1:00 pm. Montclair's Jill Jeffrey was just four points shy of the impressive 1,000-point level. While others had achieved that number, none of them were five feet tall. Jill would be the smallest collegiate player to achieve that goal.

The second game between the Gems and Stars would start at 3:30. The (14-13) Gems and the (22-7) Stars must have been delirious when 8,293 fans attended this game.

There was no evidence that this was the first game of a doubleheader with the Knicks. Yet on this day in the evening the Knicks did play the Cleveland Cavaliers in front of a mere 9,977.

Either way this was the 2nd largest WBL crowd in the league's history. The Stars were also a part of the largest crowd in WBL history as 8,452 fans watched them beat the New Orleans Pride in the Super Dome.

As is normal with New York – New Jersey games the newspaper accounts were pathetic. The Stars scored 28 in the 1st quarter and 38 in the 2nd, while the Gems scored 45 by half time. The Stars had a safe 66-45 lead. Through the next two quarters the Stars scored 56 and the Gems scored 53 for a 122-98 Stars victory.

Ex-NY Star Donna Geils had 21, while Denise Burdick added 19. The Stars limited Ann Meyers to just 11 shots and 10 points for the whole game. Willodean Harris did pull down 13 rebounds for NJ.

The (23-7) Stars had beaten the Gems for the 4th time in five games as ex-Olympian Gail Marquis led the way with 28 points. Denise Craig was the next high scorer with 23, while Pearl Moore came through with 22.

New Jersey Gems																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Arturi, Lynn	20		0	0			0	0			0						0
Browning, Pam	22		1	2			3	5			0						5
Burdick, Denise	35		7	11			5	6			0						19
Geils, Donna	4		5	14			11	14			0						21
Greer, Drema	7		1	2			0	0			0						2
Harris, Willodean	5		4	9			0	0		13	13						8
Meyers, Ann	14		3	11			4	6			0						10
Simms, Donna	19		1	2			0	0			0						2
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		5	10			4	4			0						14
Young, Faye			2	6			4	4			0						8
Young, Kaye			3	7			3	4			0						9
Adjustment		240															
Totals		240	32	74	0	0	34	43	0	13	13	0	0	0	0	0	98
			FG%	43.2%			FT%	79.1%		Team Rebs							

New York Stars																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Bender, Evelyn	35		3	6			0	0			0						6
Craig, Denise	13		9	14			5	5			0						23
Farrah, Sharon	11		5	14			0	4			0						10
Gwyn, Althea	31		3	8			1	3			0						7
Marquis, Gail	6		12	17			4	9			0						28
Moore, Pearl	12		6	21			10	12			0						22
Sanborn, Kathy	32		1	1			2	2			0						4
Smith, Karen	24		2	5			2	2			0						6
Tatterson, Gail	33		0	1			0	0			0						0
Thomas, Janice	10		6	14			4	4			0						16
Adjustment		240															
Totals		240	47	101	0	0	28	41	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	122
			FG%	46.5%			FT%	68.3%		Team Rebs							

The Gems didn't have time to worry about this loss as they were going to be hosts to the (18-11) Iowa Cornets the next day. The Cornets were trailing the Minnesota Fillies by one game in the Midwest Division. The Cornets were also showcasing the league's 2nd leading scorer, Molly Bolin, who came into the game with a 32.31 average. Molly trailed the former St. Louis Streak star, Liz Silcott, on February 23rd by just .09, (32.40), but Liz's dominant role was fading fast after being traded to the San Francisco Pioneers.

The Cornets trip to New Jersey came after two home games. So what? Remember Iowa had been away from their home court for 35 days, from 1/13 to 2/17. So in their 2nd home game they beat the Stars on Thursday February 21st, 131-125, with Bolin scoring 41 points.

The next day, Feb. 22nd, Iowa travelled to Chicago where they lost an overtime game, 121-119. So here they were back on the road again in New Jersey.

The Gems, for the second game in a row, had their newest teammates participating. The twins, Faye and Kaye Young, participated in the previous New York game. In a gracious classy move, the Gems' Lynn Arturi gave up her #20 uniform to Kaye Young for the rest of the season. Lynn's new number was 17.

The Sunday February 24th game attracted 1,820 to the Dunn Sports Complex, which was their 2nd highest for the year, only topped by the 2,754 who came out for the 1st game of the year.

Even though the Cornets were 18-11, two of those losses were against the Gems in the only two games they had played. The Gems won 108-100 back in mid-December, and again 111-95 in mid-January.

So, when Iowa jumped out to a seven point, 29-22 lead it didn't scare the Gems at all. The Gems found the right combination in the 2nd quarter as they poured in 39 to the Cornets 21. Their 61-50 half time lead was what the Gems needed as Iowa outscored them 33-24 in the 3rd quarter. Therefore, the Gems had only a slim 85-83 lead going into the 4th quarter. The Gems came through with a 112-103 victory to raise their record to 15-14, and 3-0 against a future playoff team.

The Gems were led by 28 points from Willodean Harris, who had been a member of the Cornets for one game on December 30th. Ann Meyers righted herself after her poor performance against the Stars as she had 22 points, 17 rebounds, eight assists, and five steals, before she picked up six fouls. Denise "The Bird" Burdick also came through with 22 points on 9 of 12 from the floor.

For the (18-12) Cornets Charlotte Lewis came through with 20 points, while Pat Hodgson added 18 before she fouled out. Molly Bolin was held to six baskets on an unknown number of shots and 5 of 7 from the line for 17 points. This was 15 under her scoring average.

Yet even though it was only 17, Molly's 17 carried more weight than Liz Silcott's 17 on the same day, because Molly jumped her for the scoring lead, 31.80 vs 31.67.

New Jersey Gems																	Team Ge	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	
Arturi, Lynn	17	Name not in Newspaper																
Browning, Pam	22		2				2	2			0						6	
Burdick, Denise	35		9	12			4	5			0						22	
Geils, Donna	4		5				7	10			0						17	
Greer, Drema	7	Name not in Newspaper																
Harris, Willoden	5		13				2	2			0						28	
Meyers, Ann	14		11				0	0		17	17	8	6	5			22	
Simms, Donna	19	Name not in Newspaper																
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		2				9	10			0						13	
Young, Faye		Name not in Newspaper																
Young, Kaye	20		1				2	2			0						4	
Adjustment		240											19					
Totals		240	43	12	0	0	26	31	0	17	17	8	25	5	0	0	112	
			FG%	#####			FT%	83.9%	Team Rebs									
Special Notes:																		
With Kaye Young joining team did Lynn Arturi give up #20 to Kaye & took #17																		

Iowa Cornets																	Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Bolin, Molly	30		6				5	7			0						17
Chavers, Tonyus	20	Name not in Newspaper															
Draving, Doris	50		3				2	7			0						8
Eckroth, Mo	22	Name not in Newspaper															
Green, Anita	12		3				3	4			0						9
Hodgson, Pat	34		7				4	6			0		6				18
Kunzmann, Connie	44		0				4	4			0						4
Lewis, Charlotte	52		10				0	1			0						20
Thomas, Debra K.	40		7				1	3			0						15
Tucker, Robin	10		5				2	3			0						12
Adjustment		240											18				
Totals		240	41	0	0	0	21	35	0	0	0	0	24	0	0	0	103
			FG%	#####			FT%	60.0%	Team Rebs								

With just seven games remaining for the Gems, and an unknown number for the other teams in the league, the Gems needed to start assessing their position in the playoff race.

EAST

New York	22	7	.759	---	Minnesota	18	8	.692	---	Houston	16	11	.593	---
New Orleans	18	12	.600	4.5	Iowa	18	12	.600	2.0	San Fran	16	14	.533	1.5
St. Louis	15	13	.536	6.5	Chicago	13	16	.448	6.5	California	11	17	.393	5.5
New Jersey	15	14	.517	7.0	Milwaukee	8	19	.296	10.5	Dallas	7	25	.219	11.5
Philadelphia	2	8	.200	Disbanded										
Washington	3	7	.300	Disbanded										

MIDWEST

WEST

Knowing that the playoff teams would be the top two from each division meant the Gems had to jump two teams. In the Gems next seven games two of their games were against the St. Louis Streak, so they could take care of business there. The bonus for the Gems was that ever since the Streak traded Liz Silcott their record was 1-3, after posting a 14-6 record with her.

On the negative side of the schedule was they would also be facing division leaders four of the seven games, including two more with New York.

Meanwhile while the Gems were disposing of the Cornets on the East Coast there were fireworks on the West Coast. On Saturday February 23rd the Dreams beat the Pioneers for their 2nd win in a row and their 5th under Coach Nancy Dunkle.

The next day the General Manager, Bob Joseph, informed the Dallas Diamonds the Dreams would not make the trip to Dallas for their game on Sunday the 24th. They also told the Minnesota Fillies to change their plans for Wednesday the 27th, because the team was rolling up the red carpet and quitting. California was the 4th team in the league to go under. (Remember Dallas was revived before anyone knew she was dead.)

The decision to cancel the season wasn't even run past one of the Dreams' primary owners, Larry Kozlicki. The Koz wasn't informed until all the other messages had gone out. Of course, Bob Joseph was fired on the spot, but nothing could be done to revive the team. The Dreams ended their existence at 11-17 and had the worst attendance in WBL history. Their 14 home games drew 3,713, which was an average of 265.21 (.21 means a pregnant mother's fetus was counted as an attendee!)

As February was coming to a close the Gems had a killer schedule with two games on the road and two at home in five days.

Their road trip took them to Houston to play the first place (16-11) Angels. The Angels were another team in flux. After going 6-0 to start the season, they then went 2-9 through the end of January. In the month of February, they righted themselves with a 8-2 record.

This winning record accompanied the speculation that the Angels were going to be purchased by an outside group. So that before the WBL office had to try to keep another franchise afloat, on February 24th a Houston Chronicle had the headline: *Angels Purchased by Local Investors*.

Unfortunately, that good news didn't change their playing site back to their original location of Hofheinz Pavilion. The Gems instead wandered onto Rice University and tried to find Autry Court on this Tuesday February 26th. The Gems were much more successful than the thousands who couldn't find the Angels as only 268 witnessed the game.

The (15-14) Gems broke away from an 18-18 tie with 3:15 left to take an early 26-23 lead. They then created some separation with a 53-44 lead at the half. But the handwriting might have been on the wall as four Gems had at least three fouls at the half.

Houston recouped one point and then with about seven minutes remaining the score was tied at 85. The Angels continued their attack as they moved ahead, 95-92, with 1:06 to play. An Ann Meyers jumper from the free throw line narrowed the score to 95-94. After each team had unsuccessful attempts the Gems Donna Geils broke away for a layup and a one-point lead with 18 seconds left. Houston failed in their last attempt and were forced to foul Geils as she came up the floor with the ball. Her two free throws gave the Gems a winning score of 98-95.

The Gems were led by Willodean Harris who had 25 points and 18 rebounds, before she fouled out. The next high scorer was Donna Geils who had 23 points and a technical foul. The Gems did lose two other players to fouls, Pam Browning and Denise Burdick.

Vicky Chapman came through with 22 points before she fouled out, while Karen Auhlenbacher was next with 16 points.

New Jersey Gems																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Arturi, Lynn	17	Name not in Newspaper															
Browning, Pam	22		2				4				0		6				8
Burdick, Denise	35		2				4				0		6				8
Geils, Donna	4		9				5			1	1						23
Greer, Drema	7	Name not in Newspaper															
Harris, Willodean	5		10	16			5			18	18		6				25
Meyers, Ann	14		6				3				0						15
Simms, Donna	19	Name not in Newspaper															
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		7				0				0						14
Young, Faye			2				1				0						5
Young, Kaye	20		0				0				0						0
Adjustment		240		68				27			34		13				
Totals		240	38	84	0	0	22	27	0	19	53	0	31	0	0	0	98
			FG%	45.2%			FT%	81.5%	Team Rebs								
Special Notes:																	
Technical: Donna Geils & Coach Howie Landa																	

Houston Angels																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Auhlenbacher, Karen	11		6				4	5			0						16
Candler, Belinda	24		5				4	6			0						14
Chapman, Vicky	22		8				6	8			0		6				22
Durham, Gwen	3	Name not in Newspaper															
Johnson, Pat	45		4				2	4			0						10
Jones, Belinda	23		2				4	4			0						8
Kenlaw, Jessie	40		3				2	5			0						8
Mayo, Paula	10		6				3	5			0						15
Washington, Cynthia	15		0				2	6			0						2
Adjustment		240		94							50		21				
Totals		240	34	94	0	0	27	43	0	0	50	0	27	0	0	0	95
			FG%	36.2%			FT%	62.8%	Team Rebs								

The Gems' chance to claw into a playoff spot found them in St. Louis on Thursday February 28th at Kiel Auditorium. A really great crowd of 3,050 came out to watch the sinking (15-13) Streak take on the (16-14) Gems. Their virtual tie, even though the Streak had a .536 vs .533 advantage, would be decided tonight.



The 3,050 fans came out to support a team with a 1-4 record since their favorite player, Liz Silcott was traded. So, they were all quite pleased when St. Louis took a 23-17 1st quarter lead. The Streak stayed ahead at the half 41-38. The Gems took control in the 3rd quarter as Donna Geils and Willodean Harris combined for 18 of the Gems 26 points as they outscored the Streak 26-15 to take a 64-56 lead.

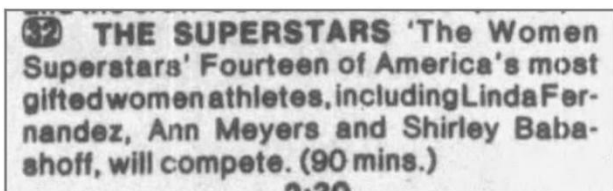
As the 4th quarter wound down the lead changed hands three times. The Gems held a slim 76-75 lead with 20 seconds left. Wanda Szeremeta's steal and pass to Ann Meyers led to two free throws. The 78-75 lead then became an 80-75 victory after Willodean Harris was fouled with one second left and converted both free throws.

The (17-14) Gems just won their 3rd in a row and took a one game lead over the (15-14) Streak who lost their 4th in a row. Ann Meyers achieved her 3rd known Triple Double with 17 points, 13 assists, 10 steals, and her eight rebounds put her two away from a Quadruple Double. This was the 2nd time she had almost had a Quadruple Double. In an earlier Iowa game she missed her Quad-Double by one steal. But Meyers wasn't the top scorer as Willodean Harris came through with 22 points, while Donna Geils also had 17 points. Denise Burdick's 11 rebounds played a large part in the team's victory.

The Streak got 21 points from Adrian Mitchell as well as 18 points from Coco Daniels.

New Jersey Gems																	Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Arturi, Lynn	17		0				0	0									0
Browning, Pam	22		1				0	0			0						2
Burdick, Denise	35		3				0	2		11	11						6
Geils, Donna	4		7				3	5			0						17
Greer, Drema	7	Name not in Newspaper															0
Harris, Willoden	5		9				4	6		1	1						22
Meyers, Ann	14		5				7	10		8	8	13		10			17
Simms, Donna	19	Name not in Newspaper															0
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		3				4	6			0			1			10
Young, Faye			2				2	2			0						6
Young, Kaye			0				0	0									0
Adjustment		240											23				
Totals		240	30	0	0	0	20	31	0	20	20	13	23	11	0	0	80
			FG%	#####			FT%	64.5%		Team Rebs							

St. Louis Streak																	Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Davidson, Winsome	6		1				5	6			0						7
Daniels, Coco	1		8				2	2			0						18
Greene, Vivian	31		1				0	0			0						2
Hastings, Martha			0				0	0									0
Keeley, Marguerite			0				0	0									0
Mitchell, Adrian	34		5				11	16			0						21
Patterson, Sheila	33		2				3	3			0						7
Platte, Ann	23		4				0	0			0						8
Plice, Darla	20		4				2	2			0						10
Travnik, Mary Pat	25	Name not in Newspaper															0
Vincent, Peggy	10		1				0	1			0						2
Adjustment		240											23				
Totals		240	26	0	0	0	23	30	0	0	0	0	23	0	0	0	75
			FG%	#####			FT%	76.7%		Team Rebs							



The day after the St. Louis game the TV Guide had the listing for the Women's Superstars Competition that Ann Meyers participated in – and came in 4th.

The St. Louis Dispatch wrote an article called *Nothing is Streaky About Meyers*. The article followed a theme that had been taking place all year in almost every city the Gems played in. The idea was to conjure about dissension based on Ann Meyers' salary and her ability. With Ann supposedly getting \$50,000 this year, and \$40,000 over the next two years, players who were getting between \$7,500 to \$10,000 were prompted with loaded questions. The players did a good job of giving "vanilla" answers, which stopped any follow-up questions.

The next part had to do with Ann's tryout with the Pacers.

Prior to the season, a Sports Illustrated story suggested that Meyers was grossly overrated. Dean Meminger, the coach of the New York Stars, has called Meyers the league's best player. Larry Gilman, the coach of the St. Louis Streak has said that was nonsense, that there are 12-15 WBL players as good as.

The best way to describe Meyers is:



The 24-year-old Meyers cannot shoot with the grace and accuracy of the Iowa Cornets' "Machine Gun" Molly Bolin. Nor can she penetrate with the persistent pirouettes of the San Francisco Pioneers' Liz "The Whiz" Silcott. She doesn't jump abnormally high nor handle the ball with the wizardry of a Harlem Globetrotter.

She is the game's most complete player. Dribbler, defender, shooter, stealer, rebounder, rallier, picker, passer - Meyers is a Renaissance Lady of Basketball.

So, while the Gems and Streak both ventured to New Jersey and the Dunn Sports Complex for the concluding game of their home-n-home series there was more controversy in the New Jersey air. The "Brouhaha" as the headline said involved the Governor of New Jersey, the Mayor of Elizabeth, New Jersey, and several assemblymen, along with the Gems' front office. A big article in the February 29th Newark Star Ledger was too big and too complicated for me to summarize. But don't worry, it will raise its ugly head in the future and you'll understand it then.

The next article was in the Paterson News about Bob Milo and his history with the franchise. Milo found one his biggest obstacles to spreading the word about a Women's Basketball team were the women owners of businesses, who told him to forget it, they weren't interested in lending any support.

The last piece of outside news involved the Gems' two head coaches, as it stated that Howie Landa was on his way out as the Gems' coach. The Gems' former coach, Don Kennedy, was wondering if Landa was going to get paid, because he was still trying to collect his \$30,000 promised salary from last year. Kennedy wanted to let Landa know he had the name of a good lawyer if he needed one.

On Saturday March 1st the Gems could finally get back to what they were doing well, winning! The (17-14) Gems were beginning to eye the (19-12) New Orleans Pride as the Pride just beat the Angels on February 29th. New Jersey was now just two games behind the Pride for the final playoff spot.



With the addition of the Young sisters the Gems switched up their advertising and 1,650 came to the Dunn Sports Complex. They got to watch as Denise Burdick scored six of the Gems first nine points which propelled them to a 21-11 lead. The Streak fought back to make it 23-19 by the end of the 1st quarter. The Gems expanded on their lead with a 27-14 2nd quarter and a 50-33 lead. As the two teams played evenly in the 3rd quarter the Gems kept their large lead going into the 4th quarter, 72-55.

What the Streak did right and the Gems did wrong in the 4th quarter was allow former Gem Martha Hastings to lead the charge as the Streak got to within four at 88-84 with two minutes remaining. The Gems barely held on as they had a 90-88 lead with seven seconds left. An Ann Meyers free throw finished the scoring as the final score was Gems 91 and Streak 88.

The Gems were led by Denise Burdick and Ann Meyers who each had 21 points. Willodean Harris set a Gems' record by pulling down 22 rebounds and scoring 20 points. This would be her first, and only, 20-20 in her WBL career. Wanda Szeremeta also added 18 points for the Gems. The (15-15) Streak were led by Sheila Patterson's 20 points, with Martha Hastings' 18 coming in next.

New Jersey Gems																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Arturi, Lynn	17	Name Not in Newspapers															0
Browning, Pam	22	Name Not in Newspapers															0
Burdick, Denise	35		10				1	2									21
Geils, Donna	4		2				4	4									8
Greer, Drema	7		0				0	0									0
Harris, Willoden	5		8				4	6		22	22						20
Meyers, Ann	14		8				5	8									21
Simms, Donna	19		0				0	0									0
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		6				6	6									18
Young, Faye			0				3	4									3
Young, Kaye	20		0				0	0									0
Adjustment		240															
Totals		240	34	0	0	0	23	30	0	22	22	0	0	0	0	0	91
			FG%	#####			FT%	76.7%		Team Rebs							

St. Louis Streak																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Daniels, Coco	1		4				0	0									8
Davidson, Winsome	6		2				0	0									4
Greene, Vivian	31		2				2	4									6
Hastings, Martha	11		8				2	2									18
Hoffman, Jeri	15		0				0	0									0
Mitchell, Adrian	34		3				7	12									13
Patterson, Sheila	33		7				6	7									20
Platte, Ann	23		4				2	4									10
Plice, Darla	20		4				1	3									9
Travnik, Mary Pat	25	Name Not in Newspapers															0
Vincent, Peggy	10		0				0	0									0
Adjustment		240															
Totals		240	34	0	0	0	20	32	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	88
			FG%	#####			FT%	62.5%		Team Rebs							

The (18-14) Gems and their four-game winning streak were hosting the (7-26) Dallas Diamonds who brought their own nine-game losing streak to the Dunn Sports Complex. The Diamonds were playing their fifth game under their new head coach, Ray Scott. Their first coach, the legendary Dean Weese, had been relieved of his job with a 7-22 WBL record. The Diamonds were just trying to play out the string and finish their inaugural season.

What the Gems might not have been totally prepared for was a doubleheader, especially because they were playing their 6th regular season game in eight days. At the half of the Dallas game members of the Gems would be playing a 5-minute game against the governor of New Jersey, Thomas Byrne, and members of the Legislature.

We don't know if there was any money being bet on the game, but it would have been smart for the Gems to throw the game in order to get whatever goodies the politicians had to offer.

The 1st quarter was a tightly contested battle as the Gems had a narrow 29-28 lead. The Gems took control with a 20-10 run for a 49-38 lead. They closed out the half ahead 59-45. In the 2nd half New Jersey kept up the pressure as they led 81-64 going into the 4th quarter. But with the comeback the Streak pulled off the day before the Gems needed to be leery of the Diamonds.

Instead of pushing ahead the Gems slowed everything down to cut down on possessions, which allowed them to walk away with a 98-80 victory. Their fifth win in a row was a new franchise record and brought them up to 19-14.

On March 2nd the New Orleans Pride were sitting at 19-12, which meant the Gems were within one game of the final playoff spot.

The Gems got their 2nd great performance in a row from Willodean Harris who contributed 28 points and 17 rebounds. These results were achieved against her former Alabama State teammate, 6'3" Alfredda Abernathy. Ann Meyers had 21 points and 14 rebounds. Both Wanda Seremeta and Donna Geils scored 14 points each, but Wanda did hers efficiently with a 6 of 11 from the floor, while Donna tortured the crowd hitting just four of 20 shots.

Dallas' Abernathy didn't achieve her 27-point average, but she did get 23 along with six steals. Her 9 rebounds did give her a 1.114 Efficiency Rating in her 35 minutes. But that rating paled when put up against Willodean's 1.405 in 37 minutes. Three other Diamonds contributed 12 points each in the loss. With this loss the Diamonds had a perfect road record, 0-18.

New Jersey Gems																		Team Game #
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Arturi, Lynn	17	12	1	4			0	0	1	2	3	4	1	0	0	0	2	1.083
Browning, Pam	22	25	5	9			3	6	5	6	11	3	2	1	1	1	13	1.200
Burdick, Denise	35	28	1	3			0	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	0	2	0.179
Geils, Donna	4	41	4	20			6	6	5	2	7	3	2	3	5	0	14	0.610
Greer, Drema	7	4	0	1			0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000
Harris, Willoden	5	37	12	21			4	5	4	13	17	5	4	1	4	1	28	1.405
Meyers, Ann	14	42	10	17			1	2	6	8	14	6	4	6	7	0	21	1.095
Simms, Donna	19	7	0	0			0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.286
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	28	6	11			2	3	0	4	4	5	1	1	2	1	14	0.964
Young, Faye	Name Not in Newspapers																	
Young, Kaye	20	16	2	5			0	0	1	3	4	2	1	0	1	0	4	0.688
Totals		240	41	91	0	0	16	26	23	41	64	29	16	13	22	3	98	0.879
			FG%	45.1%			FT%	61.5%		Team Rebs	3							

Dallas Diamonds																		Team Game #
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Abernathy, Alfreda	34	35	11	27			1	1	3	6	9	2	5	6	3	1	23	1.114
Baker, Janice	12	6	0	1			0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0.333
Bruton, Cindy	20	31	4	6			4	6	5	2	7	2	4	6	1	0	12	0.903
Bush-Roddy, Carolyn	40	27	0	9	0	1	0	0	1	4	5	0	0	0	0	1	0	0.185
Earnhardt, Christy	42	26	2	8			2	3	0	1	1	2	2	0	1	0	6	0.385
Goodwin, Valerie	22	28	5	8			2	2	0	1	1	1	1	1	2	0	12	0.500
John, Jeriann	44	33	4	17			1	2	0	4	4	1	3	0	5	0	9	0.303
Shoemaker, Cathy	24	34	5	17			2	2	1	4	5	4	3	2	2	1	12	0.735
Stewart, Debbie	33	20	3	8			0	0	1	2	3	2	3	1	3	0	6	0.550
Totals		240	34	101	0	1	12	16	11	24	35	15	22	16	17	3	80	0.600
			FG%	33.7%			FT%	75.0%		Team Rebs	6							

The next game for the Gems wouldn't be until March 13th, so let's use this time to take care of news related to the Gems.

The first involved the Gems' mascot, Bob Milo's English Sheepdog. Whether it was the lockerroom or the bench during the game, the sheepdog was there.



Gems' Best Friend

The mascot for a women's professional basketball team could be a candidate for an identity crisis. She's an English Sheepdog who goes by the name of "Parson" — and, on the court, she's a ham.

Article by
JOAN SERRATO
Staff Writer

Her name is Parson. She's Personality. And she can't get her Parson. Or she can't get her Parson. But if you're from the Gem State, you know Parson.

Parson is a 30-pound shaggy named by the late Miss Mabel of Chatham, who started the New Jersey Gems, the women's professional basketball team.

Melissa Duerksen, of Whippany, is Parson's handler and best friend.



The next issue involved good old fashion New Jersey politics. The Morristown Daily Record headline read: **Politics Make Gems Orphans**

Here you go:

Last month, Union County Assemblyman Raymond Lesniak invited Gems' captain Wanda Szeremeta to take a tour of the statehouse in Trenton and meet Governor Brendan T. Byrne. One thing led to another and quicker than anybody could say "publicity stunt" Szeremeta and Byrne organized an exhibition pitting the governor, his staff and Lesniak against the Gems in a 5-minute contest during halftime of today's 8:00 PM game with the Dallas at the Dunn enter.

The Dunn Sports Complex is named after Elizabeth mayor Thomas Dunn. Lesniak was planning to run against Thomas Dunn in the next mayor primary. Dunn didn't like being ganged up on by having Lezniak and the governor building goodwill at his expense with a basketball game in "his" arena.

After the fun exhibition had been finalized Bob Milo learned the following:

The Elizabeth Board of Education contacted Milo's office and told the Gems were behind in rent payments for use of the Dunn Center and told them they could not use the facility until the rent for the Gems last three home games (last night, tonight and March 15th) was paid in advance.

Milo authorized Gem officials to pay the \$2,225 dollars (\$750 per game) in rental fees immediately so as to not to jeopardize the upcoming games.

The next battle for the Gems was with the WBL league office and the schedule makers. As the season was drawing to a close on March 2nd the (19-14) Gems had three more games and the (19-12) Pride had at least four more games scheduled. But,

New Jersey will be denied the opportunity for direct confrontation with the Pride. According to the WBL schedule, the Gems were supposed to play New Orleans at home on the last day of the season, March 15.

"New Orleans refused to play us here," said Donna Geils.

So, the Gems will play the New York Stars on that day instead. But the Stars, 24-7, are the best team in the WBL.

"It's really unfair," said Geils.

"If the Pride won't come here to play us, the game should be declared a forfeit. Someone has to take a stand."

"We will have played the Stars seven times this year," said Gems coach Howie Landa, "while New Orleans will have played the Stars only twice. Also, New Orleans hasn't been here all year. We have played them three times down there (winning once). I feel we have a legitimate gripe."

For the Gems after the threat of being evicted from Dunn Sports Complex, a place they really didn't want to be in, they had to consider other future playing sites. Supposedly when the Meadowlands builds their new arena the nightly fee would be \$40,000. (In comparison, Madison Square Garden charged \$25,000 a night. But for the Stars that fee was only when they weren't doubled up with the Knicks.)

So, while the Mennen Arena looked good for next season, Milo knew they needed a bigger place in the future. He was looking at three tracts of land that the Gems could build their own arena, but he wanted to stay in Morris County where they were developing their base.

On a lighter note and for the sake of future basketball stars the Gems held a clinic on Saturday March 8th for girls and boys at the junior high and high school levels.

As the clinic was taking place the WBL made a determination on the playoff situation. Bob Milo was trying to add a wild card team in to accommodate for the number of games played, but that was rejected. The Pride were also not required to make up the two games they would have played against the California Dreams. The refusal to come to New Jersey on March 15th was never addressed in the newspaper.

Yet as of March 9th the Pride had won two more games to raise their record to 21-12, which was two games better than the Gems. For the Gems to make the playoffs they would have to beat the Stars twice and the Fillies once to get to 22-14. The Pride would then have to lose to San Francisco and Minnesota to become 21-14.

Yet I will allow you to interpret what the Morristown Daily Record reports about this issue:

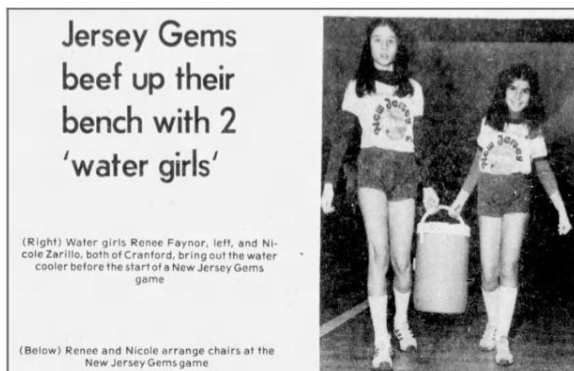
Through a series of strange determinants, the Gems are mathematically eliminated from any chance at a WBL playoff berth, despite an attempt by Milo to change the league playoff format to include a wild card team. That appeal, plus one which would have forced New Orleans to make up two postponed games, was turned down by the league.

The Gems currently trail the New Orleans Pride by 1 1/2 games in the battle for the final playoff spot. The Pride will finish the season with two less games than the Gems, since it will not reschedule two games that were postponed in California earlier this year.

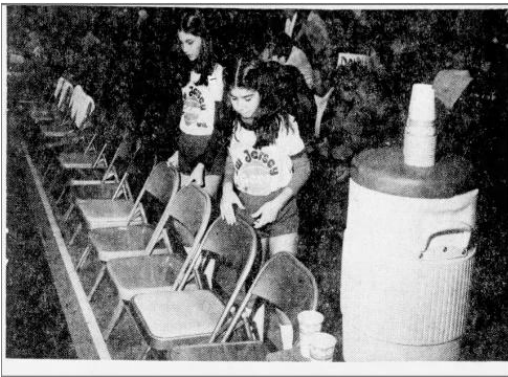
If the Gems win their remaining three games and New Orleans loses its final two, that would leave the Gems with a 22-14 record and the Pride at 20-14, A one game difference in New Jersey's favor. But strangely, the Pride would be given the playoff spot.

According to WBL rules, the first determinant is losses. The two teams would be tied. But the league then ignores total wins and winning percentage and goes right to head-to-head competition. The Pride holds the edge in the season series between the teams.

For the Gems this was a bummer, so to lighten things up the Newark Star Ledger provided a cute series on the Gems' water girls. It is up to you to determine if they were more important or valuable than the sheep dog.



The highlighted young ladies, Renee Faynor (10) and Nicole Zarillo (9), got their jobs because Nicole's dad, Paul, was the Gems' vice president and he believed their presence was an inspiration to young ladies attending the Gems' games.



The girls prepare with the players and enjoy the locker room music and antics, but they also understand the seriousness of the sport. While they find all the Gems players "nice," they found the visiting players very dismissive of them.

Should their role be taken seriously? They were so good at their jobs that the Gems' trainer Ron Linfonte, who worked with the Cleveland Indians, wanted them to come to spring training with him. Ron had not found many kids with their work attitude.

Has anyone else noticed that there were more pictures of the dog and water girls than there were of the Gems as the season was coming to a close?

With what seemed like the elimination of the Gems from the playoffs, there were huge problems in the Gems front office. On March 13th the papers announced *Gems Suspend Landa Indefinitely*.

"I've given the league three definite reasons for suspending Howie Landa," stated Gems president Robert Milo. "They are: insubordination, conduct unbecoming a coach and holding an unauthorized scrimmage. In addition, he failed to report an injury - to our center Willodean Harris - that came out of that scrimmage."

The action seemed to be a culmination of a series of conflicts that were occurring all year. Milo felt threatened by Landa, and Howie felt like the front office was questioning his coaching all year.

With the team fighting for a playoff spot, at the time, and 10 days between games Landa was looking for a way to keep his team ready and in game condition. He therefore organized a scrimmage against his former college, Mercer Community College. During the game Harris' knee popped out, but it was taken care of quickly.

Landa believed the front office wanted him out, even though he had a two-year contract. Milo's plan was to let him finish the season and then reassess the situation. Yet at this point the lines of communication had been severed as Landa was not returning phone calls from the front office. He was at least suspended with pay.

This meant the Gems needed a respected leader to take over. Milo's choice was the Gem with the longest tenure, "Wicked" Wanda Szeremeta. It would be her job on March 13th to inspire and lead the Gems past the first place New York Stars twice and the second place Minnesota Fillies once.

The Gems would end the season with three games in three days, and only one game was on the original schedule. On Thursday the 13th the Gems travelled to the Felt Forum in New York City to take on the (26-7) Stars.

With the Stars carrying a five-game winning streak, with turmoil in the Gems' front office, with no chance to make the playoffs, and with an inexperienced professional coach on the floor or on the bench the Gems should have just cashed in their chips and gone through the motions.

Instead, the 400 Forum fans were surprised to see the Gems come out and hold the Stars to 15 points while scoring 23.

You would have to imagine that Stars' coach Dean Meminger didn't like what he saw, especially when the Gems went up 29-17 in the first few minutes of the 2nd quarter. My assumption is that the Stars called a time-out, because over the next six minutes the Stars pressed all over the floor and put together a 24-2 streak with Pearl Moore and Janice Thomas leading the way. A full game at this rate would give a team 192 points. The Stars went into the locker room with a comfortable 50-41 lead.

The Stars opened the 3rd quarter with an 11-2 run to lead 61-43, which gave the Gems another chance to quit, especially with a game in Minnesota the next day. Instead Coach Szeremeta and her aide, Lynn Arturi, used two seldom used players, Donna Simms and Drema Greer to begin the fight back. Greer took control of the ball and led the team to a 25-14 effort at the end of the quarter which gave the Gems a chance at 75-68.

Over the first seven minutes of the 4th quarter the Gems shocked the Stars with another run of 15-8 to tie the score at 83. During this sequence Ann Meyers picked up her 6th foul and left the game with 6:13 remaining. While Ann's floor leadership was needed her offensive production was pretty close to 0 this game. While playing 26 minutes she was 2 of 9 from the floor for seven points.

The Gems took a lead of 85-83 and 87-85, before the Stars went ahead with 4:20 left. At this point the Gems' shooting went cold and the Stars scored 11 straight points to open a nine-point lead, 96-87, with two minutes left. The 104-91 final score, pleased losing coach Szeremeta because the team held the Stars to only 104 points. This was in light of the fact the Stars had put up 135, 121, and 146 over their previous three games.

For the (19-15) Gems Donna Geils and Willodean Harris each had 23 points, while Dean pulled down 11 rebounds. Donna Simms came through with 10 to help the team's cause. The Stars were led by Pearl Moore's 29 and Janice Thomas' 19 points and nine assists.

New Jersey Gems																	Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Arturi, Lynn	17	Name Not in Boxscore															0
Browning, Pam	22		2				6	9			0						10
Burdick, Denise	35		2				2	2			0						6
Geils, Donna	4		8				7	8			0						23
Greer, Drema	7		0				0	0			0						0
Harris, Willodean	5		11				1	3		11	11						23
Meyers, Ann	14	26	2	9			3	4			0		6				7
Simms, Donna	19		4				2	2			0						10
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		2				3	4			0						7
Young, Faye			1				1	2			0						3
Young, Kaye	20		0				2	2			0						2
Adjustment		214															
Totals		240	32	9	0	0	27	36	0	11	11	0	6	0	0	0	91
			FG%	#####			FT%	75.0%		Team Rebs							
Special Notes:																	
Coach Howie Landa - suspended by Gems management																	

New York Stars																	Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Bender, Evelyn	35		0				0	0			0						0
Bucklew, Patti			0				1	2			0						1
Craig, Denise	13		4				2	2			0						10
Farrar, Sharon	11		6				0	0			0						12
Gwyn, Althea	31		0				1	2			0						1
Marquis, Gail	6		5				3	6			0						13
Moore, Pearl	12		8				13	17			0						29
Rhoades, Stacy			1				0	0			0						2
Sanborn, Kathy	32		2				0	2			0						4
Smith, Karen	24		1				0	3			0						2
Tatterson, Gail	33		3				5	7			0						11
Thomas, Janice	10		6				7	8			0	9					19
Adjustment		240															
Totals		240	36	0	0	0	32	49	0	0	0	9	0	0	0	0	104
			FG%	#####			FT%	65.3%		Team Rebs							

The quotes after the game emphasized what the front office had been experiencing with Coach Landa.

“He didn't listen to us,” said Milo. “Wanda understands how to use the players, which she proved tonight. The last time we played the Stars, we were blown out by 28 points. Tonight, Wanda utilized the entire bench, which Coach Landa didn't do.”

Case in point. Drema Greer is a Gems’ guard who had not seen much playing time while Landa was coach. She would get a minute here, a minute there, and was never given a chance to play. But she played 29 minutes last night, running the team from the point in the third quarter when the Gems began a comeback from a 16-point deficit.

“Howie obviously didn't feel I fit in with his plans,” Greer said. “But I knew I could play. Wanda felt I could play.”

The 4:30 game time gave the Gems time to get to the airport for their 7:30 game the next day in Minnesota.

The (20-12) Fillies were kind of in the same boat as the Gems when it came to the number of games being played. Before the Friday March 14th game at the Metropolitan Sports Center the Fillies trailed the Iowa Cornets, who were 23-12, for the Midwest Division lead. Minnesota could not overtake the Cornets, because of games played. They could not overcome if they both ended the season with 12 losses each, because Iowa had won the season series 3-2. Therefore, they could only hope to win it on percentage if they could find another game.

The Fillies made a deal with the (22-12) New Orleans Pride to come up to Minnesota on Sunday March 16th (the day after they should have been in New Jersey playing) to give the Fillies another game. If the Fillies beat the Gems and the Pride they'd be 22-12, with a .647 winning percentage. If the Cornets lost their last game of the year against the (10-23) Milwaukee Does they'd be 23-13, with a .639 percentage. This would give the Fillies first place and a bye in the upcoming playoffs. With the Cornets beating the Does 106-73 on the 16th all the problems disappeared.

Yet for the Gems on Friday the 14th 1,500 people came out to see Minnesota take a 20-15 1st quarter lead. At the half the Fillies' lead had shrunk to 37-35. The Gems found themselves trailing 65-58 and then 96-83 at the end of the game.

While Ann Meyers had 22 points to lead the team it came on just four field goals and 14-17 from the free throw line. Donna Geils came through with 21 and Pam Browning added 15 as she substituted for the injured Willodean Harris. Even though Harris played 29 minutes she could only shoot 1 of 11 from the field as her injured knee bothered her. She was able to grab 10 rebounds though.

The (21-12) Fillies did what they needed to do if they wanted to get that playoff first round bye. Donna Wilson had 22 points and Scooter DeLorme added 20 points.

New Jersey Gems																	Team Game #	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Arturi, Lynn	17		0				0	0			0						0	
Browning, Pam	22		3				9	12			0						15	
Burdick, Denise	35		5				0	0			0						10	
Geils, Donna	4		8				5	6			0						21	
Greer, Drema	7	12	0	2			0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0.000
Harris, Willodean	5	29	1	11			1	2	4	6	10	1	0	0	1	1	3	0.483
Meyers, Ann	14		4				14	17			0						22	
Simms, Donna	19	Name not in Newspaper																
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	27	3				0	0			0						6	0.222
Young, Faye		16	1	4			0	0	2	2	4	0	0	1	1	1	2	0.375
Young, Kaye	20	9	1	2			2	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	4	0.333
Adjustment		147											19					
Totals		240	26	19	0	0	31	39	7	8	15	1	20	1	4	2	83	0.404
			FG%	####			FT%	79.5%	Team Rebs									

Minnesota Fillies																	Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
DeBoer, Kathy	21		2				2	2			0						6
DeLorme, Scooter	32		8				4	6			0						20
Kocurek, Marie	42		7				1	1			0		6				15
Mason, Debbie	13	Injured - Broken Bone															
Montgomery, Pat	53		4				2	2			0						10
Owens, Katrina	33		2				0	0			0						4
Roberts, Patricia	44	30	6	15			1	2	2	6	8	1	4	1	1	0	13
Sharps, Denise	10		3				0	0			0						6
Timperman, Janet	12		0				0	0			0						0
Wellen, Nancy	14?		0				0	0			0						0
Wilson, Donna	11		11				0	3			0						22
Adjustment		210											16				
Totals		240	43	15	0	0	10	16	2	6	8	1	26	1	1	0	96
			FG%	#####			FT%	62.5%	Team Rebs								

To finish out the 2nd season of the WBL the Gems were back on the plane and returning to New Jersey for the seventh and final meeting with the New York Stars.

Even though there was no obvious newspaper ads, like there had been in the past, a crowd of 3,534 came out to show their support of the Gems. The Saturday March 15th crowd was probably a result of the Fan Appreciation Night and the free gift and team photograph that each person would receive.

As opposed to the last Stars' game when the Szeremeta-led Gems jumped to an eight point first quarter lead, this time it was nine points. The 33-24 1st quarter lead got the crowd hopping and hoping for an upset. The 2nd quarter was an eight-point reversal, which meant the Gems were ahead 61-60 at the half. The crowd was still delighted, because who cares about defense when the season is about to come to a close.

The two teams matched baskets and free throws as they both scored 27 points so the Gems still led 88-87 after three quarters. But three games in three days finally caught up with the Gems as they were outscored 43-27 in the 4th quarter for a 130-115 final score.

Ann Meyers broke out of her New York Stars' prison, as instead of seven and 10 points like her last two Stars' games, she came through with her third Triple-Double. 29 Points, 14 rebounds, 13 assists, and seven steals was a great way to cap off a very full year. Donna Geils wasn't far behind as she had 28 points and Willodean Harris recovered enough to score 25 points.

The Stars prepared for their playoff run by having Gail Marquis set the stage with 25 points, followed by Pearl Moore's 23. Both Sharon Farrah and Denise Craig added 18 each.

New Jersey Gems																	Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Arturi, Lynn	17		0				0	0			0						0
Browning, Pam	22		2				4	4			0						8
Burdick, Denise	35		6				2	2			0						14
Geils, Donna	4		7				14	19			0						28
Greer, Drema	7		0				0	0			0						0
Harris, Willodean	5		11				3	5			0						25
Meyers, Ann	14		10				9	14		14	14	13		7			29
Simms, Donna	19		0				0	0			0						0
Szeremeta, Wnda	23		3				3	5			0						9
Young, Faye			1				0	0			0						2
Young, Kaye	20		0				0	0			0						0
Adjustment		240															
Totals		240	40	0	0	0	35	49	0	14	14	13	0	7	0	0	115
			FG%	#####			FT%	71.4%		Team Rebs		per Mad Seasons p. 255					
Special Notes:																	
Gems 1-6 vs Stars 18-11 .620 vs rest of league																	

New York Stars																	Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Bender, Evelyn	35		2				0	0			0						4
Bucklew, Patti			0				2	2			0						2
Craig, Denise	13		9				0	0			0						18
Farrah, Sharon	11		7				4	6			0						18
Gwyn, Althea	31		0				0	0			0						0
Marquis, Gail	6		11				3	4			0						25
Moore, Pearl	12		9				5	6			0						23
Rhoades, Stacy			4				1	2			0						9
Sanborn, Kathy	32		0				0	0			0						0
Smith, Karen	24		3				3	10			0						9
Tatterson, Gail	33		2				1	2			0						5
Thomas, Janice	10		6				5	5			0						17
Adjustment		240															
Totals		240	53	0	0	0	24	37	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	130
			FG%	#####			FT%	64.9%		Team Rebs							
Special Notes:																	
Stars 6-1 vs Gems 22-6 .786 vs rest of league																	

The fact that the Gems were forced to play the Stars seven times, which resulted in a 1-6 record, against the rest of the league they were 18-11 record and a .620 winning percentage. (Though even this percentage would not have put them ahead of the Pride who at 22-13 were .629)

The WBL Final Standings looked like this:

EAST				MIDWEST				WEST			
New York	28	7	.800 ---	Iowa	24	12	.667 ---	Houston	19	14	.576 ---
New Orleans	22	13	.629 6.0	Minnesota	22	12	.647 1.0	San Fran	18	18	.533 2.5
New Jersey	19	17	.528 9.5	Chicago	17	19	.472 7.0	Dallas	7	28	.200 13.0
St. Louis	15	21	.417 13.5	Milwaukee	10	24	.294 13.0				
Philadelphia	2	8	.200 Disbanded					California	11	17	.393 Disbanded
Washington	3	7	.300 Disbanded								

Even though the Gems ended their season with a three-game losing streak, at least they weren't the Dallas Diamonds or the St. Louis Streak who both ended the season with 11-game losing streaks.

As a team, the Gems after the All-Star break on January 30th, only lost to the Stars and then the Fillies after they were out of the playoffs. On the 30th they were 11-11 and they went 8-0 against everyone, but against the Stars (0-5) and the Fillies (0-1).

If the Gems thought they were going to have an off-season they may have needed permission from Bob Milo. His off-season plans had the Gems playing in Belgium and France in early summer and exhibition games against the St. Louis Streak in the vacation areas of the Poconos and the Catskills. Several Gems would also be participating with the WBL All-Stars against the 1980 Olympic team in Chicago on April 16th and in New York's Nassau Coliseum on April 19th.

On March 16th Bob Milo met with Carol Blazejowski and her agent, Bob Wolff. This would be the beginning of negotiations to put together a championship team for next year. With the Blaze and Tara Heiss joining the current Gem foundation things looked good for the Gems. All of this was leading Milo to consider building his own \$10 million home court.

Milo recognized that Coach Landa was only suspended, not released or fired. So, it was possible for him to return, but with their philosophical differences it wasn't very likely.

And speaking of coaches. In the upper bleachers of the Dunn Sports Complex in the last game one of the 3,534 people watching, on his own dime, was the assistant coach of the New Jersey Nets, Phil Jackson.

Phil was one of the names being thrown around as a replacement for Howie Landa. Of course, without any real head coaching experience Jackson probably couldn't have handled the intense pressure of the WBL. I'm sure when he wasn't offered the Gems' job he probably sailed off into oblivion, never to be heard of again.

The Gems concluded the season with the players not sure of who their coach was going to be, because most of them liked and respected Howie Landa. They also didn't know where their home court would be, so securing housing for the future would also be up in the air. As for the team they at least felt confident of the finances and security of Bob Milo and there would be a team in New Jersey.

As for the rest of the WBL. The 2nd place Pioneers surprised the defending champion Houston Angels by beating them in game three on the Angels' home court. The Pride, who made a deal to play Minnesota in that extra regular season game, won game one in Minnesota. They then had two home games to close the series. They didn't.

The Pioneers, who had given the New York Stars two of their seven losses, lost in two straight to the Stars. The Cornets were destroyed in Minnesota by the Fillies in game one, 108-87. But they came back to win their two home games to go to the WBL Finals for the 2nd year in a row.

In the Finals the Stars had two easy home victories and then withstood a 49-point onslaught by Molly Bolin in game three, before they won the Championship 125-114 in front of 2,891 fans in Iowa.

Statistically the Gems regular season results were as follows:

	At Home	On Road	TOTALS
New York	1-3 404 439	0-3 318 366	1-6 722 805
Philadelphia	0-0	0-0	0-0 0
Washington	0-1 90 98	1-0 87 84	1-1 177 182
Chicago	2-0 225 186	0-1 108 116	2-1 333 302
Iowa	2-0 223 198	1-0 108 100	3-0 331 298
Milwaukee	1-0 98 96	1-0 84 79	2-0 182 175
Minnesota	1-0 114 108	0-2 178 194	1-2 292 302
St. Louis	1-1 174 91	2-1 266 271	3-1 371 362
California	1-0 95 79	0-1 94 99	1-1 189 178
Dallas	2-0 195 165	1-0 107 97	3-0 302 262
Houston	1-0 107 84	1-1 185 192	2-1 292 276
New Orleans	0-0	1-2 273 316	1-2 273 316
San Francisco	0-1 89 102	0-1 80 103	0-2 169 205
	12-6 1,814 1,729	7-11 1,687 1,732	19-17 3,516 3,550
	.667 100.8 96.1	.636 94.6 101.2	.528 97.7 98.6

The team's final 1979-1980 stats are nowhere near complete or correct.

In the 1980-81 WBL Media Guide there were 8 players listed as Not With Team, therefore their individual stats are all accumulated. We, unfortunately, have to trust the FINAL Totals from the media guide and then use the ADJUSTMENT LINE to back into those final figures. I hope and pray that some day that some former WBL players find missing Box Scores so we can complete the records accurately.

YEAR THREE of the New Jersey Gems 1980-1981

As the WBL cleaned up any loose ends involving their 2nd season, several of the Gems, including Donna Geils, along with Faye & Kaye Young were part of a "Clean-Up" Campaign in Morristown on April 19th. Of course, an autograph session would be involved and also a season pass to the Gems 1980-81 home games.

Interestingly enough, the article claimed that the Gems would be playing at the South Mountain Arena in West Orange. After all the speculation and hoopla about Mennen Arena or building their own, it seemed they settled on South Mountain Arena.

While Howie Landa was still the coach of the Gems, the April 8th newspapers were calling him the former coach of the Gems. Did they have inside information or were they so lazy in their research they did not understand he had only been suspended? Either way Coach Landa was a guest speaker, along with Ann Meyers and several prominent college coaches at a clinic in the Somerset Marriot Hotel on May 2 & 3rd.

Remember the European trip the Gems were going to take? Well, it seemed the team was in touch with the Far East Amateur Athletic Union to play games in Guam (which is nowhere near Europe) in October. The only problem had to do with the amateur status of the opposing players. If the team from the Guam played the Gems they could lose their amateur status.

(This same problem actually occurred. In November 1980 the Dallas Diamonds scheduled several scrimmages against local college teams. They also played the eventual national champions, Louisiana Tech, in a six quarter game in Tyler, Texas. Bill Wall, the head of ABA-USA -which was the governing body of amateur sports in America - was going to declare that the players from Univ. of Texas, Louisiana Tech, Texas Christian and Texas Western were no longer amateurs. While the 1980 Olympics were behind us there were many quality players from U.T. & La. Tech that would make future American teams. Thankfully, the threats were never carried out.)

With the U.S. participation in the 1980 Olympics having been officially closed (with a vote of 1,604 – 797 on April 12th) the New Jersey spotlight was focused on an angry and frustrated Carol Blazejowski. With her exclusion from the 1976 team having been so close and the years of work to make the 1980 team now being for naught Blaze's mindset had to change.

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MEET FAYE & KAYE YOUNG
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IN PERSON

She had put off her life, her career for two years to prepare to play on the women's basketball team in the Moscow Olympics and now it appears that the United States will not participate.

"It'll be my luck I'll be a school teacher next year and there will be no Women's Professional Basketball League," she said, disappointment evident in her voice. "The major things I really set my whole life on, my goals, are falling apart."

Even though the Olympic team would not be playing in Moscow, they still had a scheduled trip to Europe. They would play first in France and then in Italy on April 22nd, and then to Bulgaria for the Olympic qualifying round on May 5-15.

"There is little incentive since we don't have a shot at the Russians but if we don't go we can get fined and suspended," she explained. "It's hard to get up for practices now when you're in this environment, hearing skepticism every day with reporters asking you why you're bothering to train."

"I think once we get away, we'll play well," she said.

"What did they say there about Lieberman?" Blazejowski asked, referring to Nancy Lieberman's announcement last week that she would relinquish her position on the 1980 Olympic team because of her support of the boycott.

"We don't understand it here," Blazejowski said. "She committed herself and then left after we'd worked out all our offensive plays with her. She just deserted us."

Deserted - and a little mistreated is how the Olympians feel.

As a warm-up game the Olympians would be playing at the County Center in Westchester, New York. This was within 10 miles of Iona College where the New York Stars bombed out and couldn't attract fans in 1978-79. The Olympians would be taking on an All-Star team from the state of New York.

A feature article, in the Raleigh Observer, about the Young sisters, who were from North Carolina, focused on their lives as celebrities. They humbly recognized they had been in the right place at the right time. They received basketball scholarships to North Carolina State University when they were first scholarships were first being offered. Then they graduate just as the WBL began and then became a part of the New York scene with the Stars. The number of promotional openings they were expected to attend was cutting into their opportunity to practice with their team in the 2nd season.

They understood how important promotions were to the WBL, which led them to be on the Mike Douglas Show, and part of Easter Seals or Cystic Fibrosis fund raisers with people like Arthur Ashe.

Yet they had no problems when they were able to bolt the Stars to go to New Jersey where they could concentrate on playing basketball. The less frequent outside distractions in Jersey were what they needed. It also didn't hurt that they were closer to the beach.

The exhibition in White Plains allowed owner Bob Milo to present roses to his future Gems: Tara Heiss and Carol Blazejowski. Of course, this all took place after Blaze scored had 18 in a 99-57 victory. After the game the Olympians took a flight to Europe for their three games.

The Gems made sure they took every opportunity to promote their team. On May 24th the Young sisters represented the Gems, along with Philadelphia Eagles' quarterback Ron Jaworski at the Cumberland County Sports competition.

It would seem that Howie Landa's suspension finally culminated in a release. The Gems announced that Kathy Mosolino, who coached Fordham University, was named the next head coach. Her 114-48 record and a quarter-final appearance in the AIAW playoffs highlighted her credentials.



Mosolino, the 29-year-old New Jersey native, signed a three-year contract. As the coach of the Gems she was going to give up her playing basketball with the AAU Allentown Cresettes. But it wouldn't keep her from her kayaking or her commercial art.

The front office was pleased to hear of her desire to focus on defense, conditioning, and communication. Personally, Mosolino thought the 79-80 version of the Gems were out of shape when she saw them. When she was questioned about being a woman coach, and the only woman coach, in the WBL she made sure they knew she had been a woman for 29 years and it hadn't bothered her yet.

The May 14th article said that a trade involving Ann Meyers going to San Francisco was a possibility. It seemed that the only untouchable on the team was 6'5" Willodean Harris, according to an unnamed spokesperson. In the eyes of Wanda Szeremeta, Annie on the West Coast could strengthen the whole league, instead of having stars like Blazejowski, Heiss, and Meyers all being in one city.

On Saturday May 17th Lynn Arturi, and the Young sisters participated in a 10K race called "The Human Race." It was a fund raiser for the Girl's Athletic Association of Chatham, NJ.

With the formal signing of Kathy Mosolino at Afflito's Restaurant in Union, NJ it was time for ex-Gems coach Howie Landa to fade into the horizon. But in the WBL was this ever possible?


First, Landa had a relationship with NBA player Bobby Weiss, so Landa was being considered as an assistant coach in the NBA. While this would be definite step up, there was something else that was even better. He would get paid!

Landa and assistant coach Charlie Podlesny are suing the New Jersey Gems for "the five and a half checks they owe us for last season and the contract we have for next." It will be an interesting case if it reaches court, the women's pro team claiming Landa failed to live up to his end of the bargain.

"They owe a bunch of people," Landa says about the employer that fired him. "They haven't paid for gyms they used including Mercer for practice. They let six other key people go, but unlike the coaches they didn't have contracts."

Of course, while coaching was in Howie's blood he was not going to be hurting for money as his seven camps for girls in the Poconos, along with his appearances in Michigan and Kansas supplemented his income.

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The Camp will feature Lynn Arturi, Fay Young, Kaye Young and many more **NEW JERSEY GEMS PLAYERS.**
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The Gems were also not naïve about the income generated from summer camps as these ADs show two different camps being offered.

The AD to the left was in a paper in New Rochelle, New York – 18 miles away.


The AD to the right was in the Newark Star Ledger – 5 miles away.

The desire to make the Gems the favored team in the Metropolitan area was something that advertiser Bob Milo enjoyed pursuing.

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Don't miss your shot at a super summer! Learn basketball direct from the stars of the **NEW JERSEY GEMS** . . .

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In June the WBL announced the Most Valuable Player award. But instead of one player, there were two. Ann Meyers and Molly Bolin, of Iowa, shared the award as the top players in the league. The MVPs were selected by a panel of coaches and writers in the WBL.

Of course, Ann led a 9-25 team to a 19-17 record and was in the top six in the four most important offensive categories: Scoring 5th – 22.2, Rebounds 6th – 10.3, Steals 1st – 4.9, and Assists 3rd – 5.9.

The Gems' owner, Bob Milo, was pleased with the results of the gamble he took by securing the rights to sign Meyers.

The future for the Gems looked very promising as they got ready to go to the New York Hilton for the 3rd Annual WBL Draft on Tuesday, June 16, 1980. As opposed to last year, when the Gems had no first round pick, this year's picks were probably going to be solid subs for the Gems. If Tara Heiss and Carol Blazejewski signed contracts and joined Ann Meyers, Willodean Harris, Donna Geils, Denise Burdick and Wanda Szeremeta then the Gems were probably the team to beat in the East.

One local New Jersey player that was keeping her eye open on the draft was Alice Schmidt from Montclair State. The 5'6" guard was pretty sure she would be a high pick and she wanted to play for the Gems or the World Champion Stars.

Before the draft, the Gems were contacted and

"San Francisco wanted to give us a number one draft pick and cash for Meyers, but she made my franchise last year. I couldn't trade her," said Gems president Milo.

"We have big plans for her. With her doing her thing, and Blaze shooting, we're looking forward to the Meadowlands."

The results of the June 16th draft for the Gems were as follows:

1. Helen Shereda 6'0" Forward Oakland College
2. **TRADED TO ST. LOUIS**
3. **TRADED TO NEW YORK**
4. Susan Summons 5'7" Guard Lamar College played 1 year
5. Kim Bueltel 6'1" Forward Pepperdine University played 1 year
6. Bobbi Mims 5'6" Guard Clemson University
7. Cheryl Burnett 5'8" Guard Univ. of Kansas
8. Jill Jeffrey 5'0" Guard Montclair State played 1 year
9. **TRADED TO CHICAGO**
10. **TRADED TO ST. LOUIS**



The choice of Helen Shereda was based on her college stats of 27.3 points (3rd in the nation) and 14.4 rebounds (4th in the nation). To Helen playing pro ball had always been her dream and this was confirmed after she met with the Gems' coach, the General Manager and the WBL president.

Her dream began in Free Soil, Michigan (4 hours northwest of Detroit) where at the age of five she got a basketball. She later led her high school team, which had 56 students in the school and 18 in her graduating class, to a 60-7 record over her career, which included 1,651 points.

To the Gems' vice-president and general manager, Ed Kozma, Shereda fit the following role:

"We needed somebody to go to the boards," Kozma said of Shereda. "At 6-1, she's very mobile. She can also play any position and she's ambidextrous."

"If she doesn't start, she's the kind of player who can give us 15 or 20 minutes and not complain."

Also, after the draft Bob Milo was optimistic that the team could sign Blazejowski in the next two weeks. Of course, the \$500,000 package that her agent, Bob Wolff, presented was only going to become available in 2001.

After the draft the Gems' next focus was on different camps. Of course, there were the two youth camps for 9-18 year olds on July 13-18 and July 20-25. At a reasonable cost of \$125 for the day and \$175 for the overnight camps, the Gems were looking forward to building a young and committed fan base.

There was going to be another camp for bigger people and it was a free agent try-out camp. The location was the Newark Academy in Livingston, NJ on Friday June 27 from 4-8 pm and Saturday June 28 from 10-2 pm. As the quality of play improved in the college ranks the chance of missing out on good players was getting greater and greater.

How many tried out? How many made the cut? Were there any big-time college name people there? We will never know. The newspapers neither pursued or were given any information or write-ups about the tryout camp. The question is, did it ever take place?

During the summer several Gems were involved raising money for charity by playing softball. None of the other WBL teams were on the receiving end of the charitable list though they all probably needed help.

In what the Gems hoped wasn't a premonition of the future they took an early 9-2 lead against the Linden Police Department, but eventually ended up losing 10-9. Yet that just made their record 15-4 as they were beating the Mets, WINS radio, the NHL, Madison Square Garden, and the Orange Crush (???)

Over \$700 was raised by Lynn Arturi, Donna Simms, Faye Young, Wanda Szeremeta, and Kaye Young. In another charitable act Debbie Comerie and Wanda Szeremeta raised money for Easter Seals by being in a wheelchair basketball game.

A large July 8th, Philadelphia Daily News, article on Carol Blazejowski gave some insight into her disappointment over the Olympic boycott. Yet when she realized that this was a goal that was out of reach, and was also not her fault, she turned to teaching others. At the Cathy Rush Basketball Camp she expressed the following wisdom:

"I just tell them to never cheat themselves and to be the best they can be," is Carol's succinct description of her role as a speaker. "As far as instructions, I just helped them with whatever problems they have."

"The biggest problem I run across in some women players is (lack of) mental discipline; It can be a big problem. I mean, if someone doesn't have the fundamentals, you can work on that and improve things, but if you don't have the mental discipline, what can you do?"

"Also, a lot of the players are afraid to make their own corrections. I was always a self-teacher. Instead of waiting for someone to correct their mistakes on the court, they should take the initiative and help themselves out."

It was always the desire of Bob Milo to play in the Meadowlands, but a confirmation of an earlier speculation appeared in the Sunday July 13th newspaper

A staff of about 800, mostly concessionaires and ushers and all but 50 working on a per-diem basis, will be required for the Arena, say authority officials. Should anyone wish to rent the new building, the cost will run about \$15,000 or 17% of admissions, if any, whichever is larger.

While the New Jersey Gems of the professional Women's Basketball League have not been ruled out, arena officials do not foresee that team being able to afford rental of the new building.

A Cleveland Plain Dealer July 15th article confirmed there was a free agent camp, because Diana Biber of Ohio University made the cut. The next phase for Biber was the Gems rookie camp on August 15th in Livingston, N.J.

With all the hard work the Young sisters were doing promoting the Gems it was important to them that they become permanent members of the team. Therefore, the July 30th announcement that they had each signed one-year contracts for the 1980-81 season was significant. They both realized their roles with both the Gems and the WBL. Their \$8,000 a year contract put them just slightly above the league average. Yet in an August 1st article their salary was listed as \$20,000 for the two of them.

These days, the 24-year-old women have become unofficial ambassadors of the league. They do commercials, appear on television talk and quiz shows, participate in celebrity "trashsport" events, and do some charity work whenever we got the chance.

"Basketball isn't everything for us right now," Faye said. "We could go into modeling or teach social studies or a lot of other things. Everything is open."

One funny item the twins mentioned was that they led separate lives and there was nothing in their contract that said if you got one, you were stuck with both.

Though it was acknowledged earlier the Gems made sure, as of July 30th, that everyone knew they would play at the 4,000 seat South Mountain Arena. One big upgrade was the ability to have assigned seats, instead of having bleachers and hoping to get the same spot each time.

With a new head coach and the eventual signing of Olympians the need to upgrade for respect and prestige was necessary.



Photo by JOHN BELL
Nine-year-old Stacey Payton of Randolph receives a handshake and an award at the conclusion of the New Jersey Gems basketball camp.

With a headline titled: ***Just Wait Until Year 2005*** a summary of the success of the Gems' camps for New Jersey youth showed it had made an impact in some lives. The belief that there would be a women's league in 2005 gave the campers and the counselors something to work hard through.

A player who overcame the streets of Roxbury, Massachusetts was 4th round draft pick Susan Summons. Her hunger to make it in the pros could be summarized as:

"I think of the sacrifices, like not keeping the late hours with the friends. Then I look at some of the kids I grew up with who are dead now because of drugs or someone else killing them. This motivated me more and made me strong to achieve my goals," she said.

"I always wanted to be a professional athlete. It was like something of an internal desire."

"My philosophy has always been, if you fail, try again. If you never try, you have failed."

Now the youngest in a family of six girls and one boy will go to the Gems' veterans camp in the fall to battle it out for a spot on the team.

The beginning of August was a time of chess for the owners and big-name players in the WBL. The San Francisco Pioneers were still trying to get Ann Meyers to the West Coast. While they understood that Ann liked her time in New Jersey, she had business opportunities and her home was on the West Coast. So, the Pioneers thought the time was right to offer a trade.

As far as the time being right Carol Blazejowski and her agent, Bob Wolff, were waiting to see how much the number one pick in the latest draft, Nancy Lieberman, was going to be paid before Carol signed. This was a trick that Wolff used as the agent for Larry Bird. He waited until after Earvin "Magic" Johnson signed his contract before Wolff dealt with the Celtics. And it worked – but only with an organization that had real money to negotiate with.

Yet the Gems had already planned on \$40,000 for Ann Meyers and with the signing of Tara Heiss at a salary commiserate with her Olympic status, how much would still be available to pay the Blaze? Supposedly Nancy Lieberman was looking for \$100,000 and the Gems knew they couldn't afford that. So, the chess game continued into August.



THEY'RE GEMS — Head coach Kathy Masolino, Faye Young, Joe Baron and Kaye Young of the New Jersey Gems get together for a pre-season parley. The Young sisters are expected to play key roles for the Gems, while Baron has been named Hudson County group sales manager for the Women's Basketball League team.

With the type of information that is usually seen in the pre-season the Gems named Joe Baron the Hudson County group sales manager.

Another group of Gems, Ann Meyers and Drema Greer



MOST VALUABLE PLAYER of the Fred Carter Basketball Camp for girls at Mt. St. Mary's College in Emmittsburg, Md. was State College senior-to-be Dee Marrara (right). Miss Marrara is receiving her MVP certificate from Maryland Sen. E. Franklin Shore. At left are camp counselors Drema Greer and Ann Meyers, both of the New Jersey Gems of the Women's Pro Basketball League.

were part of another Maryland camp.

While the names of the players on the court got the most attention, the people who deserved an extra amount of recognition were the owners. These were the ones that struggled with payroll, taxes, meal money, arena rentals, travel, etc. and were usually spoken about in a negative light. On August 18th one of the original owners of the Gems, Nicholas Caruso, died at the age of 67. As a World War II veteran, a Villanova graduate, and tavern owner in Jersey City his funeral took place in Jersey City. We could only hope that someone, anyone, from the Gems organization attended it, to say thank you for getting the team started.

On August 21st the official signing of Tara Heiss took place at Afflito's Restaurant along with the fanfare of a press conference. The three-year contract, for an undisclosed amount, had an interesting clause within it. While it was a three-year contract Tara would be allowed to renegotiate her salary or declare herself a free agent after the first season.

The adulation and bright lights were not what Heiss was expecting. When asked to give a speech, her response was, "This was not what I expected. I'd rather be playing basketball." The Gems coach noted that whatever role they needed Tara to play, she could handle it, because she was an 'Unselfish, spirited player and a great person to deal with."

One more item of note:

Heiss, a teammate of former Gem Martha Hastings in high school and college, watched the team play five games last season and liked what she saw.

"I thought they needed a new coach," said Heiss of the departed Howie Landa. "Howie's very knowledgeable basketball wise, but I think sometimes men have trouble relating to women as players. Plus, I don't think this was his only job. I've never played for a male coach. I'm not saying I couldn't, but I think Kathy and I will get along fine."

In important summer Gems news

General Manager Kozma speaks to Blazejewski's agent, Bob Wolff, three times a week.

Season ticket sales are moving much better than last year and Kozma expects to sign a radio contract and possibly one with WPIX TV soon. Kozma said that WPIX wants the Gems to sell their own commercial space as part of the deal and that seems to be the major obstacle to an improvement over last year's taped cable broadcast.

The team expects an average attendance of over 2,700 this year. "Last year we had to beg people to come see a game at a high school gym in Elizabeth," Kosma said. "This year we're getting season ticket orders from corporations."

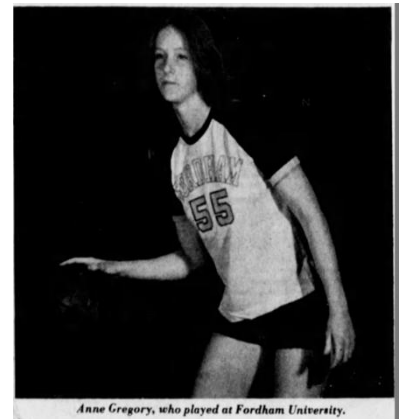
Gems services available

The New Jersey Gems of the Women's Basketball League are offering organizations or schools their services for speaking engagements and basketball clinics. Call 461-4296 or 461-2785 for further information.

Most WBL players recognized that the early stages of something new required sacrifice. Part of those sacrifices were written into their contracts. This ad gives you an idea of what the team expected of themselves and their players.

The Gems had no trouble stealing fans from their cross-river rivals, the New York Stars. The barnstorming Gems' softball team ventured into Stars' territory, 20 miles north of New York City, Hawthorne, New York to play the staff of a boys' school called Hawthorne Cedar Knolls. The 17-5 Gems were led by Lynn Arturi, who grew up in this region, and played on Monday Sept. 8th. Joining Lynn were the Young sisters, Donna Simms, and Wanda Szeremeta.

A big Sept. 6th article on Anne Gregory appeared in the White Plains Journal News. At this point in time Anne had nothing to do with the Gems. As a player for Kathy Mosolino at Fordham her skills allowed her to be a 2nd round pick of the expansion Tampa Bay Sun. Yet her correspondence with General Manager Steve Brown soured her on going to Tampa, so she set her sights on France. Logic told her that if the WBL was around in two years, she's come back and sign with a more local team, like the Gems or Stars. She would eventually play 25 games with the Gems in 1980-81.



Anne Gregory, who played at Fordham University.

As the middle of September rolled around Bob Milo was expressing frustrations with Blazejewski's agent, Bob Wolff. Wolff was so busy working for his NBA clients that Milo felt Carol was being pushed to the side. Milo felt that the Gems were also being made to look bad, because of a lack of progress. The game of waiting for Lieberman to sign didn't matter to Milo, because he wasn't going to offer Blaze more than he was paying co-MVP Ann Meyers.

Important Result – The Gems beat Cedar Knolls 14-13, behind Lynn Arturi's two run base hit.

On September 23rd the Gems made a trade with the Chicago Hustle. They did this with an eye on both the present and the future. The Gems sent All-Star guard Donna Geils to the Hustle for two 1981 draft picks and another pick in 1982. With the signing of Tara Heiss, the Gems believed Geils was expendable and worth quality draft picks.

As the end of September came to a close, and while the players prepared themselves for a new season, there were some major league undertakings in the WBL that affected them all. On September 30, all the WBL teams' owners had to prove they were financially capable of running a team for the whole season. The league didn't want any more disasters like last year.

In the end, the day known as "Black Tuesday" in the WBL, saw four WBL clubs suspend their operations. These included the 1979 WBL Champion Houston Angels, the 1980 WBL Champion New York Stars, the 1979 & 1980 WBL runners-up Iowa Cornets, and the cellar-dwelling Milwaukee Does. WBL league rules allowed each team up to two years of inactivity before they would be given an opportunity for readmittance into the league.

With four teams suspending operations the WBL needed to do make some more adjustments. The first was the naming of a new Commissioner, Sherwin Fischer. Mr. Fischer was a major figure in the success of the Chicago Hustle. The league office moved from New York City to Chicago. Also, the teams were placed into two new divisions.

Those two divisions were as follows:

Coastal Division

Dallas Diamonds
New Jersey Gems
New Orleans Pride
San Francisco Pioneers
Tampa Bay Sun

Central Division

Chicago Hustle
Minnesota Fillies
Nebraska Wranglers
St. Louis Streak

Any preliminary preparation work that teams had done needed to be scrapped for neater, cleaner, and up-to-date information. As opposed to the dispersal draft that was held last December when two teams folded the league determined that all of the players associated with these four teams were now free agents. They were free to negotiate with whatever teams they wanted.

With each team carrying about 15 players on the roster in the off season the 195 players (15x13 teams) now meant that only 135 players (15 x 9 teams) would have a job in the WBL. Some players opted to meet with a team closer to where they grew up. Others looked for stability by joining a team that they believed wouldn't fold and would pay them a fair wage.

Yet the number of casualties was more than just the players. Front office people, arena people, trainers, etc. from the dissolved teams also had to realize their dream had been stopped. Some people, like myself, were able to move on (Houston to Dallas) before the bloodletting took place. This website and these narratives would not exist, if it weren't for God allowing me to continue following my dream and being a part of the Diamonds.

How does a league know when they have become important or accepted? When someone believes that being involved with them would look good on their resume. One example was a young man, who applied for the assistant coaching job of a New Jersey college and claimed to be an assistant coach with the Gems. There is no known evidence of his team involvement, nor does Wanda Szeremeta remember him. (His name is known, but being withheld, just in case he was telling the truth and I was wrong).

Yet give him credit for using a source that was developing credibility – I wonder if he got the job?

What was another piece of evidence that the WBL was gaining traction? How about a Fan Club? Yet, it wasn't the creation by the parent clubs, but the fact that it made it into the Paterson News.

Heiss, Blazejowski fan clubs formed
The New Jersey Gems of the Women's Basketball League have formed individual fan clubs for two of their new players, Tara Heiss and Carol Blazejowski. For further information, contact the president of the Heiss club, Betty Tunny, 10 Orchard Rd., Chatham 07928, or the president of the Blazejowski club, Jean DeFilippis, 6909 Grand Ave., North Bergen 07047.

As we may remember earlier an important cog in the Montclair State dynasty, Alice Schmidt, wanted to play close to home. With the demise of the New York Stars, the 2nd round draft pick, now had a chance to play with some of her former teammates with the Gems. Yet when presented with a choice of sitting on the bench for a team close to home or playing regularly someplace else the competitor usually emerges with the desire to play.

Alice realized that the expansion Tampa Bay Sun could use a leader at the guard position and former teammate, Pat Mayo, out in San Francisco told her how much they needed a point guard as well. Schmidt would survey her options, because the Gems' training camp was going to begin on Monday October 13th.

The New Jersey Gems players began gathering for training camp. Among the missing were Ann Meyers, 1980 number one draft pick Helen Shreda and 1978 number one draft pick, Carol Blazejowski.

The Paterson News, on October 13th, were the first to publish the Gems' 1980-81 entire schedule. But, as we've learned over the years, newspapers don't research what they print. Can you find the problem?

Even though the Gems' star, Ann Meyers, was not in the picture it didn't seem that any newspaper was going to care or write about this hurdle. All the news was about Carol Blazejowski.

The stories about the Gems weren't about the missing MVP, but when was "she" going to sign? And everyone knew who "she was." Yet it wasn't just the local New Jersey papers, it was nationwide. From Hawaii to Alaska to Florida the articles wanted to know when would Blaze sign?

Gems' schedule

DECEMBER
14, New Orleans, away; 16, Tampa Bay, away; 17, San Francisco, home; 19, New York, away; 22, Chicago, home; 29, New York, home.

JANUARY
2, Chicago, away; 4, Minnesota, away; 7, Dallas, home; 10, New York, away; 12, Chicago, home; 14, St. Louis, away; 16, Omaha, away; 17, Iowa, away; 19, Iowa, home; 21, St. Louis, home; 26, Milwaukee, home; 28, New York, home.

FEBRUARY
2, Tampa Bay, home; 11, New Orleans, home; 16, St. Louis, home; 18, New York, home; 24, New York, away.

MARCH
2, Omaha, home; 4, Milwaukee, home; 6, New York, away; 9, Minnesota, home; 11, Houston, home; 14, Chicago, away; 15, Milwaukee, away; 19, Milwaukee, away; 21, St. Louis, away; 23, San Francisco, away.

Part of the frustration, for the Gems' owner Bob Milo, was that just as the two parties would be close to an agreement Blaze's agent, Bob Wolff, would "all of a sudden throw in some goodies that would really break our bank." Wolff, who had no trouble playing these financial games with the NBA teams who had deep pockets seemed to forget that Bob Milo was an individual with an advertising business.

When you put together the desire by Blazejowski to be the highest paid WBL player, at around \$50,000 a year, Ann Meyers to be paid \$40,000 for the coming year, and the team's new arena, South Mountain, costing about \$90,000 (\$5,000 x 18 games) for the season was it possible Milo was pricing himself into big trouble? This total didn't include 9-10 other players being paid a fair salary, front office staff, advertising, or traveling to away games.

This is the reason recognition of the owner's sacrifices needs to be constantly remembered.

Just before camp got started it was announced that Coach Kathy Mosolino would receive the Female Athlete of the Year Award on November 25th at the 15th Annual Bergen County Sports Banquet.

On October 20th the first of the former players from the New York Stars arrived. Each was a former All-Pro and one was a former Gem. Gail Tatterson, the Gems' leading scorer and rebounder in 1978-79 returned to try and lend her championship skills to the team. Gail's presence added to the front court and she was joined by former Olympian Gail Marquis, who played a big role in the Stars' dominance. These two were joined by All-Pro Janice Thomas which gave the Gems a very solid backcourt.

It seemed Janice Thomas would run the offense, because she led the league in assists last season with 8.6 per game. It was important to remember that Olympian Tara Heiss' flexibility allowed for a smooth backcourt combination.

As a floor general how good was Heiss while she was in Maryland from 1975-1978? Guess what? It isn't easy to find! Do you know why?

Tara played in the era where the NCAA didn't consider women's sports worth their time. So, the women were governed by a group called AIAW – Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women. It was founded in 1971 to govern women's college competitions. It wasn't until 1982 that the NCAA accepted women's sports as legitimate.

Editor: In the same way the NFL did not begin in the Super Bowl era. Whenever people talk about the great players of the NFL, they usually only consider the players since 1967.

Also, the NBA, and its hype, did not begin when ESPN started broadcasting in 1979. Yet that is as far back as people go when they talk about the greats. And don't get me started that the NBA refuses to recognize the existence of the ABA and the stats those players accrued.

It is vital for those of you who played college basketball to swamp the NCAA with letters and petitions forcing them to recognize the AIAW years.

How many championships did Delta State win? 0, per the NCAA stats.

How about Immaculata?

How many points did Blaze score in the NCAA? 0, therefore her points don't count.

Around the same time that Thomas and Tatterson signed the Gems also signed Ms. Reliable, Wanda Szeremeta, and Debra Comerie to their 1980-81 contracts.

Each year of the WBL's existence teams slowly began to realize the importance of pre-season games. Therefore, there were only two pre-season games the first year. The 2nd year had 23 games and the 3rd year had at least 22 games. One such pre-season game that was announced was the Gems against the expansion Tampa Bay Sun to be played on November 14th at Clifton High School.

With no news coming out of the Gems' training camp the next bit of news involved the word "close." The national newspapers again were focused on the Blaze and the fact that the two parties were "close." Some papers made the closeness a done-deal and others said that the principles were in place. Yet either way – Carol hadn't put her signature on a legal piece of paper to solidify an agreement.

Does anyone remember how many weeks the papers had Coach Howie Landa as the Gems coach before he finally signed on? I think it was about two month of "closeness."

So, as of October 22, after nine days of training camp there was still no Blaze and no Meyers. The speculation was that Blaze would show up, because she was so "close" to signing her contract.



Associated Press
Carol Blazejowski holds aloft her new contract after signing with the New Jersey Gems.

On Friday October 24th the Gems and Carol Blazejowski were all smiles as the official contract had finally been signed. After years of preparation for the Olympics and a major disappointment because of the boycott Carol was ready for the next stage of her career. She was now going to see her blood, sweat, and tears turned into lucrative green. No more amateur sacrifices, now it was going to be hard work, success, and money in the bank.

The 24th date was about one month after the Dallas Diamonds signed Nancy Lieberman. So, if waiting for the Liebs' numbers to be announced was a cause for the delay, we will never know. Yet if the \$50,000 a year amount for Carol was correct, she didn't win the highest paid player award. The evidence is in my possession.

With Blazejowski signing, the Gems made a trade with the Minnesota Fillies. Donna Simms, who refused to go to St. Louis in a trade last year, was sent to the Fillies for a 1981 10th Rd. draft pick. This created an obvious opening for 1st round pick Helen Shreda, if she were to sign.

Interestingly enough the newspapers from September to the beginning of training camp had more information about an "Ann Meyers" getting married or being flower girls than updates on the co-MVP of the league. How was it possible for the player that made the Gems a respectable franchise became persona-non-grata in New Jersey?

There were no rumors, no speculation, nothing. Other than the possibility of being traded to San Francisco, New Jersey didn't care about Ann Meyers.

Research shows no questions, articles or interest from the beginning of Gems camp, October 13th to October 27th, when an article finally appeared in the Albuquerque Journal. Why? The Energiee of the Ladies Professional Basketball Association were planning on getting Meyers to play for them. In all that time Ann's name was only used as a reference to compare with Carol's contract.

No one cared for the co-MVP of the league.

As November rolled around Ann's name reappeared. There was speculation that Ann wanted to renegotiate her contract, after Blazejowski signed. This was probably a speculative projection by the newspapers because of the immature attitude displayed by many NBA players. But that wasn't the case with Ann. She wanted something very simple and straightforward – money that she was owed from last season.

When the Gems missed three paychecks, per Ann's presentation, she declared herself a free agent for breach of contract. Yet she was willing to abide by whatever ruling the commissioner of the WBL, most likely Sherwin Fischer, believed was correct.

Asked if she wouldn't assume the WBL commissioner would rule for the contract because he would not want to lose her from the league, Meyers said, "I'm not assuming anything."

Meyers said, "As far as I know, the commissioner should make a ruling sometime this week," said Meyers.

On November 6th, after almost three weeks of training camp, the Gems made four cuts. Elaine Carroll and Ramona Benjamin were two of the players waived. The other two, Diana Biber and Cathy Inglese were also waived, but they had a unique commonality. Each of them had tried out for the Dallas Diamonds in August at a camp at Carson-Newman College in Tennessee.

Finally on November 10th Ann Meyers and the Gems made their presence known and it would involve a court. As noted before, in the Albuquerque newspapers, Ann Meyers had been negotiating with the new L.P.B.A. and this was proving true. For the Gems, and the WBL, only arbitration could solve the dispute between the two parties.

"If Ann and the Gems can agree to an arbitrator within 10 days, a hearing could be held as soon as November 22nd," Fischer told The Tribune today.

"If they can't agree, then it could go to the American Arbitration Association," said Fischer.

After a month in training camp the Gems made a deal with a team that hadn't existed before their training camp started. The Tampa Bay Sun, would become infamous as an official WBL franchise that never put a team on the floor. The same way the Washington Wiz, who drafted in 1978, but became the Dayton Rockettes, also never put a team on the floor. The Sun became the New England Gulls in November and the Gulls had 35 days to put together a team and a franchise before the December season openers.

The Gems sent two players to the Gulls in exchange for Cash Considerations. Each player had a background in the New England area. Sue Summons, the 4th round pick, went to college in Texas, but was from the Boston area. Therefore, any followers of girls' basketball in the New England area would know the name Sue Summons. The other player was Lynn Arturi, who played with the Stars in the first season and then with the Philadelphia Fox before they disbanded. After settling in with New Jersey last year she was now on her way back to her college stomping grounds, Northeastern, in New England.

The Gulls now had two more warm bodies to put out on the floor. What did New Jersey get? Cash Considerations. Yes, if you read the story of the New England Gulls, you will find cash was in short supply in the front office. In fact, the owner ran out of gas on his way back from the airport after picking up his new general manager – former Gems employee, Ernie Spinelli. This was only a foreshadowing of what life with the Gulls would be like. Therefore, the Gulls considered giving the Gems money – if they hit the lotto.

As this trade happened there was more news about Ann Meyers and arbitration took place. The Gems were not interested in trading her, because they felt they had a championship team and this was what the New Jersey fans deserved. Even though she was fined \$200 a day for holding out from camp, the Gems were hoping they had all the right cards to get her back on the floor for them.

Some front office people felt that Ann was looking for a way to get out of Jersey and end up in 'Frisco.



Ann Meyers — left her heart in San Francisco

1980-81 proved to be the third year of the WBL and even though the Gems, Chicago Hustle, and Minnesota Fillies were the last teams to survive three years it seemed each year and each training camp was vastly different.

After five weeks of looking at the same players and wondering how this team stacked up when compared to the other WBL teams the Gems finally had a pre-season game. The St. Louis Streak, who ended the previous season with an 11-game losing streak, came to Clifton, N.J. to face the Gems. But only two players, Adrian Mitchell and "Skinny" Davidson were a part to last year's team.

But before we get to the game, where Blaze put up 43 points, I came across something that I had never heard of.

Professional Athletes International – PAI.

“PAI is an umbrella for individual sports union groups,” said Richard Schaeffer, attorney for the National Football League Players Association. Affiliates of PAI are the NFLPA and players associations of the North American Soccer League, Canadian Football League, Major Indoor Soccer League and rodeo riders. The organization also has allowed individual members not belonging to an established union - such as WBL players - to join.

For the WBL, this could be an intermediate step before organizing its own players’ association.

Schaeffer already has filed complaints against the WBL on behalf of some women, although he says he is willing to help out non-members as well.

Among the cases still pending are the suit against the California Dreams, which turned into a nightmare for its personnel. The franchise folded this year and the players still are owed back pay.

I’d be surprised if any players in the league heard about this, because you can bet the owners weren’t going to tell them.

Back to basketball – The long two year wait for New Jersey’s prime asset, Carol Blazejowski, returned to the hardwood on Friday November 21st in Clifton, NJ. The sparse crowd in the Clifton High School gym was treated to 43 points and 16 rebounds from ‘The Blaze’ as she shot 14-25 from the field and a perfect 15 of 15 from the line.

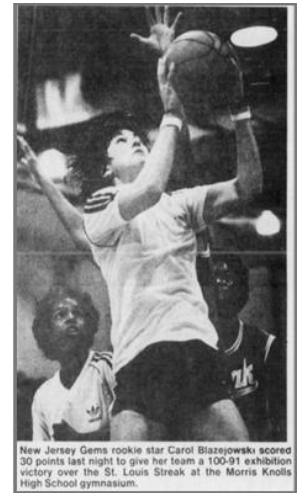
The Streak started with an 8-0 run, but the Gems fought back and after two Blazejowski baskets, the Gems took a 12-10 lead. After taking a 24-22 1st quarter lead, the Gems reeled off eight straight points to make the score 32-22. They kept their 10-point margin as they went into the half with a 51-41 lead.

In the 3rd quarter the Streak tightened things a bit, but with 11 made free throws to end the quarter the Gems held their 78-72 lead going into the 4th quarter. With a six-point burst the Streak got to within 85-84 with 7:35 left in the game. But the Olympians, Heiss and Blazejowski, took control to bring the lead up to 93-85 and eventually a 108-95 victory.

On top of Blazejowski’s 43, Tara Heiss came through with 24, while Wanda Szeremeta had 11 and Janice Thomas had 10. For the losing Streak, who were now 1-4 in the pre-season they were led by former New York Stars’ star Pearl Moore who had 24. Rookie Mary Fuller had 14 before she had to leave the game with an abdominal injury.

It was going to be a busy weekend for Coach Mosolino, because on Saturday the 22nd it was her job to impersonate Larry Gillman, if that was possible. The Streak had a game the next day up in Springfield, Mass. at Western New England College against the New England Gulls. With Mary Fuller in the hospital, Larry Gillman stayed behind in New Jersey as he sent six players up north. The six Streak players did not include any guards. So, when the Mosolino-led Streak lost to the Gulls 83-76 nobody should have been surprised. The 200 fans that attended probably weren’t exactly sure of what they witnessed. After the game Mosolino had to hurry back to Jersey.

The same two teams met again in Denville, NJ at Morris Knolls H.S. on Sunday November 23rd. A crowd of 300 came out to cheer every time Blazejowski touched the ball. Whether she was shooting, passing, or rebounding it resounded in cheers. It was recognized by the newspapers and the fans that this was probably not the team they would be seeing in the future. Not only was co-MVP Ann Meyers missing, but so were Willodean Harris and 1st round draft pick Helen Shreda.



New Jersey Gems rookie star Carol Blazejowski scored 30 points last night to give her team a 100-91 exhibition victory over the St. Louis Streak at the Morris Knolls High School gymnasium.

The fans were treated to a 100-91 Gems victory behind 30 points from Blazejowski. But the Gems' running game was fueled by Janice Thomas' 10 assists and 14 points, while Tara Heiss came through with 18 points and seven assists.

New Jersey Gems																	Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Blazejowski, Carol	12										0						30
Comerie, Debbie	34										0						19
Heiss, Tara	44										0	7					18
Jeffrey, Jill	14	Name not in Box Score										0				0	
Marquis, Gail	24										0						12
Szeremeta, Wanda	23										0						2
Tatterson, Gail	33	Name not in Box Score										0				0	
Thomas, Janice	10										0	10					14
Van Ness, Joan	32										0						1
Young, Faye	22										0						4
Young, Kaye	20	Name not in Box Score										0				0	
Adjustment		240															
Totals		240	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	0	0	0	0	100
			FG%	#DIV/0!			FT%	#DIV/0!			Team Rebs						

St. Louis Streak																	Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Cook, Jane Ellen	7																10
Davidson, Winsome	6																3
Fuller, Mary	22																2
Johnson, Lydia	50																21
Jones, Linnell	1																12
Moore, Pearl	12																15
Pope, Rowanna	11																2
Roberts, Patricia	44																18
Skimbo, Jenny																	2
Thompson, Rosie	10																6
																	0
																	0
Adjustment		240															
Totals		240	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	91
			FG%	#DIV/0!			FT%	#DIV/0!			Team Rebs						

In a short 36 game season the following quote should have raised some eyebrows in the New Jersey area:

"It'll take us some time for the girls to get into shape," said Mosolino. "The players will have to adjust. The new girls have plays to learn. It'll take until January or February until we'll be in the shape I know we can be in. I'm optimistic because of the determination in winning the championship."

By February 1st the Gems would have played 20 games.

On November 28th and 29th the Gems hosted the New Orleans Pride. Yet the 2nd game was played under unusual circumstances.

The Friday November 28th game was played at Secaucus High School before a capacity crowd. The Gems won their third pre-season game in a row with a 94-83 victory. Blazejowski added 44 points and 18 rebounds, while both Debbie Comerie and Janice Thomas added 20 points each.

The next game had no home team hosting as both teams flew to New England. The game was played at Salem State College and it was an introduction of women's pro basketball to the New England area. The recently transported Tampa Bay Sun to the New England area did not give the Gulls time to put together a team to host another team. Therefore,

Per the WBL book, Mad Seasons (pg. 246), the New Orleans Pride were also scheduled to fly up to play an exhibition against the Gulls, but the Gulls refused to pay their travel expenses. So, several players from the New Jersey Gems agreed to impersonate the Pride players and play against the Gulls. It didn't matter if a white player impersonated a black player, no one knew who anyone was yet.

So, according to this account the fans thought they saw the Gulls play the Pride, with the Pride being impersonated by New Jersey Gems.

Yet the newspaper account of November 30th clearly shows the Pride players beating the Gems players. What took place is that 1,700 fans paid \$5 each to see two teams play.

Either way – here are the results. The Gems, who were 3-0 in the preseason, still were missing Ann Meyers, who was being fined \$200 a day with the hopes she would return to honor her 3-year contract.

The two teams fought to a 23-23 1st quarter tie, after going 4 ½ minutes without scoring. Yes, with 7:30 on the clock the score was 0-0 with each team piling up the turnovers. By the 6:18 mark, there were 16 turnovers by the two teams. But at least they found the basket as the score ballooned to 10-10 by the halfway point of the quarter.

The Pride went ahead 35-27 by the 8:59 mark of the 2nd quarter, but the Gems tied it up at 40 with 2:12 left. By half time the Gems trailed 46-42. In the 3rd quarter, Blazejowski, who was playing with a slight virus scored 14 of the Gems' 20 points, but the Pride came through with 32 to take a 78-62 lead. The Pride beat the "Gull impersonators" 97-84.

The Gems were paced by Blazejowski's 25, Tara Heiss' 18, and Gail Marquis' 16. The Pride were led by Cindy Brogdon and Sharon Farrah's 16 points each. Vicky Chapman added 14 points to their winning cause.

New Jersey Gems																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Blazejowski, Carol	12		7				11				0		3 << at least				25
Comerie, Debbie	34		4				3				0						11
Heiss, Tara	44		7				4				0						18
Jeffrey, Jill	14	Name Not in Box Score															0
Marquis, Gail	24		6				4				0						16
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		1				2				0						4
Tatterson, Gail	33	Name Not in Box Score															0
Thomas, Janice	10		2				0				0						4
Van Ness, Joan	32		0				2				0						2
Young, Faye	22		2				0				0						4
Young, Kaye	20	Not Sure Which Young Played															0
Adjustment		240															
Totals		240	29	0	0	0	26	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	84
			FG%	#DIV/0!			FT%	#DIV/0!			Team Rebs						

New Orleans Pride																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Andrykowski, Kathy	32	Name Not in Box Score															0
Blalock, Sybil	10		6				1										13
Booker, Betty	20		1				0										2
Brogdon, Cindy	44		8				0										16
Chapman, Vicky	30		6				2										14
Crusoe, Beverly	25		2				0										4
Farrah, Sharon	11		6				4										16
Feeney, Eileen	55	Name Not in Box Score															0
Forest, Augusta	31		3				2										8
Hardy, Bertha	33		6				0										12
Peters, Sue	23		1				2										4
Wayment, Heidi	22		4				0										8
Adjustment		240															
Totals		240	43	0	0	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	97
			FG%	#DIV/0!			FT%	#DIV/0!			Team Rebs						

The Gems were really preparing for the difficult, but sometimes sporadic WBL schedule, because after playing the Pride two games in a row they stuck around New England to play a third game in three days.

The game took place in North Andover, Mass. at an unknown site where the Gems won 96-79. The Gems ended their preseason with a 4-1 record, while the Gulls were 1-1 for their preseason games.

With all the pre-season games finally over the Gems were excited over the team they had put together. Yet it was still not a complete team as Willodean Harris was in a contract dispute and Ann Meyers was not present. The uplifting news for the Gems was a poll conducted among the league's general managers that said the Gems were the favorites to win the Coastal Division. Only eight of the nine G.M.'s voted, because someone there were too many unknowns to take into account. The Hustle were the overall favorites to win the championship.

The voting was as follows:

<u>Coastal Division</u>		<u>Central Division</u>	
New Jersey	41	Chicago	61
New Orleans	37	Minnesota	31
Dallas	33	St. Louis	22
San Francisco	22	Nebraska	22
New England	3		

The predicted MVP's were dominated by first-year players: Carol Blazejowski, Nancy Lieberman, or Cindy Bogdon.

The 3rd season of the WBL officially began the same day the Gems and Gulls played in Massachusetts. The Minnesota Fillies hosted the resurrected and transplanted California Dreams, who were now called the Nebraska Wranglers. The Fillies set a WBL record for futility for the least number of points scored in a game as they put up 60. The Wranglers' 74 gave them an easy 74-60 victory to start their season.

The first head-to-head matchup between two of the most anticipated stars in the women's game took place in Dallas at Moody Coliseum on Friday December 5, 1981. The Gems, led by Carol Blazejowski, were about to face the Nancy Lieberman led Dallas Diamonds.

The Diamonds, who were 7-28 the previous year and ended the year with an 11-game losing streak, had a new coach, and nine new players. During the preseason Dallas was 5-1. This included an 80-66 demolishing of the 8-0 Chicago Hustle in front of 4,616 Old Dominion fans who wanted an alumni battle between Lieberman and Inge Nissen.

The preseason 4-1 Gems took a 27-26 1st quarter lead that disappointed the 2,217 fans who came out. In the 2nd quarter Dallas' youth and exuberance overcame the mature steadiness of the Gems with a 34-18 quarter to take a 60-45 half time lead. The two teams settled down into a defensive 3rd quarter as the Diamonds added to their lead by one point, 76-60.

After 48 minutes the Gems started off their third year just like the other years, with a loss. The final score was 102-87. Blazejowski led the way with 24, with an 8-8 from the free throw line, but a poor 8-22 from the field, along with just six rebounds. All-Pro Janice Thomas was the next high scorer with 20, but with only four assists.

This game exposed two things about the Gems. First, an unexalted star was going to emerge, as ex-Olympian, ex-World Champion Gail Marquis came through with 18 points and 21 rebounds. The other item exposed was the lack of trusted players coming off the bench. Four Gems played over 40 minutes each, and the 5th starter, Debbie Comerie played 33 minutes.

For the Diamonds Lieberman didn't shoot much better than the Blaze with an 8-20 from the field for 21 points, but her 11 assists showed she was trusting her new teammates. All-Pro Alfredda Abernathy came through with 19 points, but only three rebounds. An undrafted newcomer, Rosalind Jennings shot 9 of 9 from the field for 18 points.

New Jersey Gems																	Team Game #	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Blazejowski, Carol	12	43	8	22			8	8	3	3	6	4	5	2	5	0	24	0.814
Comerie, Debbie	34	33	2	4			0	0	4	1	5	0	5	1	2	0	4	0.242
Heiss, Tara	44	40	2	5	0	1	7	8	2	3	5	1	4	1	10	0	11	0.225
Jeffrey, Jill	14	Name Not in Newspapers																
Marquis, Gail	24	42	6	13			6	7	7	14	21	0	2	2	3	2	18	0.905
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	17	1	3			4	4	0	0	0	0	3	1	3	1	6	0.235
Tatterson, Gail	33	5	1	1			0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0.400
Thomas, Janice	10	44	10	22			0	0	1	1	2	4	3	3	4	0	20	0.659
Van Ness, Joan	32	6	0	0			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	-0.167
Young, Faye	22	7	0	0			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	-0.286
Young, Kaye	20	3	1	3			0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	1.667
Totals		240	31	73	0	1	25	27	17	23	40	10	23	10	30	3	87	0.529
			FG%	42.5%			FT%	92.6%		Team Rebs	4							
Special Notes:																		
Technical: Gail Marquis																		
Willodean Harris in Contract dispute - 1st 8 games																		

Dallas Diamonds																	Team Game #	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Abernathy, Alfredda	34	34	9	17			1	3	0	3	3	0	3	0	1	1	19	0.618
Barnes, Vanessa	11	18	2	5			0	0	0	1	1	1	4	1	3	0	4	0.278
Browning, Hattie	22	27	2	10			2	4	2	2	4	2	2	2	2	1	6	0.519
Bruton, Cindy	20	12	4	7			2	2	1	1	2	0	2	1	0	1	10	1.083
Fancher, Sherri	14	12	0	2			0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	3	0	0	-0.083
Gillom, Peggie	42	12	1	3			0	0	1	1	2	0	1	0	2	0	2	0.167
Jennings, Rosalind	15	33	9	9			0	0	0	3	3	4	2	3	5	0	18	0.818
Lieberman, Nancy	10	34	8	20			5	6	6	1	7	11	3	1	6	1	21	1.324
Sacoco, Katrina	33	2	0	2			0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0.500
Shoemaker, Cathy	24	20	5	10			2	4	4	0	4	1	1	2	2	0	12	0.900
Swindell, Retha	35	22	2	6			2	2	3	3	6	0	2	2	0	1	6	0.636
Walker, Gwen	40	14	2	8			0	0	0	3	3	0	4	1	1	0	4	0.500
Totals		240	44	99	0	0	14	21	18	18	36	20	27	13	25	5	102	0.692
			FG%	44.4%			FT%	66.7%		Team Rebs	1							

After the game the Gem had another Coastal competition against their old buddies, the New Orleans Pride on Saturday December 6th. The game in the Super Dome attracted 3,120, which was a nice number, but nowhere near the record setting 8,452 they had for their opener last year.

The Pride jumped out to a quick 20-14 1st quarter lead which they built up to 26-14 with 8:53 left in the 2nd quarter. The Gems, who again had four players play over 40 minutes, took advantage of poor shooting by the Pride to outscore them 32-15. By the half Blazejowski had 17 and Tara Heiss had 11 and the Gems had a 46-41 lead.

The 3rd quarter belonged to the Pride's Cindy Bogdon as she scored 10 of the team's 1st 12 points to take a 53-48 lead. The flustered Gems helped the Pride by turning the ball over 13 times to the Pride's four, as the Gems were outscored 26-10 and trailed 67-56 after three quarters.

In the 4th quarter Coach Mosolino picked up her 2nd technical and an ejection at the 4:28 mark. This was after they had reduced the score down to 76-70. Jill Jeffrey took over for the team, but back-to-back games and 40+ minutes for the starters proved too much. The Gems fell to 0-2 with an 87-79 loss.

The Gems were led by Carol Blazejowski's 31 points. She also pulled down nine rebounds. Tara Heiss came through with 20 points, but only one assist, because Janice Thomas was running the show. JT picked up nine assists for the game. Gail Marquis pulled down 15 rebounds and Debbie Comerie grabbed 12 as well.



NO's Bertha Hardy Watches Gems' Gail Marquis (34) Outjump Debbie Comerie. —Staff Photo By G. Andrew Boyd

The 2-0 Pride, who had beaten the New England on December 4th were led by balanced attack of Bertha Hardy and Sybil Blalock with 15 points each and Brogdon with 14. The Pride also had four players with over seven rebounds.

New Jersey Gems																	Team Game #	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Blazejowski, Carol	12	40	14	30	0	1	3	3		9	9	0	3				31	1.000
Comerie, Debbie	34	27	2	6			6	8		12	12	0	5				10	0.815
Heiss, Tara	44	43	7	16	1	1	3	5		7	7	1	2				20	0.674
Jeffrey, Jill	14	0	0	0			0	0		0	0	0	0				0	
Marquis, Gail	24	41	4	14			0	0		15	15	0	3				8	0.561
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	22	1	4			0	0		3	3	3	4				2	0.500
Tatterson, Gail	33	7	1	4			0	1		3	3	0	0				2	0.714
Thomas, Janice	10	42	2	12	0	1	0	0		3	3	9	3				4	0.595
Van Ness, Joan	32	8	0	0			0	0		2	2	0	0				0	0.250
Young, Faye	22	9	1	1			0	0		3	3	2	0				2	1.000
Young, Kaye	20	1	0	0			0	0		0	0	0	0				0	0.000
Adjustment															32			
Totals		240	32	87	1	3	12	17	0	57	57	15	20	0	32	0	79	0.558
			FG%	36.8%			FT%	70.6%	Team Rebs									
Special Notes:																		
Technical: Coach Kathy Mosolino (2) - Ejected 4:28 4th qtr																		
Willodean Harris in Contract dispute - 1st 8 games																		

In the 2nd quarter the Gems began to widen the gap as they had a 43-34 lead. Behind nine 2nd quarter points from Blazejewski the Gems put together a 14-6 blitz to end the quarter with a 57-40 half time lead. The fact that Lieberman was held to two first half points on 1-8 from the floor and the team could just generate 40 points probably exposed a Diamonds' weakness.



Photo by Richard Chu
Diamonds' Nancy Lieberman (left photo) pulls down a rebound in front of Gems' Wanda Szeremeta. (Right) Gems' Carol Blazejewski leaps for joy while rooting for team last night at South Mountain Arena

The 3rd quarter began with the Gems losing five points off their 17-point lead as Dallas crept to within 65-53 near the halfway point. But with four points from Tara Heiss and four points from Gail Marquis and four other points the 12-0 run blew the score up to 77-53. The Gems kept the pressure on with Janice Thomas handing out assists (12 for the game), so the Gems ended the 3rd quarter with an 85-59 lead. In the end the Gems who shot 56.8% from the floor (42-74) came away with a 110-93 victory. The fans, who paid \$7.50 and \$10 for tickets, couldn't fault the action, though it was a sloppy game with 46 turnovers and 67 free throws.

The Gems were led by Blazejewski's 28 (10-13 from the field) and Gail Marquis' 26. Janice Thomas, probably held back by foul trouble with five, came through with 10 points, 12 assists, and six rebounds in only 26 minutes.

The Diamonds were led by Rosalind Jennings 26 points on 10-15 from the field and Alfreda Abernathy's 15 points. Lieberman finished the Battle of the Stars with 12 points on 6-19 from the field, 0 free throws, 11 assists, and eight rebounds.

New Jersey Gems																			Team Game #	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat		
Blazejewski, Carol	12	37	10	13			8	9	2	4	6	9	2	0	0	0	28	1.405		
Comerie, Debbie	34	27	2	4			4	6	1	8	9	0	6	2	3	2	8	0.593		
Heiss, Tara	44	37	7	13	1	1	2	2	0	4	4	8	1	3	10	0	17	0.811		
Jeffrey, Jill	14	Name Not in Newspapers																		
Marquis, Gail	24	42	10	15			6	8	2	10	12	0	2	1	4	1	26	0.833		
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	23	3	10			4	4	2	1	3	1	5	2	1	0	10	0.696		
Tatterson, Gail	33	23	2	6			1	2	1	3	4	2	3	2	0	0	5	0.652		
Thomas, Janice	10	26	5	9			0	2	1	5	6	12	5	2	4	0	10	1.462		
Van Ness, Joan	32	14	2	3			0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	3	0	4	0.143		
Young, Faye	22	6	0	0			0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	-0.167		
Young, Kaye	20	5	1	1			0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	2	0	2	0.600		
Totals		240	42	74	1	1	25	33	9	36	45	33	27	13	28	3	110	0.858		
			FG%	56.8%			FT%	75.8%		Team Rebs	4									
Special Notes:																				
Technical: Gail Marquis																				
Willodean Harris in Contract dispute - 1st 8 games																				

Dallas Diamonds																		Team Game #
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Abernathy, Alfredda	34	26	5	13			5	8	6	2	8	0	2	0	0	1	15	0.885
Barnes, Vanessa	11	27	6	11			1	1	1	0	1	1	3	1	4	0	13	0.481
Browning, Hattie	22	18	2	5			2	5	1	1	2	0	2	3	0	0	6	0.611
Bruton, Cindy	20	16	1	3			2	2	0	3	3	0	1	0	0	1	4	0.438
Fancher, Sherri	14	6	2	2			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	4	0.500
Gillom, Peggie	42	8	0	4			0	0	1	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0.250
Jennings, Rosalind	15	29	10	15			6	8	0	4	4	3	4	1	3	0	26	1.172
Lieberman, Nancy	10	36	6	19	0	1	0	0	4	4	8	11	3	5	5	0	12	1.167
Sacoco, Katrina	33	6	0	3			0	0	3	2	5	0	2	1	1	0	0	0.833
Shoemaker, Cathy	24	25	3	8			2	2	2	1	3	0	4	0	0	0	8	0.440
Swindell, Retha	35	23	1	4			1	2	1	1	2	0	3	3	2	2	3	0.261
Walker, Gwen	40	20	0	4			2	6	2	3	5	3	3	2	0	0	2	0.750
Totals		240	36	91	0	1	21	34	21	22	43	18	28	18	18	4	93	0.717
			FG%	39.6%			FT%	61.8%		Team Rebs	0							
Special Notes:																		

While the Gems' victory added another defeat to the Diamonds' road streak, the fireworks going on outside the court were even more volatile. Of course, the unanswered Ann Meyers' question received the following response from Blazejewski:

"Annie is an important issue only because everywhere we go, people say, 'Where's Annie?' Her contract problems are not a concern of the players, it is a concern of management. We will win with or without and Meyers."

Not only was Annie being fined \$200 a day, she was going to be sued for a million dollars by the Gems for breach of contract. Not only that but management was upset that she shot a 7-Up commercial with Magic Johnson wearing a Gems' #15 uniform.

If she were playing, the team and the league would be delirious, but now it all looked like a black eye to the league. Yet, in reality there were probably only 10,000 people who knew or cared about Ann Meyers' contract situation and several million who saw two excellent basketball players enjoying a 7-Up.

The Gems were also still negotiating with Willodean Harris, who was not answering her phone. As for first round pick Helen Shreda her negotiations came to a halt as the team wrote her off as any part of the team's future.

The team also had to overcome negative publicity by local columnists who had the following to say:

Well, how can you take a pro league serious when it has to borrow its hardwood from Nassau Community College and its baskets from Fordham University?

And how can you take a league serious when the scoreboard reads: Montclair 110, Guests 93?

And what about the dog mascot who barks throughout the game? And the small crowds, that make it possible to hear the dog?

The WBL sure doesn't have very much going for it – except the two players on the floor last night.

The home game on the 8th with a win was that the Gems needed as they had three road games coming up over a four-day period of time. New Jersey began the year with six of their first seven games on the road.

With a 1-2 record the Gems needed another win to get to .500 and a road game against the (0-3) New England Gulls was just what they needed. The game, on Thursday December 11th, was played at North Essex Community College in Haverhill, Mass. As opposed to the 1,700 at Salem State College, where the Gems played the Pride, or the 2,014 the Gulls had against the Diamonds on the 9th, only 300 came out to see this game.

The Gems fell behind 23-19, which they turned around quickly, but not dominantly, as they went into the half with a slim 44-42 lead. The 3rd quarter proved to be all Gems as they put up 36 to the Gulls 20 for an 80-62 lead. All 11 Gems scored in the 103-86 victory.

Blazejowski had 27, while Gail Marquis chipped in 21. The guard combo of Janice Thomas and Tara Heiss scored 15 & 14 respectively for the 2-2 Gems. The Gulls top scorers were All-Pro and former New York Star Althea Gwyn with 26, Old Dominion rookie Cris Critelli with 19, and former Gems' draft pick Sue Summons with 17.

New Jersey Gems																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Blazejowski, Carol	12		10				7				0						27
Comerie, Debbie	34		1				0				0						2
Heiss, Tara	44		7				0				0						14
Jeffrey, Jill	14		0				2				0						2
Marquis, Gail	24		6				9				0						21
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		2				3				0						7
Tatterson, Gail	33		1				0				0						2
Thomas, Janice	10		7				1				0						15
Van Ness, Joan	32		1				0				0						2
Young, Faye	22		2				0				0						4
Young, Kaye	20		3				1				0						7
Adjustment		240															
Totals		240	40	0	0	0	23	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	103
			FG%	#####			FT%	#DIV/0!	Team Rebs								
Special Notes:																	
Willodean Harris in Contract dispute - 1st 8 games																	

New England Gulls																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Arturi, Lynn	17	Name not in Newspaper															
Booker, Gerry			1				1				0						3
Cooper, Accronetta	44		4				2				0						10
Critelli, Cris	6		6				7				0						19
Gwyn, Althea	33		9				8				0						26
Hale, Melinda	22		0				0				0						0
Hastings, Martha	9	Name not in Newspaper															
Rajcula, Jody	24		3				1				0						7
Schlesinger, Lisa	11		2				0				0						4
Simms, Donna	32		0				0				0						0
Slinker, Tina	7		0				0				0						0
Summons, Sue	13		6				5				0						17
Adjustment		240															
Totals		240	31	0	0	0	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	86
			FG%	#####			FT%	#DIV/0!	Team Rebs								

Game two of the road trip gave them a day off as they travelled to St. Louis for a game in Keil Auditorium against the (0-2) St. Louis Streak. Just like the Diamonds who carried an 18-game road losing streak into New Jersey and went out losers, the Gems wanted to continue the Streak's 13-game (11 last year and 2 this year) losing streak.

A strong supportive home opener crowd of 2,511 came out to watch a Streak team, who had only two returning players from last year, take a 21-20 1st quarter lead. By the half the Gems had secured a slight 44-41 lead, which they expanded to 65-59 after three quarters.

The Gems held the lead and then raised it to nine points with just a few minutes left. As the two volatile coaches yelled instructions the Streak used their noisy crowd advantage to finally tie the score at 86-86 with 1:03 remaining. Neither team could score in the last 63 seconds, so they went to overtime.

The Streak took a 92-88 with 1:50 left on two Mary Fuller baskets. (which means she recovered from her internal injuries she received in New Jersey on November 21st). To show the Gems weren't depending on Blaze to carry them, Tara Heiss, Janice Thomas, and Debbie Comerie all scored in the last 1:50 to give the Gems all the points they needed for a 94-92 victory.

The Gems raised their record to 3-2 and the Streak had now lost 14 in a row. For the Gems, Blazejowski had 28, while Comerie added 23. St. Louis was led by former New York Star Pearl Moore who had 24, followed by Rosie Thompson's 13, Mary Fuller's 12, and Patricia Roberts' 12.

New Jersey Gems																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Blazejowski, Carol	12										0						28
Comerie, Debbie	34										0						23
Heiss, Tara	44										0						10
Jeffrey, Jill	14	Name not in Newspaper															
Marquis, Gail	24										0						8
Szeremeta, Wanda	23										0						13
Tatterson, Gail	33	Name not in Newspaper															
Thomas, Janice	10										0						10
Van Ness, Joan	32										0						2
Young, Faye	22	Name not in Newspaper									0						0
Young, Kaye	20	Name not in Newspaper									0						0
Adjustment		265	39	90			16	18					26				
Totals		265	39	90	0	0	16	18	0	0	0	0	26	0	0	0	94
			FG%	43.3%			FT%	88.9%	Team Rebs	<input type="text"/>							
Special Notes:																	
Willodean Harris in Contract dispute - 1st 8 games																	

St. Louis Streak																		Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	
Cook, Jane Ellen	7	Name not in Newspaper															0	0
Davidson, Winsome	6																0	5
Fuller, Mary	22																0	12
Johnson, Lydia	50																0	11
Jones, Linnell	1																0	5
Moore, Pearl	12																0	24
Murphy, Donna	42																0	4
Pope, Rowanna	11																0	6
Roberts, Patricia	44																0	12
Thompson, Rosie	10																0	13
Adjustment		265	34	104			24	38					19					
Totals		265	34	104	0	0	24	38	0	0	0	0	19	0	0	0	92	
			FG%	32.7%			FT%	63.2%	Team Rbs									

The next Gems game was on Sunday December 14th in Omaha, Nebraska against the Wranglers. As the new kids on the block, the Wranglers were doing their best to attract and entertain their customer base. Their home opener, the week before, had an expected crowd of 5,000, but a paralyzing ice storm kept people away. The crowd of 1,257 was good, but disappointing. Therefore, their newspaper ad looked like this:

The (2-1) Wranglers were able to update their ad with current local info, but the fact that no one knew Ann Meyers was Missing In Action, didn't seem to register with them.

Wranglers' coach, Steve Kirk, tried to amp up the publicity by comparing the Gems to the NBA's emerging powerhouse, the Philadelphia 76ers. The 1980 Sixers were loaded with talented All-Stars like Dr. J, Maurice Cheeks, Bobby Jones, and Darryl Dawkins.

Kirk felt that with Olympians like Blazejowski, Heiss, and Marquis, along with All-Stars like Janice Thomas and Wanda Szeremeta the Gems had put together a great collection of stars.

Sunday, December 14th
3 P.M., Omaha Civic Auditorium
Nebraska Wranglers
 vs.
New Jersey Gems
 (Ann Meyers of UCLA)

Due to weather conditions all tickets that were not used for Sunday 12/7 game will be honored this week.

Nebraska Wranglers

For Season tickets or Group Rates call 895-6114



World-Herald
 Gloria Beasley, left, Nebraska; Miss Comerle . . . reach for the ball already in the hand of a hidden player.

Despite an afternoon start and great publicity only 915 came out to the Omaha Civic Auditorium to see New Jersey take a lead when Tara Heiss scored nine points in a two-minute stretch. But Nebraska was able to gain control and took a 25-22 lead. The Wranglers held the Gems scoreless for four minutes straight in the 2nd quarter and took a 45-36 lead into the half time locker room. Nebraska raised their lead to as many as 11, but each time the Gems came back until the score was 65-57 after three quarters.

The Wranglers had what they thought was a safe lead at 79-70 with 1:24 left, when Blazejowski completed a three-point play to make the score 79-73. Baskets by Heiss and Debbie Comerie made the score 79-77 with 16 seconds left. When Carol Chason hit only one of three free throws the Gems still had a chance at 80-77, but they could not secure the rebound on the last miss. In the end the Gems fell 80-77, and having withstood five games on the road the team was a solid 3-3.

For the first time in the season Blazejowski scored less than 20 points with 19, but this still led the team. Tara Heiss was next with 18. But the person who finally made their presence known was Gail Tatterson, who had 13. This was good news, based on the points the former All-Pro had put up in four other games. Her 2,2,5,2, and Did Not Play were not encouraging through the first five games.

For the (3-1) Wranglers, Rosie Walker posted the first of five lifetime 20-20 games. Her 28 points and 20 rebounds were establishing her as a force to deal with. Carol Chason was the only other Wrangler with double figures as she added 13.

New Jersey Gems																	Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Blazejowski, Carol	12		8				3				0						19
Comerie, Debbie	34		4				0				0						8
Heiss, Tara	44		8				2				0						18
Jeffrey, Jill	14	Name not in Newspaper															
Marquis, Gail	24		5				1				0						11
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		1				0				0						2
Tatterson, Gail	33		4				5				0						13
Thomas, Janice	10		3				0				0						6
Van Ness, Joan	32		0				0				0						0
Young, Faye	22	Name Not in Newspaper															0
Young, Kaye	20	Name Not in Newspaper															0
Adjustment		240															
Totals		240	33	0	0	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	77
			FG%	#####			FT%	#DIV/0!	Team Rebs								
Special Notes:																	
Willodean Harris in Contract dispute - 1st 8 games																	

Nebraska Wranglers																	Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Beasley, Genia	34		4				0				0						8
Chason, Carol	10		6				1				0						13
Flora, Janet	32	Name not in Newspaper															
Greene, Vivian	14		4				0				0						8
Jordan, Kim	30		3				0				0						6
Kunzmann, Connie	44		0				1				0						1
Lewis, Charlotte	50		2				0				0						4
Pope, Peggy	20	Name not in Newspaper															
Taylor, Susan	24		2				2				0						6
Walker, Rosie	40		10				8			20	20						28
Warlick, Holly	22		1				2				0						4
Wright, Josephine	42		1				0				0						2
Adjustment		240															
Totals		240	33	0	0	0	14	0	0	20	20	0	0	0	0	0	80
			FG%	#####			FT%	#DIV/0!	Team Rebs								

The Gems returned home to prepare for a visit from the San Francisco Pioneers, who had only played one game compared to the Gems six. Yet the Pioneers had played five pre-season game and succeeded in losing all five.

Therefore, their 0-1 record was somewhat of a surprise as they lost their home opener, 104-102, to the Dallas Diamonds who were playing without Nancy Lieberman. The Gems also continued to perform without Willodean Harris and "What's-her-Name?"

The Gems jumped out to a 27-24 1st quarter lead, which became 45-38, with the help of 19 Blazejowski points. In the first five plus minutes after the half the Gems raised their lead to 63-45 behind great passing and shooting from Tara Heiss and Janice Thomas. Over the next 6 minutes they scored another 16 points to grab a 79-56 advantage.

A 10-4 4th quarter beginning gave the Gems an 89-60 lead with seven minutes left in the game. A 14-2 Pioneers' burst brought the score to 91-74 with 4:30 left. As the buzzer sounded the Gems had outscored the Pioneers in all four quarters as they finished with a 104-77 victory.

This game was like a home-coming as four Montclair State stars Blazejowski, Wanda Szeremeta, and Jill Jeffreys reconnected with the Pioneer's Pat Colasurdo Mayo. After several warm friendly embraces the two teams had to acknowledge one thing about this game – it was *COLD* in the arena.

The Wednesday December 17th game drew a crowd of 780 (which included 'no-shows' according to owner Bob Milo) and had to suffer through a very cold South Mountain Arena. The 15° outside temperature seemed to soak through the walls. Was this an exaggeration? Probably not, as the headlines said: Gems 'Ice' 104-77 Victory.

It seemed that the Arena management only turned on the arena's heat only minutes before the game. The basketball floor, which was laid over the ice of the public ice skating rink, also played a role in the cold.

The following headline and article summed up the night: 'The Blaze' Keeps Gems From Cold

Tara Heiss walked off the basketball court at halftime Wednesday night with a towel draped over her shoulders. A closer look revealed that the New Jersey Gems' playmaking guard was shivering beneath the blue terry cloth.

"It was freezing!" shrieked her teammate Gail Tatterson following the game. "Even after playing four or five minutes, we still were cold."

Faye Young, who came off the bench to score seven points in eight minutes of play saw it differently.

"When I got up there for those foul shots in the 4th quarter, I couldn't push the ball off I couldn't push off the ball because my hands were so cold," she said. Young missed on two out of the three of those chances and one of her shots never reached the vicinity of the basket's rim.

As a team 'the Blaze' led the way with 30 points on 11 of 24, and nine rebounds. These 30 points moved her to the top of the WBL scoring race with 26.7 points per game. Gail Marquis came through with 18 points, but it was the guard combination of Janice Thomas and Tara Heiss who destroyed the Pioneers. Thomas was one steal away from a Triple-Double as she had 18 points, 11 assists, and nine steals. Heiss added to this with 16 points, five assists, and seven steals. Together that was 34 points, 16 assists, and 16 steals.

The Pioneers had three players who barely reached double figure points as Anita Ortega had 12 points, while rookie Cindy Haugejorde and Pat Mayo had 10 points each.

New Jersey Gems																	Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Blazejowski, Carol	12		11	24			8	10		9	9						30
Comerie, Debbie	34		1				2	2			0						4
Heiss, Tara	44	20	8				0	0			0	5		7			16
Jeffrey, Jill	14		0				0	0			0						0
Marquis, Gail	24		8				2	2			0						18
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		2				2	2			0						6
Tatterson, Gail	33		0				1	2			0						1
Thomas, Janice	10		8	9			2	2			0	11		9			18
Van Ness, Joan	32		1				2	5			0						4
Young, Faye	22	8	3				1	3			0						7
Young, Kaye	20		0				0	0			0						0
Adjustment		212		48						29		15	25	9	22		
Totals		240	42	81	0	0	20	28	0	38	9	31	25	25	22	0	104
			FG%	51.9%			FT%	71.4%		Team Rebs							
Special Notes:																	
Willodean Harris in Contract dispute - 1st 8 games																	

San Francisco Pioneers																	Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Draving, Doris	50		2				0	2			0						4
Dunkle, Nancy	40		3				0	0			0						6
English, Margaret	32		4				0	2		9	9						8
Haugejorde, Cindy	43		4				2	3			0						10
Hicks, Cardie	10		4				1	3			0						9
Mayo, Pat	13		4				2	3			0						10
McKinney, Musiette	33		2				1	4			0						5
Ortega, Anita	11		4				4	5			0						12
Ricketts, Debbie	8	Name Not in Newspapers															0
Washington, Suzanne	22		1				2	2			0						4
Williams, Roberta	1		4				1	2			0						9
Adjustment		240		69						37		19	27	13	32		
Totals		240	32	69	0	0	13	26	0	46	9	19	27	13	32	0	77
			FG%	46.4%			FT%	50.0%		Team Rebs							

The (4-3) Gems had four days to get warmed up and convince South Mountain Arena they needed to be taken seriously and have the heat on for games.

Editor: Which reminded me of the 1980's Tank McNamara comic where the high school principal told the janitor there was a girls basketball game that afternoon and the janitor asked, "Do you want me to pull out the bleachers?"

Coach Mosolino gave the team four days away from South Mountain as the team tried to resolve the heat issue. It was determined that with an ice-skating rink below the court the air temperature had to stay cooler than usual to prevent condensation from forming on the court. The Gems were going to have to be a tougher breed than the other WBL teams.

The (0-5) New England Gulls came to South Mountain Arena for a Sunday December 21st game. The 33° outside temperature allowed 1,035 hardy dedicated Gems fans to watch the Gems continue their quarter streak of outscoring the opponents as they took a 27-18 1st quarter lead. After the Gems lead crept up to 38-27, the Gulls dominating star, Althea Gwyn, picked up her 4th foul and had to sit. The Gems put together a 14-0 streak to take a commanding 52-27 lead with about a minute left in the half. The 55-31 halftime score blew up to 81-50 after three quarters.

The Gems backed off and were outscored 32-27 in the 4th quarter as they raised their record to 5-3 with a 108-82 victory. This was their 3rd home victory in a row and all three times the team scored more than 100 points.

The Gems had four players in double figures with Blazejowski hitting her average with 28, Heiss with 17, Thomas with 15, and Marquis with 12. Unfortunately, no other stats were available as you could bet Heiss and Thomas had plenty of assists and steals against a weak New England team.

Despite having to sit in the 2nd quarter with four fouls Althea Gwyn still proved to be a force as she had 27 points and 19 rebounds. This meant she was one rebound shy of another 20 point-20 rebound game. Over her three years in the WBL she had 13 games with at least 20-20. Her best was a 38-point 28-rebound game in 1979 against the Dayton Rockettes.

The Gulls Cris Critelli came through with 19 and one former Gem, Lynn Arturi, added 14 points, while the other former Gem, Sue Summons, was shut out.

New Jersey Gems																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Blazejowski, Carol	12	10	10				8				0						28
Comerie, Debbie	34	10	4				0				0						8
Heiss, Tara	44	10	8				1				0						17
Jeffrey, Jill	14	10	2				1				0						5
Marquis, Gail	24	10	5				2				0						12
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	10	0				3				0						3
Tatterson, Gail	33	10	3				2				0						8
Thomas, Janice	10	10	5				5				0						15
Van Ness, Joan	32	10	3				0				0						6
Young, Faye	22	10	2				0				0						4
Young, Kaye	20	10	1				0				0						2
Adjustment		130															
Totals		240	43	0	0	0	22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	108
			FG%	#####			FT%	#DIV/0!	Team Rebs								
Special Notes:																	
Willodean Harris in Contract dispute - 1st 8 games																	
Everyone played at least 10 minutes																	

New England Gulls																	Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Arturi, Lynn	17		7				0				0						14
Booker, Gerry			2				0				0						4
Cooper, Accronetta	44		0				0				0						0
Critelli, Cris	6		8				3				0						19
Gwyn, Althea	33		12				3			19	19		4 <<at least				27
Hastings, Martha	9		0				0				0						0
Rajcula, Jody	24		1				0				0						2
Schlesinger, Lisa	11		3				0				0						6
Simms, Donna	32		1				0				0						2
Slinker, Tina	7		3				2				0						8
Summons, Sue	13		0				0				0						0
Adjustment		240															
Totals		240	37	0	0	0	8	0	0	19	19	0	4	0	0	0	82
			FG%	#####			FT%	#DIV/0!	Team Rbs								

The Gems ended 1980 with a record of 5-3. The Gulls ended the year with a record of 0-6. This ignominious fact means that the Gulls didn't win one game in all of 1980. Of course, they didn't exist in the beginning of the year and only played six games in 1980.

The Gems had 11 days off before their next game. During that time, on December 27th, the Gems waived Pam Browning. Pam had an interesting career with the Gems as she could only play one game in 1979, because her Kentucky teacher's license couldn't be transferred to New Jersey. The next year she had a solid 1979-80 averaging 28.4 mins, 9.0 points, and 6.8 rebounds in 34 games. Then in this 3rd year, her name was never mentioned until this waiving.

On December 28th the Gems ended the year in a big way: an Allentown Morning Call article highlighted the exploits of 5'0" Jill Jeffrey. Life with the giants was summarized by the following story:

It was about an hour before the New Jersey Gems were to face New Orleans in a Women's Basketball League game at the Superdome. The players were filing in one-by-one.

Jill Jeffrey was at the back of the line, and when she tried to enter the Superdome, she was stopped by an usher.

"Hold it," said the usher. "Where do you think you're going?"

Jill tried to explain she was a player, but that just brought some uncomplimentary remarks from the usher. It wasn't until Kathy Mosolino came to her aid that Jill was allowed to enter the Superdome with her teammates.

Over the years Jill had learned to handle the jokes from her teammates, because she knew not only how hard she had worked, but also how much she had accomplished. Jill was one of the 10 Montclair State players played in the WBL. She was also the player who fed Carol Blazejowki, when Blaze set a Madison Square Garden record with 52 points. While everyone focused on Blaze, Jill came through with 24 points and 19 assists. If I can ever find a box score of that game and see that Blaze had four or fewer assists, then the 5-foot dynamo actually had a more productive game.

Coastal Division

New Orleans Pride	7	1	.875	---
Dallas Diamonds	5	2	.714	1.5
New Jersey Gems	5	3	.625	2.0
San Francisco Pioneers	1	5	.167	5.0
New England Gulls	0	6	.000	6.0

Central Division

Nebraska Wranglers	5	1	.833	---
Chicago Hustle	5	1	.833	---
Minnesota Fillies	2	4	.333	3.0
St. Louis Streak	0	7	.000	5.5

1981 began with the (5-3) Gems taking their two-game winning streak into Chicago to take on the (5-1) Hustle. The Hustle were loaded with All-Pros, All-Stars, and a 6'5" rookie dominant force in Inge Nissen. After going 8-1 in the pre-season they continued their display of power in the beginning of the season. Only 2,471 came out to Alumni Hall on a Friday night to see two teams loaded with stars.

Yet this was going to be a new Gems' team, because 6'5" Willodean Harris signed her contract on December 24th and joined the team. While Willodean may not have gotten into playing shape, she had enough time to blend in with her new teammates. In addition to Ms. Harris, the Gems also added Anne Gregory, a 2nd round pick of the Tampa Bay Sun, who played under Kathy Mosolino at Fordham. The 6'0" forward brought with her an extra layer of toughness to the Gems' front court.

Over on the Hustle sideline their coach, Bill Gleason, who had led the team to a 4-1 record, was not available for this game. After their 89-87 overtime loss in Minnesota Coach Gleason was admitted into the hospital with a bleeding ulcer. Assistant coach Ed Smythe took over on December 31st and guided the team to a 114-111 victory over the at the time undefeated New Orleans Pride.

To prove to the Gems, she was back and ready to play, Willodean Harris made the warmup line her playground as she dunked to get the Gems revved up.

From the beginning the Gems' game plan was to swarm Nissen and force her away from the basket. New Jersey took a 27-24 1st quarter lead, which they increased to 58-42 at the half, because their defense caused steals and fast breaks. In the 3rd quarter the Hustle could only cut off six points to trail 76-66. The Gems experience and maturity made sure the Hustle didn't get a foothold as they raised their record to 6-3 with a 105-93 victory.

The Gems had a well-balanced performance as six players scored in double figures: Blazejowski 22, Harris 18, Faye Young and Tara Heiss with 14 each, Gail Marquis with 11, and Janice Thomas with 10.

The Hustle were led by Inge Nissen who had 26, but it was on 8 of 22 from the field and 10 of 13 from the line. Former Gem and All-Star Donna Geils added 15, while former Houston Angel and All-Pro Paula Mayo added 14, on 4 of 18 from the field.

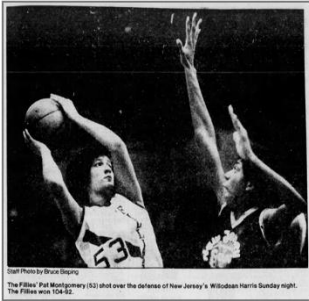
Because the game was in Chicago these three Chicago players went to the free throw line 30 times, which was more than the whole Gems team. Overall the Hustle shot 51 free throws to the Gems 29.

New Jersey Gems																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Blazejowski, Carol	12		10				2	3			0						22
Comerie, Debbie	34		0				2	3			0		6				2
Gregory, Anne	42		0				0	0			0						0
Harris, Willodean	40		8				2	2			0						18
Heiss, Tara	44		6				2	2			0						14
Jeffreys, Jill	14		2				0	0			0						4
Marquis, Gail	24		3				5	8			0						11
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		1				2	2			0						4
Tatterson, Gail	33		2				2	2			0						6
Thomas, Janice	10		5				0	0			0						10
Van Ness, Joan	32	Name Not in Newspapers															
Young, Faye	22		5				4	7			0						14
Young, Kaye	20		0				0	0			0						0
Adjustment		240		86									31				
Totals		240	42	86	0	0	21	29	0	0	0	0	37	0	0	0	105
			FG%	48.8%			FT%	72.4%	Team Rebs								
Special Notes:																	
Technical: Coach Kathy Mosolino																	
Carol Blazejowski																	

Chicago Hustle																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Candler, Belinda	24		4				2	2			0						10
Digitale, Sue	21		3				3	4			0						9
Easterling, Rita	15	35	1	5			2	3			0	5					4
Fincher, Janie	10		0				0	0			0						0
Geils, Donna	14		4				7	10			0						15
Hansen, Kim	44		0				0	0			0						0
Hodgson, Pat	11		2				1	4			0						5
Matthews, Linda	12		0				0	1			0						0
Mayo, Paula	25		4	18			6	7			0						14
McWhorter, Charlene	41		2				1	3			0						5
Nissen, Inge	42		8	22			10	13			0						26
White, Ethel	20		1				3	4			0						5
Adjustment		205		40									26				
Totals		240	29	85	0	0	35	51	0	0	0	5	26	0	0	0	93
			FG%	34.1%			FT%	68.6%	Team Rebs								

The Midwest tour brought the Gems up to Minnesota to take on the (2-5) Fillies. After being steamrolled in their home opener 74-60, the Fillies lost two more close games before finally getting a victory over the winless St. Louis Streak. For this next game they brought with them another two-game losing streak onto their new home court, the Minneapolis Auditorium.

A Sunday January 4th crowd of 1,095 came out to see the Fillies take a 22-19 1st quarter lead. The Gems, who may have still been in the afterglow of their big Hustle victory, continued to fall behind. They went into the half trailing 47-38. The Gems did not come out with the same defensive intensity that they had in Chicago as they fell behind 58-44. In the quarter they gave up 30 and scored 26. 77-64 – Minnesota after three quarters.



The final score of 104-92, was almost identical to the previous game, but this time with the Gems' losing. Blazejowski led the way with 27 points and 16 rebounds, before she fouled out with 2:37 remaining. And for the 2nd game in a row Blaze picked up a technical foul. Gail Marquis had 18 points, while Willodean Harris added 14 points and 16 rebounds. Harris' 4 of 11 from the line was something the team needed to keep an eye on during the rest of the season.

New Jersey Gems																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Blazejowski, Carol	12		10	19			7	8		16	16		6				27
Comerie, Debbie	34		5				0	0			0						10
Gregory, Anne	42		0				0	0			0						0
Harris, Willodean	40		5				4	11		16	16						14
Heiss, Tara	44		4				0	0			0						8
Jeffreys, Jill	14	Name not in Newspaper															
Marquis, Gail	24		8				2	4			0						18
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		0				0	0			0						0
Tatterson, Gail	33		2				0	0			0						4
Thomas, Janice	10		4				3	3			0						11
Van Ness, Joan	32	Name Not in Newspapers															
Young, Faye	22		0				0	0			0						0
Young, Kaye	20		0				0	0			0						0
Adjustment		240											16				
Totals		240	38	19	0	0	16	26	0	32	32	0	22	0	0	0	92
			FG%	#####			FT%	61.5%		Team Rebs							
Special Notes:																	
Technical: Carol Blazejowski																	
Passaic Herald was missing individual Pts - they belong to J. Thomas, but don't know if 3 FTs or 1 FGM & 1 FTM																	

Minnesota Fillies																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Cotman, Angela	21		0				0	0			0						0
Daniels, Coco	24		0				2	2			0						2
DeLorme, Scooter	32		1				3	6			0						5
Harris, Nessie	15		9				7	8			0						25
Kocurek, Marie	42		13				2	2			0						28
Montgomery, Pat	53		6				1	3			0						13
Owens, Katrina	33		1				0	0			0						2
Stachon, Toni	25	Name not in Newspaper															
Timperman, Janet	12		0				0	0			0						0
Wilson, Donna	11		10				9	10		17	17						29
Adjustment		240											18				
Totals		240	40	0	0	0	24	31	0	17	17	0	18	0	0	0	104
			FG%	#####			FT%	77.4%		Team Rebs							

The (3-5) Fillies had a dominant front court as All-Star Donna Wilson had 29, All-Pro Marie Kocurek had 28, and rookie Nessie Harris had 25.

The Gems returned home to face these same Fillies. The Wednesday January 7th game at South Mountain Arena drew 873 fans, which again included no-shows (season ticket holders who didn't attend).

The Gems, who had their three-game winning streak snapped, were able to take a 28-27 1st quarter lead. The Gems took control with a 14-5 burst that gave them a 42-32 lead. But the Fillies responded with their own 12-6 run, so the Gems could only take a 48-44 lead into the half, with the Fillies Marie Kocurek scoring 15 of their 44 points.

In the 3rd quarter Minnesota got two quick baskets from Kocurek, but things changed when she picked up her 4th foul with 7:10 left. The Fillies kept fighting and actually took a 59-58 lead with 5:44 left.

But then Janice Thomas took over and the team went on a 12-0 run to make the score 70-59. The Fillies scored two before the Gems added another six in a row. Thomas had eight of the 18 points and by the end of the 3rd quarter the score was 77-65. In the end the Gems became 7-4 with their 101-84 victory. The Fillies fell to 3-6.

Even though Carol Blazejowski led the team in points, as usual, the Gems were beginning to show better balance on the team. Again, they had six players with double figures: Blazejowski 21, Harris 17, Thomas 16, Marquis 11, and Comerie and Heiss each scoring 10. Yet you could tell the team was performing as a unit, because Heiss had 14 assists and Thomas had 11. As a team the Gems only shot 12 free throws, but made 46 baskets.

The Gems held the Fillies big three to just 47 points as Marie Kocurek had 19, Donna Wilson 15, and Nessie Harris 13. A big difference from the 82 the three scored just three days earlier.

New Jersey Gems																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Blazejowski, Carol	12		9				3	3		13	13						21
Comerie, Debbie	34		4				2	2			0						10
Gregory, Anne	42		4				0	2			0						8
Harris, Willodean	40		7				3	4			0						17
Heiss, Tara	44		5				0	0			0	14					10
Marquis, Gail	24		5				1	1			0						11
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		4				0	0			0						8
Tatterson, Gail	33		0				0	0			0						0
Thomas, Janice	10		8				0	0			0	11					16
Van Ness, Joan	32		0				0	0			0						0
Young, Faye	22		0				0	0			0						0
Young, Kaye	20	Name Not in Newspapers															
Adjustment		240											22				
Totals		240	46	0	0	0	9	12	0	13	13	25	22	0	0	0	101
			FG%	#####			FT%	75.0%	Team Rebs								

Minnesota Fillies																	Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Cotman, Angela	21		1				2	3			0						4
Daniels, Coco	24		1				0	0			0						2
DeLorme, Scooter	32		5				0	0			0						10
Harris, Nessie	15		6				1	3			0						13
Kocurek, Marie	42		8				3	4			0						19
Montgomery, Patty	53		2				1	2			0						5
Owens, Katrina	33		4				0	0			0						8
Stachon, Toni	25		2				4	4			0						8
Timperman, Janet	12		0				0	0			0						0
Wilson, Donna	11		5				5	5			0						15
Adjustment		240											19				
Totals		240	34	0	0	0	16	21	0	0	0	0	19	0	0	0	84
			FG%	#####			FT%	76.2%	Team Rebs								

After the game the local New Jersey newspapers were highlighting the role that Janice Thomas was playing on the team. As a refugee from the defunct New York Stars she wanted to stay close to home as she chose the Gems over three other teams that were recruiting her. After 11 games Janice was leading the league in assists (8.9) and was third in steals.

While "J.T." loves to play, she was also happiest when she knew her paycheck wasn't going to bounce. She also highly approved of the free dinner offered by a local restaurant as she was named player of the game.

For Janice the reality of life in the WBL was sometimes hard to grasp. She went from being a World Champion in April to unemployed by September. Along those same lines she knew that winning didn't always translate into acceptance and extra people in the stands. Therefore, the size of the crowd never influenced how she played her game.

To some outsiders Thomas had filled in the playmaking role left open by Ann Meyers. J.T. was a player that could analyze the situation and either speed things up or calm things down.

On Sunday January 11th the Gems had a game in New Orleans against the (9-2) Pride. Even though the Pride had been a successful playoff team last year and owned the best record in the league only 449 found their way to the University of New Orleans. The Gems came to town with a player similar to Louisiana hero, Pistol Pete Maravich, in Carol Blazejowski, but the town just didn't respond.

Yet you couldn't blame the people of New Orleans when there were no newspaper ads. This was just the opposite of last year when General Manager Steve Brown was spending all of the owners' money.

The Gems jumped out and dominated the 1st quarter behind 14 points from Blazejowski as they took a 36-17 lead. A quick 6-2 run gave the Gems a 42-19 lead, before the Pride ended the quarter with a 20-7 effort to cut the lead to 49-39 by the half. Play was even in the 3rd quarter and the Gems raised their lead to 11, 72-61.

New Orleans Pride																	Team Game #		
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat	
Andrykowski, Kathy	32	13	1	4			0	0		2	2	2	2				2	0.615	
Blalock, Sybil	10	36	5	6			1	2		2	2	5	4				11	0.639	
Brogdon, Cindy	44	20	1	7			0	0		3	3	5	1				2	0.750	
Chapman, Vicky	30	28	4	9			5	6		4	4	4	3				13	0.893	
Farrah, Sharon	11	25	1	7			2	2		2	2	3	2				4	0.480	
Feeney, Eileen	55	Name not in Newspaper																	
Forest, Augusta	31	35	12	15			7	15		8	8	2	3				31	1.229	
Hardy, Bertha	33	30	1	6			0	0		4	4	0	3				2	0.200	
Peters, Sue	23	35	7	13			4	8		3	3	4	4				18	0.829	
Wayment, Heidi	22	18	2	7			2	2		10	10	0	5				6	0.889	
Adjustment															22				
Totals		240	34	74	0	0	21	35	0	38	38	25	27	0	22	0	89	0.646	
			FG%	45.9%				FT%	60.0%	Team Rebs									

The (8-4) Gems took their two-game winning streak back home to play the visiting (3-7) San Francisco Pioneers. Now these Pioneers were different than the (0-2) team that froze on their December visit. As of January 1st the team fired Coach Frank LaPorte and hired Coach of the Year and WBL Champion Dean Meminger.

After the Stars folded Dean had been biding his time waiting for the right opening, and especially one where his paycheck was guaranteed. When Pioneers' owner Marshall Gellar saw his 1-5 Pioneers floundering, he knew it was time for a change.

Not only did the Pioneers add Meminger, but former co-MVP and WBL scoring champion Molly Bolin. They also added All-Star Heidi Nestor, who was formerly with the Milwaukee Does. One player missing from their last meeting was local All-Pro Pat Mayo, who decided life with Dean Meminger was not what she anticipated and she decided to retire.

After 12 days and three games Coach Meminger was still working on finding the right kind of players that would play his type of ball. The Stars' pressure defense was obviously missing, because this was the third game in three nights for the Pioneers.

On the 10th they were in St. Louis, where the Streak broke their nine-game losing streak with a 101-92 victory. Then San Francisco had to play the Gulls on Sunday the 11th, where they won 104-102 in overtime.

Now as they ventured to New Jersey, they found themselves behind the Gems 33-28 in the 1st quarter. The Gems expanded their lead to 68-54 at the half. The Gems allowed the Pioneers to get within 78-72, before they went on a 12-4 streak to take control of the game. This all led to a 119-104 Gems' victory, to the delight of the 1,104 fans that came out for this Monday game.

This was the fifth home game, all wins, where the Gems scored over 100 points. They were averaging 108 in South Mountain Arena – can you imagine how many they could have scored if the rims weren't frozen?



The 36 points by Blazejowski raised her league leading scoring average to 27.69 (360 pts). Her eight rebounds and six assists gave her an Efficiency Rating of 1.600 for 35 minutes on the floor. She was also shooting at 63.5% (33 of 52) from the floor.

A full team effort (six other Gems had an over 1.000 Eff Rat) saw Tara Heiss with 20 points and seven assists, Willodean Harris with 16 points and 10 rebounds, and Debbie Comerie with 12 points and 11 rebounds. And even though Janice Thomas only scored four points her club record 15 assists added to her league leading average -

though the actual figures are unknown (at least 73 in 7 games = 10.4)

The (3-8) Pioneers were led by 1st round draft pick Cindy Haugejorde who had 23 points, while All-Pro Anita Ortega came through with 18 points and five assists. An indication of Meminger trying to learn more about his players was the fact that of the 10 Pioneers who travelled, nine played between 17 and 27 minutes. Only Haugejorde played more with 35.

New Jersey Gems																	Team Game #		
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat	
Blazejowski, Carol	12	35	17	27			2	2		8	8	6	3				36	1.600	
Comerie, Debbie	34	32	5	12			2	2		11	11	1	2				12	0.781	
Gregory, Anne	42	12	3	5			0	1		4	4	1	2				6	1.000	
Harris, Willodean	40	28	6	11			4	4		10	10	1	3			3	16	1.000	
Heiss, Tara	44	34	10	15			0	0		3	3	7	3	4			20	1.206	
Jeffreys, Jill	14	3	0	0			0	0		1	1	1	0				0	1.000	
Marquis, Gail	24	21	5	7			1	2		3	3	0	2				11	0.667	
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	13	0	5			0	0		0	0	3	1				0	0.462	
Thomas, Janice	10	36	2	10			0	0		3	3	15	1	4			4	1.139	
Van Ness, Joan	32	14	3	4			0	0		2	2	2	0				6	0.857	
Young, Faye	22	6	2	3			2	2		0	0	0	0				6	1.000	
Young, Kaye	20	6	0	1			2	2		0	0	1	1				2	0.667	
Adjustment														7	19	1			
Totals		240	53	100	0	0	13	15	0	45	45	38	18	15	19	4	119	0.983	
			FG%	53.0%				FT%	86.7%	Team Rebs									

San Francisco Pioneers																	Team Game #		
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat	
Bolin, Molly	32	27	6	13			4	5		1	1	2	0				16	0.778	
Draving, Doris	50	27	3	4			2	2		6	6	2	0				8	0.667	
Dunkle, Nancy	40	21	2	4			2	2		5	5	0	3				6	0.524	
Haugejorde, Cindy	43	35	11	19			1	1		6	6	1	2	3			23	0.971	
Hicks, Cardie	10	25	5	12			0	0		5	5	2	4				10	0.760	
McKinney, Musiette	33	21	1	3			0	0		5	5	6	4				2	0.905	
Nestor, Heidi	51	17	0	2			0	0		1	1	0	2				0	0.059	
Ortega, Anita	11	25	8	14			2	2		2	2	5	1				18	1.200	
Washington, Suzanne	22	22	4	7			1	1		1	1	0	2	3			9	0.591	
Williams, Roberta	1	20	5	10			2	2		3	3	3	0				12	1.050	
Adjustment														5	16	3			
Totals		240	45	88	0	0	14	15	0	35	35	21	18	11	16	3	104	0.733	
			FG%	51.1%				FT%	93.3%	Team Rebs									

To given an indication of how much the league was improving a 1978-79 All-Pro and a 1979-80 World Champion, Gail Tatterson was given her release by the Gems. Whether she was approached by another team to play is unknown, but as of January 1981 Gail was finished in the WBL.

Her 3-year stats give us a good indication of the improvement in the league overall.

<u>Season</u>	<u># Games</u>	<u>Avg Mins</u>	<u>FG%</u>	<u>Rb Avg</u>	<u>Pts Avg</u>	<u>Eff Rat</u>
78-79	34	34.85	.646	10.26	20.91	.885
79-80	34	21.09	.579	4.85	9.76	.692
80-81	11	12.18	.421	2.45	3.91	.619

Also released that week were Faye and Kaye Young, who were an important advertising focus when the league began. Yet, they also proved their abilities by being only two of the 31 players who were in the league all three seasons. Their impact for the sake of the league cannot be measured by their final stats. Yet how they handled themselves with front office and media requests was crucial.

Before the team travelled back to New Orleans to take on the Pride on Friday January 16th their position in the Coastal Division needs to be recognized. Their three-game winning streak made them 9-4, which was ½ a game behind the 8-2 Dallas Diamonds and 9-3 Pride.

With about a 1/3 of the season gone, the shaping of an exciting race for playoff positions meant ever game was important. A Gems' victory over the Pride on Friday would move them ahead of the Pride.

As the team found themselves back in New Orleans for the third time this season (1-1), they had to read about what happened to the Pioneers' team they just beat. The Pioneers continued their East Coast trip with a game against the New England Gulls in Portland, Maine. The only trouble was the Gulls, who hadn't been paid since the season began, warmed up and then walked off the floor. The game was declared a forfeit and the national sports media jumped all over this.

In a league that was already fighting an uphill battle for acceptance this was a slippage the league didn't need.

The Friday crowd at the University of New Orleans wasn't much better than the Sunday night crowd 688 vs 449. Though these 688 (or was it 806 as the Times Picayune stated?) saw the Pride take a 30-25 lead, because of 62% shooting. The Gems fell behind 47-32, because the Pride went on a 17-7 run. A 13-6 recovery by the Gems allowed them to go into the half trailing 53-45.



— Staff photo by Leo Crum
BOARD BATTLE — Ann Gregory (42) down a rebound for the Gems in WBL action at the University of New Orleans as Sue Peters (23) manages to pull it down Friday night.

The defensive concern that Kathy Mosolino expressed in their last game against the Pioneers came to fruition in the 3rd quarter as the Gems gave up 31 more by allowing the Pride to shoot 71% (12 of 17) to fall behind 84-68. The Gems' winning streak was snapped as they lost by almost the exact same score that they won by four days earlier: 119-105.

Coach Mosolino was forced to play her stars for extra minutes as Blazejowski played 47, while Tara Heiss and Janice Thomas each logged 38 minutes. Blaze's shooting cooled a bit (14 of 28) for 35 points, 10 rebounds, and at least her 4th technical. Coach Mosolino also picked up her 4th technical of the year.

Side Note: For those who aren't aware the WBL's technicals were the same price as the NBA - \$75 each.

1. BUT - the average salary in the NBA from 1978-1981 was \$173,000. Therefore a \$75 technical was .00043 of their salary.
2. The average salary in the WBL was \$7,500 or 1% of their salary.
3. So, either the WBL should have paid \$3.25 a technical or the NBA should have paid \$1,730 a technical.

Janice Thomas scored 20 points on 9 of 11 shooting, while Tara Heiss came through with 18.

The Gems defense was non-existent as the Pride hit 57.5% from the floor (46-80) with seven players scoring in double figures. Cindy Brogdon had 18 on 7 of 9, Bertha Hardy and Sue Peters added 16 each and three players had 13 each.

The Pride's 10-3 (.769) put them a game ahead of Dallas 8-3 (.727) and a game and a half ahead of the Gems 9-5 (.643).

New Jersey Gems																		Team Game #	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat	
Blazejowski, Carol	12	47	14	28			7	9	6	4	10	2	2	3	2	0	35	1.064	
Comerie, Debbie	34	29	2	8			2	3	5	3	8	1	5	2	4	1	6	0.483	
Gregory, Anne	42	22	5	6			1	4	0	2	2	1	4	0	2	2	11	0.591	
Harris, Willodean	40	21	3	7			0	0	1	3	4	1	3	0	3	1	6	0.429	
Heiss, Tara	44	38	7	17	0	1	4	4	2	2	4	5	4	1	3	0	18	0.789	
Marquis, Gail	24	24	3	9			3	7	2	7	9	3	3	0	1	0	9	0.958	
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	11	0	3			0	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	1	0	0	0.182	
Thomas, Janice	10	38	9	11			2	2	1	0	1	4	3	2	6	0	20	0.658	
Van Ness, Joan	32	10	0	4			0	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	1	2	0	0.400	
Totals		240	43	93	0	1	19	29	17	22	39	20	28	9	23	6	105	0.708	
			FG%	46.2%			FT%	65.5%		Team Rebs	11								
Special Notes:																			
Technicals: Coach Kathy Mosolino 2nd Qtr																			
Carol Blazejowski 4th Qtr																			

New Orleans Pride																		Team Game #
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Andrykowski, Kathy	32	21	3	5			2	2	1	4	5	0	2	1	5	2	8	0.429
Blalock, Sybil	10	34	6	6			1	1	1	2	3	8	5	2	2	1	13	0.941
Brogdon, Cindy	44	24	7	9			4	4	1	3	4	2	3	0	0	2	18	1.083
Chapman, Vicky	30	24	4	9			5	6	2	1	3	4	3	1	2	0	13	0.958
Farrah, Sharon	11	9	0	2			2	3	0	1	1	1	1	0	2	0	2	0.333
Feeney, Eileen	55	22	4	11			0	0	1	3	4	4	4	0	1	0	8	0.864
Forest, Augusta	31	27	4	7			4	8	2	5	7	2	1	2	3	2	12	0.815
Hardy, Bertha	33	25	7	13			2	3	3	2	5	4	2	3	5	0	16	1.080
Peters, Sue	23	31	7	12			2	3	1	4	5	5	2	0	2	1	16	0.935
Wayment, Heidi	22	23	4	6			5	5	2	7	9	3	2	1	3	2	13	1.130
Totals		240	46	80	0	0	27	35	14	32	46	33	25	10	25	10	119	0.900
			FG%	57.5%			FT%	77.1%	Team Rebs	10								

While the Gems had three days off before their next game, the Pride were about to play 10 games in 16 days. To the Gems this was great, because it was almost a guarantee of a lot more losses. The Monday January 19th game was against the Minnesota Fillies, who the Gems were playing for the third time in 15 days.

The (4-7) Fillies had a home game on Friday January 16th against the Pioneers. Since San Francisco was in their 5th city in six days the Fillies beat an exhausted Pioneer team 97-90. The Fillies then needed to jump on a plane to get to New England for Saturday the 17th.

Yet with the Gulls' walk-off in Portland, Maine, the Fillies were the first casualty of whether the Gulls would continue playing or not. It is not known whether the Fillies received word soon enough to avoid flying to New England. Therefore, their January 17th game was cancelled with the potential to be re-scheduled later.

So, when the Fillies landed in Newark on the 19th, they had either started in Minnesota or New England. The Fillies' arrived without guard Coco Daniels who was out with a concussion. Also missing was All-Star Patty Montgomery who stayed home with swollen glands.

932 people came out to South Mountain Arena to watch the Gems take a 27-22 1st quarter lead. The tables were flipped in the 2nd quarter as the Fillies had the 27-22 advantage this time. The game stayed close through the 3rd quarter as the Gems took a slight 71-70 lead.



After the Fillies went ahead 74-73, the Gems went on a 9-2 stretch with Blazejowski scoring six of those points. The 82-76 lead was never breached as the Fillies could only get within five points one time. In the end the Gems improved their record to 10-5 with a 98-88 win.

This was their sixth home win in a row, but the first without 100 points. Blazejowski came through with 36 points and nine rebounds, while Janice Thomas added 14 more assists. Tara Heiss scored 18 and Willodean Harris had 17. Minnesota's rookie Nessie Harris came through with 20, while rookie Angela Cotman scored 19.

New Jersey Gems																	Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Blazejowski, Carol	12		13	25			10	11		9	9						36
Comerie, Debbie	34	10	2				0				0						4
Gregory, Anne	42	26	2				5			6	6						9
Harris, Willodean	40	32	7				3				0						17
Heiss, Tara	44		7				4				0						18
Marquis, Gail	24		1				0				0						2
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		0				0				0						0
Thomas, Janice	10		6				0				0	14					12
Van Ness, Joan	32		0				0				0						0
Adjustment		172											23				
Totals		240	38	25	0	0	22	11	0	15	15	14	23	0	0	0	98
			FG%	#####			FT%	200.0%		Team Rebs							

Minnesota Fillies																	Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Cotman, Angela	21		7				5				0						19
Daniels, Coco	24	Injured - Concussion															
DeLorme, Scooter	32		2				0				0						4
Hansen, Kim	44		0				2				0						2
Harris, Nessie	15		9				2				0						20
Kocurek, Marie	42		6				1				0		6				13
Montgomery, Patty	53	Injured - Swollen Glands															
Owens, Katrina	33		0				3				0						3
Timperman, Janet	12		4				2				0						10
Wilson, Donna	11		8				1				0						17
Adjustment		240											16				
Totals		240	36	0	0	0	16	0	0	0	0	0	22	0	0	0	88
			FG%	#####			FT%	#DIV/0!		Team Rebs							
Special Notes:																	

With the success of the Gems were having the newspapers chose to write several articles about the "new" Gems. Afterall, with former Fordham star Anne Gregory coming in from France and the release of three past stalwarts Coach Mosolino liked the way her team was going.

Yet with the Board of Governors determining the fate of the New England Gulls it was possible that some former players, like draftee Sue Summons, could reappear looking for a chance to play. While Coach Mosolino felt she needed a shooting guard, she was afraid that if a Cris Critelli joined the team the unity that Tara Heiss and Janice Thomas were giving the team might be disrupted.

On top of the possibility of other players showing up, the front office was also eyeing a move to another facility for the rest of the season. The low attendance and the consistently cold temperatures in South Mountain Arena were forcing the team to look at Bergen Community College (BCC). The 55° arena temperature couldn't be adjusted because of the ice rink underneath the floor. Bob Milo thought he could get out of his season long contract with the arena's manager, but that was news to the arena management team.

Even with a winning record the team was averaging about 1,000 a game, which was 500 less than last season. While BCC was smaller than South Mountain Arena, they did draw 1,200 fans last year for an exhibition game and Milo would rather have more fans in a smaller place.

The latest note of interest was that Ann Meyers was still requesting a contract renegotiation and Milo was refusing. The possibility of a trade with the San Francisco Pioneers was presented again.

With the official demise of the New England Gulls, the league was now down to eight teams and the scheduled January 22nd game in New England was cancelled. Just like last year a lot of adjustments to the schedule had to be made. Thankfully it was only one team that died and not two, and then later a third.

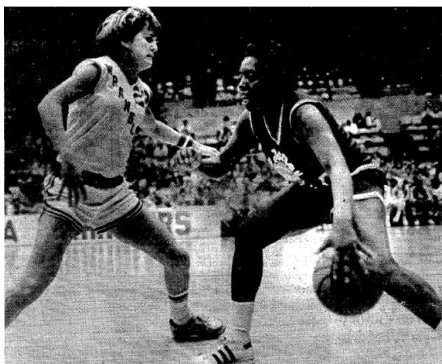
The cancelled 22nd game was to the Gems' advantage, because they would not have to play in New England on the 22nd and then fly to Nebraska for a game the next day. The nomadic Dayton-California-Nebraska team was proving to be a formidable force behind their star center, Rosie Walker.

While the Coastal Division was close and exciting, the Central Division was a train wreck

New Orleans	12	5	.706	---	Nebraska	10	2	.833	---
Dallas	9	4	.692	1	Chicago	7	5	.583	3
New Jersey	10	5	.667	1	Minnesota	5	9	.357	6
San Francisco	6	10	.375	5.5	St. Louis	2	13	.133	9.5

The Friday January 23rd crowd in Omaha of 1,038 saw Carol Blazejowski go for 14 1st quarter points as the Gems took a 28-25 lead. The Gems put up 24 in the 2nd quarter with half of them belonging to Blaze. Yet the Gems gave up 31 to fall behind 56-52 at the half.

The Gems tightened their defense and held the Wranglers to just 14 3rd quarter points, while putting up 23 to take a 75-70 lead. In one stretch of the 4th quarter the Wranglers went on a 10-0 run to gain an 87-83 lead with 4:46 left. Then with 43 seconds left the Wranglers took a 97-92 lead. But two baskets by Blazejowski cut the lead to 97-96. After a Nebraska miss, the Gems had the ball and the chance to get the win with six seconds left. An errant Gems' pass turned into a Rosie Walker steal and foul. Rosie's two free throws sealed the 99-96 victory.



Stop right there... Wranglers' Holly Warlick defends against New Jersey's Janice Thomas. World Herald/Robert Taylor

Blazejowski's 43 points on 19 of 31 from the floor brought her league leading average up to 29.6. Yet her 43 were not a New Jersey Gem record. That still belonged to the recently released Gail Tatterson who had 44 against Chicago on February 4, 1979. As for Gems' team scoring only two others could achieve double figures. Janice Thomas had 12 and Gail Marquis had 10.

For the (11-2) Wranglers Rosie Walker had 32 points and came within one rebound of a 20-20, as she had 19 rebounds. Four others had double figures with former Olympian Charlotte Lewis scoring 15 points.

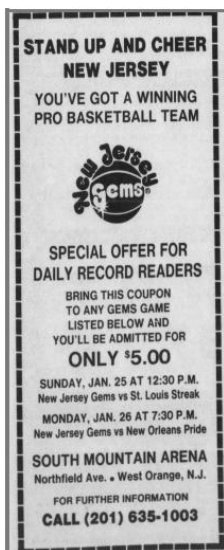
New Jersey Gems																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Blazejowski, Carol	12		19	31			5				0						43
Comerie, Debbie	34										0						7
Gregory, Anne	42										0						6
Harris, Willodean	40										0						8
Heiss, Tara	44										0						8
Marquis, Gail	24										0						10
Szeremeta, Wanda	23										0						2
Thomas, Janice	10										0						12
Van Ness, Joan	32	Name not in Box Score									0						0
Adjustment		240															
Totals		240	19	31	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	96
			FG%	#####			FT%	#DIV/0!	Team Rebs								

Nebraska Wranglers																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Beasley, Genia	34										0						6
Chason, Carol	10										0						11
Flora, Janet	32	Name Not in Newspaper									0						0
Greene, Vivian	14										0						2
Jordan, Kim	30										0						8
Kunzmann, Connie	44	Name Not in Newspaper									0						0
Lewis, Charlotte	50										0						15
Pope, Peggy	20	Name Not in Newspaper									0						0
Taylor, Susan	24										0						11
Walker, Rosie	40						2			19	19						32
Warlick, Holly	22										0						12
Wright, Josephine	42										0						2
Adjustment		240															
Totals		240	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	19	19	0	0	0	0	0	99
			FG%	#####			FT%	#DIV/0!	Team Rebs								

On January 24th the Gems made a deal with the New Orleans Pride. They traded their 1981 6th round pick for Eileen Feeney. Feeney who earned a basketball reputation at Kansas State Univ. picked up the nickname the "Jersey Bomber," because of her ties to New Jersey. Before the 1980 draft, she was hoping to be chosen by the Gems, but instead was taken in the 3rd round by the Pride. So, with this trade she was now coming home.

When the Gems returned home they saw that the front office had placed a newspaper ad to try and attract more fans.

The next scheduled game was Sunday January 25th against the (3-13) St. Louis Streak. Yet after an 0-9 start, which eventually became 1-13, their two-game winning streak made them less of a pushover.



1,112 fans came out and saw two teams that couldn't pull away from each other. The Gems outscored the Streak by 1, 2, and 1 over the first 3 quarters (26-25, 26-24, 26-25) to take a 78-74 lead into the final quarter.

After a Streak basket to open the quarter (78-76), the mindset of winners vs losers kicks in. So, when the Gems put together a 16-4 run over the next six minutes it wasn't a surprise. So, with 5:08 left the Gems created a safe 94-80 lead. This resulted in the Gems improving to 11-6 with a 105-91 victory. The Streak's two-game winning streak was over as they fell to 3-14.

For the sixth game in a row Blazejowski had over 30 points as she came through with 34 on 15 of 24 from the field. She also pulled down 11 rebounds. Guards Janice Thomas and Tara Heiss each had 16 points, while Gail Marquis pulled down 12 rebounds.

The Streak were led by former Olympian Patricia Roberts who had 28 points and eight rebounds. 6'4" rookie center Lydia Johnson had 17 points, while the Streak's first round pick guard Linnell Jones had 16.

New Jersey Gems																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Blazejowski, Carol	12		15	24			4	5			11	11					34
Comerie, Debbie	34																12
Gregory, Anne	42																10
Harris, Willodean	40																6
Heiss, Tara	44		5				6	6									16
Marquis, Gail	24										12	12					7
Szeremeta, Wanda	23																2
Thomas, Janice	10																16
Van Ness, Joan	32																2
Adjustment		240	21				13	16					18				
Totals		240	41	24	0	0	23	27	0	23	23	0	18	0	0	0	105
			FG%	170.8%			FT%	85.2%	Team Rbs								

St. Louis Streak																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Booker, Betty	20										0						10
Cook, Jane Ellen	7										0						4
Fuller, Mary	22	Injured - Achilles															
Johnson, Lydia	50										0						17
Jones, Linnell	1										0						16
Moore, Pearl	12										0						14
Pope, Rowanna	11	Name not in Newspaper															
Roberts, Patricia	44										8	8					28
Thompson, Rosie	10										0						2
Adjustment		240	38				15	19					23				
Totals		240	38	0	0	0	15	19	0	8	8	0	23	0	0	0	91
			FG%	#DIV/0!			FT%	78.9%	Team Rbs								

It was hard to know what grabbed the attention of the general public. With the Gems, and Blazejowski, scoring in bunches at home, you'd think people would want to see this type of excitement. You'd think when an 11-6 team (Gems) took on a 12-6 team (New Orleans Pride) that an electricity would radiate amongst everyone that was following their team.

Instead, only 856 came out on a Monday night to see the Gems who were 5-2 in their last seven games take on a team that was crumbling right before the league's eyes. The former 12-3 New Orleans Pride were on a three-game losing streak as they made their first visit this season to South Mountain Arena. The Pride not only lost in San Francisco to the Pioneers, they lost two games in a row to their division rivals, the Dallas Diamonds, in Dallas.

Remember this was all part of the 10 games in 16 days for the Pride. The Gems' game was just game number five of this trip and they were 1-3, just like the Gems wanted.

The Gems took an early 12 point lead, but allowed the Pride to get back as the quarter ended with the Gems up, 27-23. The Pride's defense gave the Gems fits as they went the last six minutes of the half without one field goal. If it weren't for the generous calls by the refs, which allowed them to hit 8 of 11 from the line the Gems probably would have fallen behind by more than 49-43 at the half.

A 34-24 3rd quarter behind 11 points by Blazejowski and 10 from Thomas gave the Gems a 77-73 advantage as they went into the 4th quarter. The Gems stifled the Pride with a 23-16 4th quarter and a convincing 100-89 victory.

For the 7th game in a row Blazejowski had over 30 points, as she led the team with 36 on 14 of 22 from the floor. As the team went 5-2 during this stretch Carol had 259 points for a 37.0 average. Yet it wasn't just her points as she also shot 108 of 182 from the floor for 59.3%.

The full team effort saw the guard tandem of Tara Heiss and Janice Thomas come through with 33 points and 22 assists (Heiss 17 and 11, Thomas 16 and 11). Debbie Comerie's 15 points and Willodean Harris' 12 rebounds played a big role in the win.

For the (12-7) Pride, who lost their 4th in a row, Cindy Brogdon had 22, while Vicky Chapman had 16 points and nine rebounds. Yet we could see how the personal foul hindered a player like Augusta Forest who picked up four fouls. Yet in just 18 minutes she had seven rebounds, six assists, and shot three of three from the floor for a 1.389 Eff Rat.

With the win the Gems (12-6) went ahead of the Pride (12-7) in the Coastal standings. Now the Gems and Diamonds were tied for first, with (10-4) Dallas ahead by just .047.

New Jersey Gems																	Team Game #	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Blazejowski, Carol	12	45	14	22			8	9		5	5	2	1				36	1.000
Comerie, Debbie	34	29	6	11			3	5		3	3	0	6				15	0.621
Gregory, Anne	42	7	0	0			0	2		0	0	0	0				0	0.000
Harris, Willodean	40	23	2	13			2	6		12	12	0	4				6	0.783
Heiss, Tara	44	40	6	10			5	6		8	8	11	5				17	1.175
Marquis, Gail	24	37	3	7			4	6		11	11	2	4				10	0.676
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	10	0	3			0	1		1	1	0	2				0	0.100
Thomas, Janice	10	40	7	15			2	3		3	3	11	3				16	1.025
Van Ness, Joan	32	9	0	1			0	0		0	0	0	0				0	0.000
Adjustment															16			
Totals		240	38	82	0	0	24	38	0	43	43	26	25	0	16	0	100	0.746
			FG%	46.3%			FT%	63.2%	Team Rebs	4								

New Orleans Pride																	Team Game #	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Andrykowski, Kathy	32	30	4	5			5	8		7	7	1	2				13	0.733
Blalock, Sybil	10	35	3	7			0	0		3	3	3	4				6	0.429
Brogdon, Cindy	44	42	11	17			0			7	7	5	4				22	0.929
Chapman, Vicky	30	32	4	10			8	10		9	9	5	3				16	1.094
Farrah, Sharon	11		3				0				0						6	
Forest, Augusta	31	18	3	3			0	0		7	7	6	4				6	1.389
Hardy, Bertha	33	Name not in Newspaper																
Peters, Sue	23	36	5	13			0	0		2	2	2	3				10	0.444
Wayment, Heidi	22	22	4	8			2	2		3	3	0	3				10	0.591
Adjustment		25													19			
Totals		240	37	63	0	0	15	20	0	38	38	22	23	0	19	0	89	0.633
			FG%	58.7%			FT%	75.0%	Team Rebs	7								
Special Notes:																		
Technical: Coach Butch van BredaKolff																		

The brief two game home stand had ended and the possibility of moving to a warmer arena had also ended. Bergen Community College turned them down and the number of openings at other college campuses was limited. In some good news Blazejowski was named the player of the week for her earlier exploits.

Also the Gems' General Manager Ed Kozma was expressing his interest in several unemployed New England Gulls. The best player, Cris Critelli, was being considered, but only if she could bring along her teammate, Lisa Schlesinger. The Gems said, "No." Therefore, it seemed like Critelli would go to New Orleans.

So, the Gems switched their attention to the 22 points per game and rebounding queen, Althea Gwyn. Yet most people thought San Francisco and Dean Meminger, would be interested in her. Which would have been a surprise, considering her New York Stars contribution that championship season was very limited. She went from 23.1 points down to 10.9 and 17.3 rebounds down to 9.2. It wasn't Althea's skills diminishing, it was Meminger's coaching style that was different.

As for the elusive Ann Meyers, the Wranglers wanted to make a deal with the Gems to gain her rights. To Bob Milo Ann was worth \$20,000, plus a couple of players. The \$20,000 would match the amount he sent to Houston to gain the right to negotiate.

This should be viewed as Milo caring about the health of the league and not using this opportunity as a moneymaker. Ann, the untried draftee, and Ann the co-MVP of the league were each the same \$20,000 price.

Yet in the end it seemed Ann's agent was talking to the Wranglers without Milo's permission, so any agreements without the Gem's ok were not possible. Even though a press conference was being scheduled to announce the deal to Nebraska, the WBL Commissioner, Sherwin Fischer, said no.

The Hustle then threw their hat in the ring to see if they could negotiate with Ann until Milo asked for his \$20,000. That ended those thoughts quickly. In the end – Ann was still in limbo, wanting to play with no league or team able to get her rights.

With the Gems just having played three games in four days (23rd, 25th, and 26th) they were about to go on a three game three-day road trip. They would be in Chicago Friday the 30th, in St. Louis Saturday the 31st, and in Dallas on Sunday February 1st. Yet, it could have been worse, because a home game against the Gulls was scheduled for the 28th, which would have meant seven games in 10 days.

The rampaging (12-6) New Jersey Gems went to Alumni Hall in Chicago had found 3,061 fans waiting for them. They also were facing a (7-6) reeling Hustle team that were on a two-game losing streak with those losses being to two of the league's weaker teams. The Hustle lost to the Pioneers 93-87 on the 22nd and then 84-79 on the 28th to St. Louis. There were no obvious reasons for these losses, but to Chicago's faithful they didn't care as they came out to support the team.

The Gems came to Alumni Hall averaging 101.8 over their last eight games. Blazejowski had eight of the team's first 12 points as the Gems took an 18-11 lead with 3:13 left in the quarter. The Hustle's 12-7 run got them back into the game as they closed the quarter with the Gems' ahead 25-23. Blazejowski was on her way to another big game as she had 12 by this point.

The 2nd quarter was not an offensive explosion by either team as it took them over five minutes to score 13 points. At the 6:20 mark the Hustle took the lead 31-30. The two teams then scored 12 more points for the quarter. The Hustle's 16-9 dominance of the Gems gave them a 39-34 half time lead.

The 3rd quarter wasn't much better than the 2nd quarter as the Hustle scored 10 points in the first five minutes, and then went scoreless for 4:10, before exploding for four more points in three minutes. Chicago's total = 14. The Gems were equally bad as they scored four during Chicago's 10 point run to make the score 49-38. So, while the Hustle were held scoreless the Gems scored eight, to make the score 49-46. By the end of the 3rd quarter the Gems' 16 points meant the score was 53-50, Chicago's favor.

The Gems needed to be sure their next 12 minutes allowed them to unleash their offensive dominance. Over the next 6:43 the Gems put up four points – 4! The Hustle's 12 seemed monumental as they took a 65-54 lead with 5:17 left.

In the next three plus minutes the Gems scored six points and the Hustle scored 0, to make the score 65-60 with 1:34 remaining. A 6-2 ending meant the Hustle came away with a 71-62 victory.

The 62 points by the Gems were the third lowest in WBL history.

As you can imagine the Blaze's streak of 30-point games had ended, but she still led the team with 23. Her 8 of 27 told the story of what kind of game it was, because she also fouled out along with Tara Heiss. No one else scored in double figures.

The (8-6) Hustle were delighted for several reasons. They also had only one player with double figures as rookie center Inge Nissen came through with 23 points and a Hustle rebound record of 20.

This was also the coming out party for two former Gulls – Cris Critelli and Althea Gwyn. Gee, what a surprise that they ended up in Chicago. Althea played an unknown number of minutes and had 13 rebounds and eight points. Cris came through with seven points and her tough defense on Blazejewski played the biggest role.

New Jersey Gems																	Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Blazejewski, Carol	12		8	27			7	10			0		6				23
Comerie, Debbie	34		3				1	2			0						7
Gregory, Anne	42										0						0
Harris, Willodean	40		2				1	2			0						5
Heiss, Tara	44		2				4	6			0		6				8
Marquis, Gail	24		2				0	0			0						4
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		1				2	2			0						4
Thomas, Janice	10		4				1	2			0						9
Van Ness, Joan	32		1				0	0			0						2
Adjustment		240											13				
Totals		240	23	27	0	0	16	24	0	0	0	0	25	0	0	0	62
			FG%	#####			FT%	66.7%	Team Rebs								
Special Notes:																	
Blaze named WBL Player of the Week as of 1/29/81 article																	

Chicago Hustle																	Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Candler, Belinda	24		3				1	3			0						7
Critelli, Cris	22		3				1	2			0						7
Digitale, Sue	21	Name not in Newspaper															
Easterling, Rita	15		0				2	2			0						2
Fincher, Janie	10	Name not in Newspaper															
Geils, Donna	14		2				0	0			0						4
Gwyn, Althea	44		4				0	0		13	13						8
Matthews, Linda	12		2				4	4			0						8
Mayo, Paula	25		1				4	5			0		4				6
McWhorter, Charlene	41		1				0	0			0						2
Nissen, Inge	42		8	22			7	11		20	20					6	23
White, Ethel	20		1				2	2			0						4
Adjustment		240											18				
Totals		240	25	22	0	0	21	29	0	33	33	0	22	0	0	6	71
			FG%	#####			FT%	72.4%		Team Rebs							

If there was ever a time for a team to show their professionalism and put this game in the rear-view mirror it was now. With a game the next day (Saturday the 30th) against a weak, but improving (4-14) St. Louis Streak team the Gems needed a victory.

The Saturday game attracted an unknown number of people and had unknown quarter scores all game. The Gems took a small 43-41 half time lead, which eventually became a 94-89 victory for their 13th win of the year.

Even though Blazejowski scored only 18 points, the rest of the team made up the difference. Tara Heiss also scored 18, while Gail Marquis had 16 and Willodean Harris had 15.

For the (4-15) Streak former New York Star Pearl Moore had 18 points and 11 rebounds. Guards Mary Fuller and Linnell Jones had 14 & 13 points respectively. A newly acquired Alfreda Abernathy, who came over in a trade with Dallas, had a reunion with a former college teammate, Willodean Harris. Each went to Alabama State before heading to the pros.

New Jersey Gems																	Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Blazejowski, Carol	12										0						18
Comerie, Debbie	34										0						9
Gregory, Anne	42										0						2
Harris, Willodean	40										0						15
Heiss, Tara	44										0						18
Marquis, Gail	24										0						16
Szeremeta, Wanda	23										0						6
Thomas, Janice	10										0						10
Van Ness, Joan	32	Name not in Newspaper															
Adjustment		240	36				22	42					18				
Totals		240	36	0	0	0	22	42	0	0	0	0	18	0	0	0	94
			FG%	#####			FT%	52.4%		Team Rebs							

St. Louis Streak																	Team Game #
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Abernathy, Alfreda	52										0						11
Booker, Betty	20										0						6
Cook, Jane Ellen	7										0						6
Fuller, Mary	22										0						14
Johnson, Lydia	50										0						6
Jones, Linnell	1										0						13
Moore, Pearl	12										11	11					18
Pope, Rowanna	11	Name not in Newspaper															
Roberts, Patricia	44										0						12
Thompson, Rosie	10										0						3
Adjustment		240	35				19	23					24				
Totals		240	35	0	0	0	19	23	0	11	11	0	24	0	0	0	89
			FG%	#####			FT%	82.6%		Team Rebs							

With over half the season gone and a revamped schedule the Gems headed to Dallas. This was going to be a chance for the Gems to solidify their lead over the Diamonds. With a 13-7 (.650) record the Gems had a one game lead over the 10-6 (.625) Diamonds. (The Pride still led the Coastal with a 14-7 record).

Since this was their first meeting since the beginning of the season, the two teams had worked through their kinks and were now flexing their muscles. Yet the host Diamonds were on a two-game losing streak as the teams met on a Sunday afternoon in Moody Coliseum.

2,952 came out to watch Lieberman's team battle Blazejewski's team. The 1st quarter ended in a 22-22 tie. The Diamonds put up another 22 in the 2nd quarter, but the Gems thought they were back in Chicago as they only put up 13 points. The Gems went into the locker room trailing 44-35.

The Gems got back on track with 28 3rd quarter points, but they gave up 33 in the process. 77-63 after three quarters. The game closed out with the Gems losing 105-89, a score very similar to the 1st Moody Coliseum game (102-87).

New Jersey Gems																	Team Game #	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Blazejewski, Carol	12	41	11	23			8	8	1	2	3	2	4	2	3	0	30	0.878
Comerie, Debbie	34	34	4	5			2	2	4	5	9	4	6	0	2	1	10	0.735
Gregory, Anne	42	8	0	1			1	2	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	0.250
Harris, Willodean	40	28	4	11			5	6	3	6	9	1	1	0	3	3	13	0.750
Heiss, Tara	44	37	8	16	0	1	1	4	0	2	2	4	4	3	4	0	17	0.703
Marquis, Gail	24	26	2	5			0	1	2	8	10	2	3	1	5	0	4	0.538
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	8	0	3			0	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	2	0	0	-0.125
Thomas, Janice	10	40	5	8	0	1	2	2	0	3	3	8	5	2	8	0	12	0.625
Van Ness, Joan	32	18	1	1			0	0	1	3	4	2	1	0	5	0	2	0.278
Totals		240	35	73	0	2	19	25	12	30	42	23	28	8	32	4	89	0.638
			FG%	47.9%			FT%	76.0%		Team Rebs	4							
Special Notes:																		
Technical: Carol Blazejewski																		

Dallas Diamonds																		Team Game #
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Barnes, Vanessa	11	23	2	6			3	3	1	1	2	2	5	1	1	0	7	0.565
Boutte, Joannette	30	3	1	2			0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	2	0.000
Browning, Hattie	22	29	6	12			0	0	1	1	2	4	2	1	0	0	12	0.793
Bruton, Cynthia	20	13	2	4			2	3	4	0	4	0	3	0	0	0	6	0.769
Buettel, Kim	14	19	3	7			4	4	0	4	4	1	4	1	3	0	10	0.737
French, Joanie	32	1	0	0			1	1	1		1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2.000
Gillom, Peggie	42	9	0	2			2	4	2	1	3	0	2	0	0	0	2	0.556
Jennings, Rosalind	15	37	4	12			6	6	3	2	5	4	1	7	3	1	14	0.838
Lieberman, Nancy	10	35	11	22	0	1	4	4	0	7	7	1	1	1	4	0	26	0.914
Sacoco, Katrina	33	6	1	2			0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	0.333
Shoemaker, Cathy	24	Injured - Seperated Shoulder																
Swindell, Retha	35	42	5	14			1	2	6	4	10	3	1	2	1	0	11	0.667
Walker, Gwen	40	23	4	8			4	6	3	2	5	1	3	1	4	0	12	0.696
Totals		240	39	91	0	1	27	33	21	23	44	16	24	14	19	1	105	0.733
			FG%	42.9%			FT%	81.8%		Team Rebs	5							

Blazejowski led the team with 30 points and a technical foul, while Tara Heiss had 17. For the Diamonds Lieberman had 26 points, while five others scored in double figures. An undrafted rookie guard, Rosalind Jennings, had seven steals to go with her 14 points.

Even though the three games in three-day road trip was over, that didn't mean life was any easier as the Gems returned home for a game the next day. Their fourth game in four days was on Monday February 2nd against the Chicago Hustle.

After a 1-2 road trip the first opportunity for revenge came as the (8-7) Hustle were about to play their third game in three days. They were coming in from Minnesota, who they were forced to play, because with the demise of the New England Gulls games had to be made up.

A better than usual crowd of 1,356 came and paid either \$10 or \$7.50 to see the Gems take control with a 28-19 1st quarter lead. Blazejowski had 13 points and the Gems held Inge Nissen to three points. But the Hustle found their stride as Inge Nissen scored 13 points, including eight in a row at one point. The game was tied at 50 at the half.

Chicago kept up its momentum as they went on a 10-6 streak in the first six minutes, before Blazejowski made three in a row and Willodean Harris also added six points so the Gems took a 69-64 lead after three quarters. The Gems never lost the lead in the 4th quarter as they finished the game with a 95-86 victory. Their ninth home win without a loss this season.

Blazejowski pleased the crowd by throwing in 37 points, while stopping the Hustle's momentum with seven steals. Debbie Comerie contributed 15 points on 7 of 8 from the floor, while Tara Heiss handed out 11 assists.

The Hustle were led by Inge Nissen's 30 points, while Ethel 'Poco' White added 16 points. Newcomer Althea Gwyn came through with 12 points and 12 rebounds.

New Jersey Gems																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Blazejowski, Carol	12		14	21			9	10			0			7			37
Comerie, Debbie	34		7	8			1	1		5	5						15
Gregory, Anne	42		0				0	0			0						0
Harris, Willodean	40		4				3	4			0						11
Heiss, Tara	44		5				2	2			0	11					12
Marquis, Gail	24		6				0	0		10	10						12
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		0				0	2			0						0
Thomas, Janice	10		3				2	2			0						8
Van Ness, Joan	32		0				0	0			0						0
Adjustment		240		38									21				
Totals		240	39	67	0	0	17	21	0	15	15	11	21	7	0	0	95
			FG%	58.2%			FT%	81.0%	Team Rebs								

Chicago Hustle																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Candler, Belinda	24		2				0	0			0						4
Critelli, Cris	22		3				0	0			0						6
Digitale, Sue	21		0				0	0			0						0
Easterling, Rita	15		0				0	0			0						0
Fincher, Janie	10	Name not in Newspaper															
Geils, Donna	14		6				2	2			0						14
Gwyn, Althea	44		4				4	4		12	12						12
Matthews, Linda	12		0				0	0			0						0
Mayo, Paula	25		2				0	0			0						4
Nissen, Inge	42		12				6	7		8	8						30
White, Ethel	20		7				2	6			0						16
Adjustment		240											21				
Totals		240	36	0	0	0	14	19	0	20	20	0	21	0	0	0	86
			FG%	#####			FT%	73.7%	Team Rebs								

For those that trust the information in newspapers here is a statistical summary of the Gems:

- Carol Blazejowski leads the league with 29.3 average
- Tara Heiss was averaging 14.6 points and 5.0 assists
- Janice Thomas was averaging 12.0 points and 9.1 assists
- Willodean Harris was averaging 11 points and 7.0 rebounds
- Gail Marquis was averaging 11 points and 9.3 rebounds.

Yet one thing we could be sure of were the standings as of the Gems last game.

Both New Jersey and New Orleans were 14-8 (.636), while Dallas was 11-7 (.647).

The league would play three more games by Thursday February 5th, as they went into their All-Star break.

The WBL League Statistics – as of Feb. 5th, 1981

SCORING

Name,Team	GP	Pts	Avg
Blazejowski, N.J.	21	615	29.3
Lieberman, Dal.	16	411	25.7
Walker, Neb.	17	390	22.9
Nissen, Chi.	15	344	22.9
Bolin, S.F.	9	184	20.4

REBOUNDS

Name,Team	GP	Reb	Avg
Gwyn, Chi.	13	182	14.0
Walker, Neb.	17	233	13.7
Johnson, St.L	19	256	13.5
Nissen, Chi.	15	180	12.0
Haugejorde, S.F.	16	152	9.5

ASSISTS

Name,Team	GP	Ast	Avg
Thomas, N.J.	21	192	9.1
Lieberman, Dal.	16	109	6.8
Warlick, Neb.	17	91	5.4
Jones, St.L	20	104	5.2
Blalock, N.O.	22	109	4.9

STEALS

Name,Team	GP	Stl	Avg
Lieberman, Dal.	16	54	3.4
Thomas, N.J.	21	63	3.0
Chason, Neb.	17	49	2.9
Roberts, St.L	20	55	2.8
Blazejowski, N.J.	21	51	2.4

FIELD GOAL PCT.

Name,Team	FGM	FGA	Pct.
Walker, Neb.	130	220	.591
Forest, N.O.	97	171	.567
Chason, Neb.	97	180	.539
Blazejowski, N.J.	245	485	.505
Wayment, N.O.	58	117	.496

FREE THROW PCT.

Name,Team	FTM	FTA	Pct.
Bolin, S.F.	56	66	.849
Lieberman, Dal.	105	124	.847
Critelli, Chi.	57	69	.826
Blazejowski, N.J.	125	152	.822
Brogdon, N.O.	88	108	.815

BLOCKED SHOTS

Name,Team	GP	Blks	Avg
Nissen, Chi.	15	60	4.0
Owens, Chi.	14	23	1.6
Andrykowski, N.O.	18	27	1.5
Harris, N.J.	13	15	1.2
Lewis, Neb.	16	18	1.1

The All-Star game was February 9, 1981 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. This game was a showcase from a former Ladies Professional Basketball Association team, the New Mexico Energiee. They were petitioning the WBL for a place in the league.

This effort was led by the former coach and spokesman for the LPBA, Norm Ellenberger. Norm's connections and association within New Mexico were legendary. Therefore, when 3,378 (in a 6,000 seat arena) attended the All-Star game, it made their future prospects for admittance look good.



The Gems were going to be represented by Carol Blazejowski, Janice Thomas, and Gail Marquis. For Thomas this was not only her third All-Star game, but also her third game as a starter. Her All-Star record was 1-1.

The Coastal Division, which was called the Western Division in the papers were coached by Dallas Diamond's coach Greg Williams, because of his first-place position as of that Sunday February 2nd date. Logistically the league had to pick a date for when head coaches would be named and as of the 2nd, Dallas had the best Coastal record.

The Western stars blew out the Eastern team 125-92 behind 29 points by Molly Bolin and 20 each from both Gunner and Big Head. Blaze's 20 points came with six rebounds in 21 minutes, while Gail Marquis came through with six points and eight rebounds in 21 minutes. While winning her 2nd All-Star game Janice Thomas, in 22 minutes, shot an abysmal 1 for 9.

As members of the losing team, all the players were promised \$150, with the winners receiving \$300. Whether anyone ever saw their money was debatable.

Eastern Division All-Stars																				
Coach: Steve Kirk Nebraska Wranglers 16 - 4																				
Team	No.	Name	Pos.	Min	2 FGM	2FGA	3FGM	3FGA	FTM	FTA	OF RB	DF RB	TOT RB	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Chicago Hustle		Mayo, Paula	F	16	3	11					3	1	4		3		1		6	0.563
Nebraska Wranglers		Walker, Rosie	C	21	5	10			3	6	2	1	3		5		2		13	0.667
Chicago Hustle		Nissen, Inge	C	29	8	20			7	8	2	5	7		4		5		23	0.862
St. Louis Streak		Moore, Pearl	G	33	5	16			1	1	0	2	2	3	4		0		11	0.576
Nebraska Wranglers		Warick, Holly	G	28	3	10					2	5	7	2	1		0		6	0.607
Minnesota Fillies		Kocurek, Marie	F	10	0	5			2	6	4	4	8	2	2				2	1.400
Minnesota Fillies		Harris, Nessie	F	25	3	8			3	6	2	0	2		2	1	5		9	0.280
Minnesota Fillies		Cotman, Angela	G	23	4	13					4	0	4		1		1		8	0.478
St. Louis Streak		Johnson, Lydia	C	24	3	13			3	4	4	8	12		4		2		9	0.792
St. Louis Streak		Jones, Linnell	G	31	2	6			1	4	1	3	4	3	3		5		5	0.323
				240	36	112	0	0	20	35	24	29	53	10	29	1	21	0	92	0.604

Western Division All-Stars																				
Coach: Greg Williams Dallas Diamonds 12 - 6																				
Team	No.	Name	Pos.	Min	2 FGM	2FGA	3FGM	3FGA	FTM	FTA	OF RB	DF RB	TOT RB	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Dallas Diamonds		Lieberman, Nancy	G	24	8	15			4	4	0	6	6	5	2	5	1		20	1.667
San Francisco Pioneers		Haugejorde, Cindy	F	23	7	10					2	5	7	0	2	0	1		14	0.870
New England Gulls		Gwyn, Althea	C	24	2	9			4	7	3	6	9	1	4	0	7		8	0.500
New Jersey Gems		Blazejowski, Carol	F	21	5	9			10	12	0	6	6	1	1	2	1		20	1.381
New Jersey Gems		Thomas, Janice	G	22	1	9			0	0	1	3	4	3	1	1	2		2	0.500
Dallas Diamonds		Jennings, Rosalind	G	22	0	6			3	6	3	4	7	0	0	0	0		3	0.455
New Jersey Gems		Marquis, Gail	F	21	3	5			0	0	4	4	8	0	5	0	4		6	0.476
New Orleans Pride		Brogdon, Cindy	G	22	5	14			3	3	1	5	6	1	3	0	3		13	0.818
New Orleans Pride		Blalock, Sybil	G	21	1	3			2	3	2	2	4	1	4	0	2		4	0.381
San Francisco Pioneers		Bolin, Molly	G	22	13	20	0	1	3	3	1	0	1	1	1	1	0		29	1.500
San Francisco Pioneers		Hicks, Cardie	F	18	3	11			0	0	1	0	1	1	5	0	3		6	0.333
				240	48	111	0	1	29	38	18	41	59	14	28	9	24	0	125	0.821

One highlight occurred late in the game when the San Francisco Pioneers' 5'8" guard, Cardie Hicks, made a steal and broke away to attempt a slam-dunk. While she had the height, her hand couldn't control the ball and she missed. But to the 3,378 attending, it was the anticipation that produced the electricity to bring them to their feet.

After the break four teams had games two days later on February 11th, but for the Gems their next game wasn't until the 15th. With the updated schedule the Gems were going to host the (17-4) Nebraska Wranglers on Sunday the 15th and Monday the 16th. This would also be the first road game for the Wranglers after learning about the murder of their teammate, Connie Kunzmann, in early February.

Special promotions and appearances involving the Gems filled out the rest of the year. The first involved a halftime game on the 15th between WNEW personalities and a squad of Playboy Bunnies. Also coming up on the 18th was a basketball clinic with Tara Heiss and Gail Marquis at the H.B. Whitehorne Middle School.

As of Sunday the 15th the 14-8 Gems were in 3rd place behind the 13-6 Diamonds and the 15-8 Pride. The crowd of 2,237 was more than double the average attendance (1,100), probably because of the upcoming halftime show and \$5 discounted tickets. The battle between the Gems and Wranglers, two teams that could end up facing each other in the finals, saw the Gems take a 27-26 lead. A 25-15 defensive effort by New Jersey gave the Gems a 52-41 half time lead, with Nebraska's Rosie Walker scoring 23 of those 41. Yet it was the injury to Blazejowski's back, after a collision with Janet Flora, that was concerning everyone connected with the Gems. She did not return to the game and only played 18 minutes in total.

After the Wranglers cut the lead to 54-51, Janice Thomas had a steal and two assists to give the Gems a 58-51 lead and some breathing room with 6:00 left. The Gems held on for a 71-67 3rd quarter lead after Dean Harris scored the last seven points of the period.

For the Gems trying to beat the Wranglers was like driving a stake into Dracula's heart. Not only did the Wranglers overcome deficits of 12 and 13 points, they also scored six points in the last 37 seconds to almost tie the score. Finally, after 48 minutes the Gems preserved their perfect 10-0 home record with a 94-92 victory.

Despite no Blaze, who still managed to score 13 points in 18 minutes, the team had four others with double figures. Tara Heiss led the way with 19 points and nine assists, while Willodean Harris' 14 points and 10 rebounds were needed. Janice Thomas added 14 assists. Two substitutes, Wanda Szeremeta and Anne Gregory each came through with 13 points, with Wanda shooting 6 of 9 from the field.

The Wrangler workhorse, Rosie Walker, came through with 36 points and 15 rebounds. Super sub Janet Flora added 16 points, along with crashing into Blazejowski. Carol Chason had 14 points.

New Jersey Gems																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Blazejowski, Carol	12	18									0						13
Comerie, Debbie	34										0						7
Gregory, Anne	42										0						13
Harris, Willodean	40									10	10						14
Heiss, Tara	44										0	9					19
Marquis, Gail	24										0						7
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		6	9			1				0						13
Thomas, Janice	10										0	14		1	<<at least		8
Van Ness, Joan	32	Name not in Box Score									0						0
Adjustment		222															
Totals		240	6	9	0	0	1	0	0	10	10	23	0	1	0	0	94
			FG%	#####			FT%	#DIV/0!		Team Rebs							

Nebraska Wranglers																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Beasley, Genia	34										0						8
Chason, Carol	10										0						14
Flora, Janet	32										0						16
Greene, Vivian	14	Name Not in Newspapers									0						0
Jordan, Kim	30	Name Not in Newspapers									0						0
Lewis, Charlotte	50										0						7
Pope, Peggy	20	Name Not in Newspapers									0						0
Rajcula, Jody		Name Not in Newspapers									0						0
Taylor, Susan	24										0						6
Walker, Rosie	40									15	15						36
Warlick, Holly	22										0						4
Wright, Josephine	42										0						1
Adjustment		240															
Totals		240	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	15	0	0	0	0	0	92
			FG%	#####			FT%	#DIV/0!		Team Rebs							

The Gems-Wranglers meetings were proving to be evenly played contests as all three ended up as close games: 80-77, 99-96, and 94-92. After such an exciting game the hope was that the Monday game would bring back a large crowd.

Yet the Monday February 16th game only attracted 1,037 to the South Mountain Arena. Blazejowski was back in the line-up, because of super trainer Ethel Holvas. Blaze scored nine of the first 11 points as the Gems took an 11-6 lead. The (15-8) Gems finished the quarter 19-16 for a 30-22 1st quarter lead.

But in the 2nd quarter the Gems ran into what made the Wranglers so hard to deal with – their defense. A 26-10 Wrangler stranglehold gave the Wranglers a 48-40 half time lead. Carol Chason’s 19 played a huge role in this comeback.

The Gems made the necessary adjustments in the locker room, but didn’t implement it until later. They fell behind 57-42 at the 8:44 mark after a 9-2 Wrangler run. But behind Tara Heiss’ 12 3rd quarter points the Gems fought back. After giving up 9 points in 3:16, they then gave up only eight in the final eight minutes as they took the lead 67-65.

With the Gems leading 80-79 and four minutes left the Wranglers went on a 12-6 run to end the Gems' 10-game home winning streak. The final score was 91-86.

Blazejowski led the team with 25 points, while Tara Heiss added 20 points and eight assists. Willodean Harris had 14 points and 11 rebounds. For the (18-5) Wranglers Rosie Walker had an unusual game for her – 32 points and 14 rebounds, which were expected. But six assists? She also had 12 points in the important 4th quarter as her 15 of 19 from the floor meant she only made two free throws. Carol Chason again came through 22 points.

Both Coaches showed their volatility and frustration with the refs, as they each picked up a technical.

New Jersey Gems																	Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Blazejowski, Carol	12	35	11	22			3	3			0						25
Comerie, Debbie	34		4				4				0						12
Gregory, Anne	42		3				1				0						7
Harris, Willodean	40		4				6			11	11						14
Heiss, Tara	44		8				4				0	8					20
Marquis, Gail	24		2				0				0						4
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		0				0				0						0
Thomas, Janice	10		2				0				0						4
Van Ness, Joan	32		0				0				0						0
Adjustment		205															
Totals		240	34	22	0	0	18	3	0	11	11	8	0	0	0	0	86
			FG%	#####			FT%	600.0%		Team Rebs							
Special Notes:																	
Technical: Coach Kathy Mosolino																	

Nebraska Wranglers																	Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Beasley, Genia	34		4				0				0						8
Chason, Carol	10		8				6				0						22
Flora, Janet	32		0				0				0						0
Greene, Vivian	14	Name not in Newspaper															
Jordan, Kim	30	Name not in Newspaper															
Lewis, Charlotte	50		4				5				0						13
Pope, Peggy	20	Name not in Newspaper															
Rajcula, Jody			0				0				0						0
Taylor, Susan	24		5				1				0						11
Walker, Rosie	40		15	19			2			14	14	6					32
Warlick, Holly	22		2				1				0						5
Wright, Josephine	42	Name not in Newspaper															
Adjustment		240															
Totals		0	38	19	0	0	15	0	0	14	14	6	0	0	0	0	91
			FG%	#####			FT%	#DIV/0!		Team Rebs							
Special Notes:																	
Technical: Coach Steve Kirk																	

As the Wranglers went home to prepare for their showdown with the (14-6) Dallas Diamonds, the Gems had a week off before they hosted the Chicago Hustle.

Off the court Bob Milo was adamant that if Ann Meyers came back with just 12 games left she would not receive her full \$40,000 salary. He did tell her agent, George Kalafatis, that he was willing to pay her \$20,000, but he doubted she would accept it. Milo also vowed to never speak Ann Meyers' name in public this season.

The week off also gave the Gems time to do more promotions: like the Bernards Kiwanis Club's Fish and Chips dinner on Feb 20th. Debbie Comerie and Joan Van Ness won the honors of answering questions and supporting the local causes.

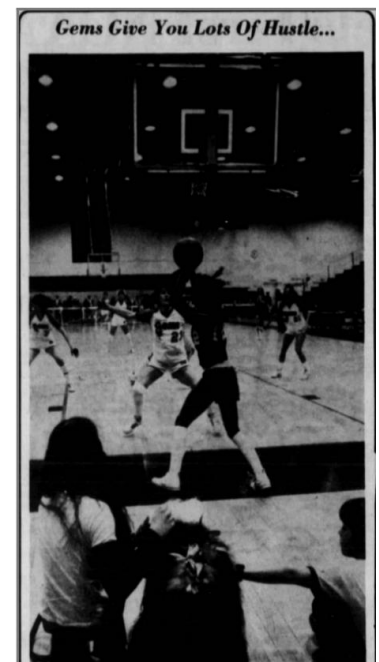
By the time Chicago came to town they had a 11-10 record and pretty much had no hope of catching the Wranglers. They also brought with them a powerful inside game with 6'2" All-Pro Althea Gwyn getting used to playing alongside 6'5" Inge Nissen. Rebounding was probably going to be the key, if the Gems wanted to use their quicker fast breaking offense.

Before the game on Monday February 23rd the Gems (15-9 .625) were still in 3rd place by one game as they trailed the Diamonds (15-7 .682) and the Pride (16-9 .640). The Pride stayed near the top as they beat the Diamonds in Dallas 108-103 before a crowd of 6,373 with a skeleton team of just eight players.

The Gems needed to beat an inconsistent Chicago team if they wanted to capture the Coastal crown. A crowd of only 853 came out to see the Gems fall behind 25-20. The WBL's leading scorer Carol Blazejowski (28.8) had no baskets and only two free throws in the first quarter. Ex-New England Gull, Cris Cristelli, was the one putting the clamps on Blaze. Meanwhile Inge Nissen was also held to just two baskets.

In the 2nd quarter Inge Nissen exploded for 14 points, while Blaze went 4 ½ minutes before she made her first basket. She would end up with just six points by half time. After trailing 25-22, the Gems then fell behind 34-22 behind scoring from Gwyn, Nissen and Paula Mayo. As the Gems continued to struggle looking for points the Hustle went on another 12-6 run to raise the score to 46-28. The Gems finally outscored Chicago 11-4 to end the half, as they trailed 50-39.

As the Gems tried to double team Nissen, they instead found themselves fouling her as she went 13 of 16 from the line, in just the 3rd quarter. As the quarter was drawing to a close the Gems were within reach at 69-53, before the Hustle closed out with a 10-2 run and a 79-55 3rd quarter lead.



As each team put about 14 points on the board the Gems trailed 94-69 with less than six minutes in the games. Tara Heiss then put the team on her back and scored 19 4th quarter points. When she drilled a crowd pleasing 3-pointer with 1:15 left the Gems were within seven, 100-93. But in the end the Hustle came through with a 107-95 victory. This was the 2nd home loss in a row for the Gems.

On a night that Blazejewski would shoot 6 of 21 for 18 total points, Tara Heiss finished with 25 points, while Janice Thomas had 18 points. Thomas also came through with eight assists. Willodean Harris' 14 points and 13 rebounds helped but were miniscule to Inge Nissen's 40 points.

On top of Nissen's 40 points were her 14 rebounds and 18 of 22 from the free throw line. All-Star Paula Mayo had 20 points and 13 rebounds. To show the dominance of the front-line Althea Gwyn added 14 points and 16 rebounds. A front court of 74 points and 43 rebounds.

New Jersey Gems																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Blazejewski, Carol	12		6	21			6	7			0						18
Comerie, Debbie	34		4				4	4			0		6				12
Feeney, Eileen	55		0				0	0			0						0
Gregory, Anne	42		2				0	0			0						4
Harris, Wilodean	40		5				4	4		13	13						14
Heiss, Tara	44		9		1	1	4	4			0						25
Marquis, Gail	24		1				0	0			0						2
Szeremeta, Wanda	23		1				0	0			0						2
Thomas, Janice	10		7				4	4			0	8					18
Van Ness, Joan	32		0				0	0			0						0
Adjustment		240		69						36			19				
Totals		240	35	90	1	1	22	23	0	49	13	8	25	0	0	0	95
			FG%	38.9%			FT%	95.7%	Team Rebs								

Chicago Hustle																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Candler, Belinda	24		3				0	0			0						6
Critelli, Cris	22		2				4	4			0						8
Digitale, Sue	21		3				2	2			0						8
Easterling, Rita	15		0				0	0			0						0
Fincher, Janie	10	Name not in Newspaper															
Geils, Donna	14		2				0	0			0						4
Gwyn, Althea	44		5				4	5		16	16						14
Kilday, Pam	26	Name not in Newspaper															
Matthews, Linda	12		0				2	2			0						2
Mayo, Paula	25		9				2	3		13	13						20
Nissen, Inge	42		11	21			18	22		14	14						40
White, Ethel	20		1		1	1	2	2			0						5
Adjustment		240								12			21				
Totals		240	36	21	1	1	34	40	0	55	43	0	21	0	0	0	107
			FG%	####			FT%	85.0%	Team Rebs								

The Gems ended up their three-game post All-Star game home stand with a 15-10 record as they ventured to St. Louis for a game against the 8-17 Streak. So, while 8-17 sounds like a bad record, when a team starts off 1-13, that means the Streak were now 7-4 in their last 11 games. This was better than the Gems 6-5, Pride 5-6, and right up there with Dallas and Nebraska at 8-3.

Hopefully, as the Gems entered Kiel Auditorium to face the Streak and 1,019 dedicated fans they weren't overconfident. The two teams were feeling each other out as the Gems took a slight 17-16 1st quarter lead. The 2nd quarter saw the Streak take control with a 42-35 half time lead. The Gems found themselves further behind after three quarters, but only by 63-54.

The Streak came through with a 90-78 victory to raise their record to 9-17. To the St. Louis players and the St. Louis media this gave them hope of catching the 12-11 Chicago Hustle with 10 games to play.

For the 8th game in a row the Gems didn't touch the 100 mark. Of course, Blazejowski led the way with 20 points, but this only gave her 66 points in the last 4 games (16.5). Tara Heiss came through with 16. The All-Stars Janice Thomas and Gail Marquis scored 12 & 10 respectively.

The Streak were led by All-Star Lydia Johnson's 27, while Patricia Roberts' 20 points and All-Star Pearl Moore's 13 complemented Johnson's effort.

New Jersey Gems																	Team Ge
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Blazejowski, Carol	12										0						20
Comerie, Debbie	34										0						8
Feeney, Eileen	55										0						0
Gregory, Anne	42										0						0
Harris, Wilodean	40									10	10						8
Heiss, Tara	44										0						16
Marquis, Gail	24										0						10
Szeremeta, Wanda	23										0						4
Thomas, Janice	10										0						12
Van Ness, Joan	32										0						0
Adjustment		240	25				28	34					27				
Totals		240	25	0	0	0	28	34	0	10	10	0	27	0	0	0	78
			FG%	#####			FT%	82.4%	Team Rebs								

St. Louis Streak																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Abernathy, Alfredda	52										0						4
Booker, Betty	20										0						11
Cook, Jane Ellen	7	Name not in Newspaper															
Fuller, Mary	22										0						1
Johnson, Lydia	50										0						27
Jones, Linnell	1										0						6
McWhorter, Charlene	55										0						6
Mitchell, Adrian	34										0						2
Moore, Pearl	12										0						13
Pope, Rowanna	11	Name Not in Newspapers															
Roberts, Patricia	44										0						20
Thompson, Rosie	10	Name not in Newspaper															
Adjustment		240	32				26	38					29				
Totals		240	32	0	0	0	26	38	0	0	0	0	29	0	0	0	90
			FG%	#####			FT%	68.4%	Team Rebs								

With a 15-11 record and just 10 games remaining the Gems were now 2.5 games behind Dallas and 2 games behind New Orleans.

But all that could change in the following week. Again, with the schedule change and the need for teams to play an equal number of games the Dallas Diamonds were going to come to South Mountain Arena for two straight games.

(Editor: The well created Ad to the right was found in a March 8th newspaper. And I'm putting it here to emphasize the point that the first two games against Dallas had already taken place.)

The Gems would put their 10-2 home record against a Dallas team that was on a five-game road trip. After two wins in Minnesota and San Francisco Dallas came east for a game on Monday March 2nd.



A below average crowd of 709 showed that the hype over a head-to-head Blazejowski-Lieberman match-up didn't move the needle. Yet those that came out saw the Gems take a 27-26 1st quarter lead. But just like the last three games the Gems found themselves playing poorly in the 2nd quarter as Dallas took the lead at 33-31 and eventually went into the locker room with a 60-54 half-time lead.

The 3rd quarter lead was cut down to two, 82-80 as the Gems trailed going into the 4th quarter. After they fell behind 100-91 with four minutes left Blazejowski added to the 21 points she would score in the 4th quarter. The Gems got to within 106-105 with 44 seconds left. A Retha Swindell free throw made it 107-105 and a missed shot and wild scramble for a loose ball with four seconds left sealed the Gems loss. This was their 4th loss in a row and their third home loss. A 15-12 record put them 4.5 games behind the 19-7 Diamonds.

Blazejowski came through with 40 points on 15 of 28 from the floor, along with six rebounds. Tara Heiss had 24 with 12 of 18 from the field, along with 10 assists. For Janice Thomas, her floor leadership had her dishing out a Gems' record 16 assists. Gail Marquis also added 12 points and 11 rebounds. As a team the Gems shot 58.4% (45-77) and had 36 assists on 45 made baskets.

Dallas had six players with double figures with Nancy Lieberman's 24 points, nine assists and seven rebounds leading the way. Kim Bueltel added 15 points, while reserve Peggie Gillom and Gwen Walker added 14 points each.

New Jersey Gems																		Team Game #
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Blazejowski, Carol	12	41	15	28			10	13	3	3	6	4	4	3	5	0	40	1.268
Comerie, Debbie	34	39	5	6			3	5	3	3	6	3	5	1	3	0	13	0.590
Feeney, Eileen	55	Name Not in Newspapers																
Gregory, Anne	42	4	0	1			0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0.000
Harris, Willodean	40	19	1	3			2	4	0	4	4	0	3	1	0	2	4	0.474
Heiss, Tara	44	46	12	18			0	0	0	1	1	10	4	2	3	0	24	0.957
Marquis, Gail	24	36	6	8			0	0	3	8	11	1	2	2	3	0	12	0.667
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	10	2	4			0	0	1	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	4	0.800
Thomas, Janice	10	41	4	9			0	0	2	2	4	16	4	4	6	1	8	1.024
Van Ness, Joan	32	4	0	0			0	0	0	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	1.000
Totals		240	45	77	0	0	15	22	12	24	36	36	26	13	20	3	105	0.858
			FG%	58.4%			FT%	68.2%		Team Rebs	15							

Dallas Diamonds																		Team Game #
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Barnes, Vanessa	11	11	5	7			0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	10	1.273
Browning, Hattie	22	9	0	1			0	0	2	2	4	2	1	0	0	0	0	0.889
Bueltel, Kim	14	20	7	11			1	2	4	1	5	1	5	0	1	0	15	1.050
French, Joanie	32	Name Not in Newspapers																
Gillom, Peggie	42	21	7	10			0	1	0	1	1	0	2	0	1	0	14	0.667
Jennings, Rosalind	15	32	5	10			3	5	3	3	6	2	3	6	3	0	13	0.813
Lieberman, Nancy	10	43	10	24			4	6	3	4	7	9	1	3	5	0	24	1.093
Sacoco, Katrina	33	2	0	0			1	2	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1.000
Shoemaker, Cathy	24	29	4	8			1	2	2	0	2	1	3	0	0	0	9	0.448
Swindell, Retha	35	38	3	7			1	2	2	0	2	2	2	1	0	3	7	0.368
Walker, Gwen	40	35	4	11			6	6	4	1	5	0	3	1	4	0	14	0.457
Totals		240	45	89	0	0	17	26	21	13	34	18	21	12	14	3	107	0.729
			FG%	50.6%			FT%	65.4%		Team Rebs	8							

On the in between day Tuesday March 3rd, the Gems wanted to be sure they got a slight edge before the next game. They pulled off a trick most teams used and it was the "Oooh, I forgot" trick. Instead of having a facility, with basketballs available for the visiting team to workout and practice, they "conveniently" forgot. The visitors either return to their hotels or go out and run around the neighborhood to stay in shape.

The local newspaper, Morristown Daily Record, used this opportunity of Blazejowski vs Lieberman to ask the question, "Where Did Everyone Go? Often at games when the public address announcer gives the attendance laughter would erupt with the media. Why? Because the figures were always horribly inflated. Yet voicing dissatisfaction about the attendance by players or front office was an unwritten rule. "It was a good night," would become the mantra

IF anyone showed up for the game. When the papers compared Dallas and New Jersey, it was noted that Dallas' best ticket cost \$5.50, while the Gems' cheapest ticket cost \$7.50. The Gems had a quality team and great individual players, but no recognized identity within the state. To Bob Milo the future was still going to be either in the Meadowlands or maybe even in Atlantic City.

Before the next game Coach Mosolino met with back-up center Willodean Harris who had been having mediocre games against Dallas. It also seemed that after resolving her contract dispute Willodean assumed she was going to be a starter and a regular. But coming off the bench was messing with her head and she was only putting in minimal effort. Coach Mosolino just wanted her, "To be as good as you can be."

The Wednesday, March 4th, crowd was an improvement at 1,261, but nowhere near what two revolutionary players like Blazejowski and Lieberman deserved. The Gems were going to be down one player, as Anne Gregory had to be taken to the hospital with back spasms.

The tired Diamonds couldn't keep up with the Gems as they took a 31-24 lead. But Dallas found a 2nd wind and the Gems, true to form in the 2nd quarter, were outscored 25-14. Lieberman led the way with 22 of the Diamonds' 49 points. The Gems trailed 49-45 at the half. The two teams played a 24-24 3rd quarter, which meant the Gems were losing 73-69.

With 9:35 remaining the Gems finally took the lead at 77-76. The Gems then found a rhythm as they fed Willodean Harris in the post for eight straight points. The fans enjoyed the announcer's voice as it echoed with "Deeeeeaaaannnn Harris" through the arena for the whole 4th quarter. The lead grew to 89-80 lead with less than 6:00 on the clock. The Gems put together a 34-23 4th quarter and a 103-95 victory.

The urgency of winning this game was seen in the minutes played: Thomas 44, Comerie 43, Heiss 42, Blazejowski 41. For some reason All-Star Gail Marquis only played 10 minutes. As a team Blazejowski led with 29 points and eight rebounds, while Dean had 26 points and seven rebounds. Tara Heiss shot 7 of 10 for 14 points and she handed out 10 assists. As a team the Gems shot 54.8% (40-73), which means for the last two games against Dallas they were 85-150 or 56.7%.

This would be an encouraging note for any future games the two teams would play. Also, if the Gems could get Harris to be mentally ready for every game, they would have unleashed a weapon that was hard to throttle.

For the Diamonds Lieberman played 43 minutes and scored 36 points, but she had only three rebounds and two assists. Infrequently used reserve Katrina Sacoco ended up playing 25 minutes and scoring 14 points on six of eight from the field.

New Jersey Gems																		Team Game #
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Blazejowski, Carol	12	41	9	18			11	12	3	5	8	3	1	2	2	0	29	1.049
Comerie, Debbie	34	43	9	13			3	5	2	4	6	1	5	2	3	1	21	0.651
Feeney, Eileen	55	4	1	2			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0.500
Gregory, Anne	42	Hospitalized - Back Spasms																
Harris, Willodean	40	34	10	16			6	6	3	4	7	2	4	2	1	2	26	1.118
Heiss, Tara	44	42	7	10			0	0	0	4	4	10	2	2	7	0	14	0.786
Marquis, Gail	24	10	0	1			2	3	0	1	1	1	2	0	3	0	2	0.200
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	12	1	5			0	0	0	3	3	1	0	0	2	0	2	0.417
Thomas, Janice	10	44	2	6			1	2	2	5	7	6	4	5	3	2	5	0.591
Van Ness, Joan	32	10	1	2			0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	1	0	2	0.600
Totals		240	40	73	0	0	23	28	10	27	37	26	18	13	22	5	103	0.763
			FG%	54.8%			FT%	82.1%	Team Rebs	12								
Special Notes:																		
Anne Gregory entered hospital prior to game with back spasms																		

Dallas Diamonds																		Team Game #
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Barnes, Vanessa	11	17	1	7			2	2	1	3	4	1	4	1	0	0	4	0.647
Browning, Hattie	22	7	0	0			0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0.000
Buettel, Kim	14	29	3	9			6	6	1	1	2	0	3	3	0	0	12	0.586
French, Joanie	32	Names Not in Newspapers																
Gillom, Peggie	42	18	0	2			1	2	0	1	1	0	2	2	1	0	1	0.167
Jennings, Rosalind	15	38	3	10			5	5	6	1	7	5	0	0	1	0	11	0.711
Lieberman, Nancy	10	43	18	29	0	2	0	0	1	2	3	2	2	4	2	0	36	1.047
Sacoco, Katrina	33	25	6	8			2	2	2	1	3	0	2	3	0	1	14	0.800
Shoemaker, Cathy	24	22	2	9			0	0	0	3	3	0	1	0	2	0	4	0.227
Swindell, Retha	35	21	3	4			1	2	0	1	1	1	5	1	2	0	7	0.429
Walker, Gwen	40	20	3	7	0	1	0	0	0	2	2	0	5	1	0	0	6	0.450
Totals		240	39	85	0	3	17	19	11	16	27	9	25	15	9	1	95	0.608
			FG%	45.9%			FT%	89.5%	Team Rebs	10								



Freeholder Lincoln Turner, at left, checks with Linda Primerano, director of operations for the New Jersey Gems, on ways to boost attendance.

The Gems had four days off and they again did their best to publicize themselves. A large article about Lincoln Turner urging the citizens of Essex County to come out and support the team accompanied his photograph with Linda Primerano, the Gem's Director of Operations.

There was also an article on Denise Burdick, who played two years for the Gems. Of course, the article had to do with a salary not received her first season. In fact, the money she was expecting was actually in the form of the title and registration of a \$6,000 Toyota Celica. But when her transportation was repossessed for lack of payments, she was given \$250 by the front office. A year and a half later she's still waiting for the other \$5,750 the original Gems' owners owed her.

How about another article in the Morristown Daily Record with the headline:

For Excitement, WBL Tops NBA

The writer, Ed Marks, believes the superior athletes of the NBA are not relatable because of their skills. Yet his biggest issue was an NBA game was 46 minutes of superficial effort and then 2 minutes of excitement. He would take the effort and the hustle of a team like the Gems, or a college team over the NBA. If you wanted the best "bang for your buck" check out the Gems, because they all loved what they were doing.

The Gems had another home doubleheader against a Coastal Division opponent. The (7-18) San Francisco Pioneers would visit South Mountain Arena on the 8th and 9th. The Pioneers ended 1980 with a 1-5 record under Coach Frank LaPorte. They brought in a winner in Coach Dean Meminger, but they struggled all year trying to find the right combination of players. In fact from January 1 to March 8th the team made 16 player personnel changes. Their 6-13 record under Meminger reflected how difficult it was to win without the right players.

The Pioneers were on their own killer road trip with five games in seven days. After beating the Minnesota Fillies, 112-108, they played the Chicago Hustle the next day and got smoked 140-117. They probably appreciated having two games in the next city as they flew into Newark.

A really good crowd of 2,617 was the result of the 2nd Annual New York-New Jersey Scholastic Cheerleading Contest that took place just before the Game. The fact that the ticket prices were now a reasonable \$5 and \$3 also helped.

The Gems took a slim 26-24 lead, which rose to 58-55 at the half, complements of a 3-pointer from Tara Heiss just before the half. Heiss' bomb was her second in a row, even though there were 13 days between jacks. Two in a row would be a WBL record, since they were an infrequently used part of the game in 1981. As neither of the teams could pull away from each other the Gems led 89-83 going into the 4th quarter.

The differential stayed about the same until the Pioneers got within 110-106 with 3:40 remaining. But when a team that had lost eight of their last nine panics, they get outscored 11-2 in under two minutes. The 121-108 score finally finished out at 129-113. The 129 was a new Gems record, as were the 46 free throws the team made.

Each team shot about the same – Gems 41 of 78, 52.6% vs 46 of 87 52.9%. But the 49 to 29 rebound advantage and the 46 vs 21 free throw advantage allowed the Gems to come through with victory #17.

The 2,617 fans were delighted to see a real shootout as this year's scoring leader, Carol Blazejowski had 34, while last year's scoring champion Molly Bolin came through with 38.

Blaze also didn't fail the fans with her passion for winning as she came through with a technical at the 4:18 mark of the 4th quarter. Tara Heiss was difficult to stop as she had 31 points on 7 of 11 from the floor and 16 of 18 from the line along with seven assists, before she fouled out.

Janice Thomas also finished one steal shy of a Triple-Double as she had 22 points, 10 assists, and nine steals. All of these stats almost made Willodean Harris' 16 points and 12 rebounds obsolete.

The Pioneers were carried by Molly Bolin's 38 on 16 of 29 from the floor in just 32 minutes, which gave her an explosive Eff. Rat. of 1.563. Her minutes were limited because she eventually fouled out. Rookie sensation Cindy Haugejorde had 29 points on 11 of 16 from the floor and 7 of 7 from the line.

New Jersey Gems																		Team Game #
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Blazejowski, Carol	12	39	11	21			12	12	3	6	9	2	5	1	1	0	34	1.205
Comerie, Debbie	34	24	1	2			1	4	3	5	8	0	6	1	1	0	3	0.458
Feeney, Eileen	55	7	0	1			1	2	1	1	2	0	3	1	0	0	1	0.571
Gregory, Anne	42	Injured - Back Spasms																
Harris, Willodean	40	38	7	16			2	4	4	8	12	1	3	0	4	1	16	0.684
Heiss, Tara	44	37	7	11	1	1	16	18	1	2	3	7	6	2	5	0	31	1.216
Marquis, Gail	24	27	2	8			5	7	0	4	4	0	2	1	1	0	9	0.481
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	14	3	5			4	5	1	3	4	0	0	0	1	0	10	0.929
Thomas, Janice	10	43	9	12			4	6	0	4	4	10	2	9	5	0	22	1.163
Van Ness, Joan	32	11	1	2			1	3	1	2	3	0	1	2	2	0	3	0.545
Totals		240	41	78	1	1	46	61	14	35	49	20	28	17	20	1	129	0.896
			FG%	52.6%			FT%	75.4%		Team Rebs	9							
Special Notes:																		
Technical: Carol Blazejowski 4th Qtr 4:18																		

San Francisco Pioneers																		Team Game #
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Bolin, Molly	44	32	16	29			6	7	2	2	4	3	6	4	2	0	38	1.563
Booker, Gerry	51	5	1	1			0	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	0	0	2	1.400
Draving, Doris	50	30	2	5			0	0	0	5	5	0	5	0	2	0	4	0.233
Green, Anita	32	Name not in Newspaper																
Haugejorde, Cindy	43	36	11	16			7	7	2	4	6	3	4	0	3	0	29	1.056
Hicks, Cardie	10	23	4	10			0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	2	0	8	0.348
McKinney, Musiette	33	23	3	5			0	0	0	3	3	4	3	0	5	0	6	0.522
Pate, Sheryl	40	16	0	0			1	4	0	0	0	0	6	1	1	1	1	0.063
Rajcula, Jody	11	19	1	1			2	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	4	0.105
Uhl, Joan	24	17	1	7			3	4	3	3	6	0	3	1	0	0	5	0.706
Williams, Roberta	1	39	7	13			2	4	1	2	3	3	2	7	4	0	16	0.718
Totals		240	46	87	0	0	21	29	9	20	29	15	35	14	21	1	113	0.688
			FG%	52.9%			FT%	72.4%		Team Rebs	14							

After this win the Coastal playoff race looked like this:

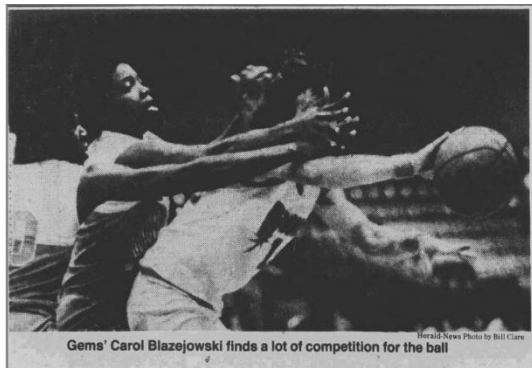
Dallas 19-9 .679, New Orleans 17-11 .607 2 GB, and New Jersey 17-12 .586 2.5 GB.



With another win over the Pioneers the Gems could jump the Pride, who hadn't played a game since March 1st.

Yet at this time to the Gems and many people in the league there was the belief that the playoffs were the same as last year with six teams making the playoffs. This meant that the two division winners would be given byes and the second and third place teams would meet. Therefore, the newspapers were loaded with articles about the Gems "clinching" their first WBL playoff spot. This was exciting news for a team that was 9-25 just two years ago.

To prove that Mondays were a bad sports day the game on March 9th drew only 511 fans, even though the tickets were still \$5 & \$3. The previous day, lots of action, a win, and very few people returned.



The two teams continued their racehorse basketball as the Pioneers took a 32-31 1st quarter lead. While the Gems were concentrating on shutting down Molly Bolin they were allowing Cardie Hicks to roam free. Coach Mosolino knew that Hicks could either hit everything or throw up bricks all day long.

The Gems continued to fall behind, especially after Blazejowski picked up her third personal foul with 5:25 and the team barely holding on to a 45-44 lead. With Blaze on the bench the Pioneers went into the half with a 59-53 advantage.

In the 3rd quarter New Jersey decided they weren't going to allow Coach Meminger to dictate the pace of the game as they held the Pioneers to only 17 3rd quarter points while they scored 27 to take a 80-76 lead. The two teams stayed close until the 4:00 mark when the Gems, who led 98-95, went on a 9-5 run over the next 2:46 to take a 107-100 lead with 1:14 left.

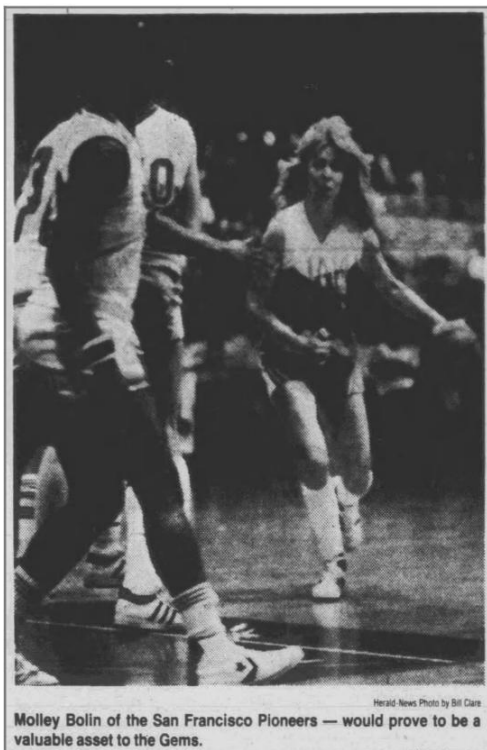
There was no defense in the last 1:14 as the Gems outscored the Pioneers 8-6 (the equivalent of a 304-228 game). The 115-106 gave the Gems an 18-12 record for the year and dropped the Pioneers to 7-20.

The Gems had six players with double figures: Blazejowski 32, Harris 24, Heiss 18, Marquis 14, Comerie 13, and Thomas 10. The Gems also got rebounds from Marquis with 12 and Harris with 10. The dynamic guard duo also distributed the ball well as Thomas had 14 assists and Heiss had 10.

How well did the Gems do against Bolin? Very well, because Molly finished with only 22 points on 9 of 22 from the field. How about Cardie and her brick laying? Not today! She was 18 of 27 from the field for 41 points to go along with five rebounds and four assists. Not bad for someone who was suffering a groin pull and the pains of a stress fracture that kept her out most of last year.

New Jersey Gems																		Team Game #
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Blazejowski, Carol	12	33	13	26	0	1	6	6	3	3	6	6	4	0	5	0	32	1.364
Comerie, Debbie	34	29	5	6			3	4	4	3	7	1	5	0	3	0	13	0.655
Feeney, Eileen	55	5	0	3			0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0.400
Gregory, Anne	42	Injured - Back Spasms																
Harris, Willodean	40	36	11	19			2	2	2	8	10	0	4	1	1	0	24	0.944
Heiss, Tara	44	41	7	9			4	6	0	2	2	10	1	2	1	0	18	1.000
Marquis, Gail	24	29	4	10			6	9	4	8	12	0	3	0	2	0	14	0.828
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	12	2	6			0	0	1	2	3	1	1	0	2	0	4	0.583
Thomas, Janice	10	37	5	10			0	0	0	2	2	14	3	2	1	0	10	1.108
Van Ness, Joan	32	18	0	1			0	0	0	2	2	4	0	2	2	0	0	0.556
Totals		240	47	90	0	1	21	27	14	30	44	37	22	7	17	0	115	0.929
			FG%	52.2%			FT%	77.8%		Team Rebs	10							

San Francisco Pioneers																		Team Game #
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Bolin, Molly	44	39	9	22	0	1	4	6	1	2	3	4	2	0	2	0	22	0.795
Booker, Gerry	51	12	2	3			0	0	3	2	5	0	1	0	1	0	4	0.667
Draving, Doris	50	30	5	10			2	4	3	5	8	0	4	0	0	0	12	0.667
Green, Anita	32	Name not in Newspaper																
Haugejorde, Cindy	43	33	6	12			0	0	0	5	5	0	5	1	1	0	12	0.515
Hicks, Cardie	10	37	18	27			5	7	3	2	5	4	2	2	3	1	41	1.432
McKinney, Musiette	33	32	1	5			5	7	0	4	4	7	0	2	1	0	7	0.813
Pate, Sheryl	40	8	0	1			0	0	0	1	1	0	4	2	2	0	0	0.125
Rajcula, Jody	11	15	0	2			0	0	0	2	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	0.133
Uhl, Joan	24	16	1	2			0	0	1	1	2	0	4	0	1	0	2	0.188
Williams, Roberta	1	18	3	10			0	0	1	2	3	2	0	0	3	0	6	0.556
Totals		240	45	94	0	1	16	24	12	26	38	17	25	7	14	1	106	0.713
			FG%	47.9%			FT%	66.7%		Team Rebs	14							



Herald News Photo by Bill Carr
Molley Bolin of the San Francisco Pioneers — would prove to be a valuable asset to the Gems.

With a poorly attended Monday game the Passaic Herald News was begging the Gems to pull off a super trade. The Co-MVPs from last year, Ann Meyers and Molly Bolin would be traded for each other. Meyers refused to fulfill her NJ contract and wanted to be in San Francisco and Molly was a Pioneer.

To the female writer, Patty LaDuca, Molly had something that Ann Meyers was missing – personality. It seemed the Gems’ promotions had been falling flat and LaDuca thought Bolin had something to offer:

Well, for one, she stands out on a basketball court. Bolin, one of the few WBL players with shoulder-length hair who does not pull it back in an elastic band, is living proof that a woman athlete can also be very feminine. When she strides downcourt, her blonde tresses flow freely behind her. The New Jersey fans must have liked what they saw. During the recent two-game series with the Gems, the personable Bolin had the crowd at South Mountain Arena cheering for her, too.

While Coach Mosolino had occasionally said the team could use another shooting guard, the idea of Blaze and Bolin on the same team – well I'll let those with WBL knowledge decide for themselves. (As for me – King Solomon's solution of cutting the ball in half would never work here.)

The end of the season was shaping up well for the Gems as they had six more game with four on the road and two at home. But three of the four on the road were against the very weak Minnesota Fillies and Pioneers again. The other three games were ALL against the New Orleans Pride. By the end of the season the Gems would have played the Pride seven times and the Diamonds only five.

On Friday the 13th the Gems found themselves at the Minneapolis Auditorium to face the very bad 7-20 Fillies. But thankfully the Fillies' most recent win on Feb. 28th was against the New Orleans Pride, so that helped the Gems.

An unknown number of fans came out to watch the Gems take a 30-27 1st quarter lead. But the 2nd quarter blues hit the Gems again as they were outscored 30-20 to fall behind 57-50. The Gems fell further behind to a team that was 1-9 over their last 10 games, by being outscored 31-26. The Gems, who were behind by 16 at one point, closed out the quarter behind 88-76 with little reason to believe they could pull this out.

With no known documentation I'd have to assume that Carol Blazejowski wasn't pleased with the way the game was going. It took her awhile, but the Gems went on a 26-12 run to take a 102-100 lead with four minutes left. The Gems' 118-113 victory raised their record to 19-12. The 42-25 4th quarter was good playoff preparation to show a never quit attitude.

Blazejowski shot 19 of 30 from the field and 15 of 19 from the line for 53 points. Her total was tied for the 3rd highest WBL total and the first one not connected with Molly Bolin. Yet amazingly there was a connection that took place. Every time a WBL player scored 50 or more points in a WBL game the opponent was always the Minnesota Fillies. This was the 6th and last time in WBL history and the Fillies were the recipients once again.

Willodean Harris added 20 points, while Tara Heiss had 16. While we know the Gems shot 52.4%, there were no other stats, like assists or rebounds or fouls available to us. The Fillies had six players with double figures led by Nessie Harris' 27, Anita Ortega's 18, and two players with 17 – Angela Cotman and Coco Daniels.

New Jersey Gems																	Team G
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts
Blazejowski, Carol	12		19	30			15	19			0						53
Comerie, Debbie	34										0						0
Feeney, Eileen	55										0						0
Gregory, Anne	42										0						5
Harris, Willodean	40										0						21
Heiss, Tara	44										0						16
Marquis, Gail	24										0						13
Szeremeta, Wanda	23										0						0
Thomas, Janice	10										0						6
Van Ness, Joan	32										0						4
Adjustment		240	24	52			17										
Totals		240	43	82	0	0	32	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	118
			FG%	52.4%			FT%	168.4%	Team Rebs								

Minnesota Fillies																	Team G	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	
Cotman, Angela	10										0						17	
Daniels, Coco	24										0						17	
DeLorme, Scooter	32										0						2	
Dunkle, Nancy	25										0						14	
Hansen, Kim	44										0						6	
Harris, Nessie	15										0						27	
Mason, Debbie	13	Name Not in Newspapers										0						18
Ortega, Anita	33										0						18	
Wilson, Donna	11										0						12	
Adjustment		240	50				13											
Totals		240	50	0	0	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	113	
			FG%	#####			FT%	#DIV/0!	Team Rebs									

In what would be the equivalent of a playoff series the Gems returned home and had four days to prepare for the New Orleans Pride. This would be another doubleheader with home games on the 17th and 18th.

As of the March 16th, the day before the "playoff" game the Coastal standings were as follows:

Dallas	21	9	.700	---
New Jersey	19	12	.613	2.5
New Orleans	17	14	.548	4.5

Both teams believed they were in the playoffs and were just jockeying for home court advantage.

In an act of charity the Gems donated 1,000 \$10 special seat tickets to the Essex County Parks and Rec Dept. to be sold for \$4 each as a fund raiser. \$1.50 of the \$4.00 would go to the Special Olympics Fund. Also, in honor of St. Patrick's Day any fans wearing Green would get \$1 off the admission price.

Before their game on the 17th there was a significant visual change with the New Orleans Pride. After starting off 12-3, the Pride then went 5-11. Therefore, Coach Butch vanBreda Kolff was suspended, but not fired. He was supposedly coming to practices and games in an intoxicated state, along with being late in paying his technicals. The Pride were coming to town and playing under assistant coach Ray Scott's guidance.

Unfortunately, Coach Scott's WBL record wasn't great as he was the interim coach last year after the Dallas Diamonds fired Dean Weese. Ray finished out the season 0-6.

Despite the discounts, promotions and fund raisers only 747 came out to South Mountain Arena Tuesday the 17th.

But the Gems didn't care as they put together a 25-22 1st quarter lead. Their 2nd quarter drought was aided by Pride foul trouble to Bertha Hardy and Vicky Chapman who had to sit most of the 2nd quarter. The Gems went on an 18-7 run to build up a 43-29 lead with 7:37 remaining. But their intensity died which allowed the Pride to put together their own 18-8 run to only trail 51-47 at the half.

An evenly played 2nd half had the Pride take an 86-84 lead with 6:59 left in the game. When Blaze's shot started flattening out she went to the bench for a rest and Janice Thomas took control. Her two baskets gave the Gems an 88-87 lead. With a revived Blaze scoring six and Gail Marquis scoring five the Gems took a 99-94 victory. Their 20-12 record was three games better than the Pride's 17-15.

With a team record 16 of 16 from the line Blaze scored 40 and 93 over the last two games. This was also her sixth game in a row with over a 1.000 Efficiency Rating, which was very unique. Willodean Harris' 20 points and 12 rebounds, along with Janice Thomas' 12 points and eight assists added to the team's totals.

For the Pride Bertha Hardy had 21 points and 11 rebounds, while Sue Peters had 19 points on 8 of 9 from the field, along with five assists. Sybil Blalock, with 16, was the only other Pride member in double figures. The Pride shot 55.6% (40-72) to the Gems 46.1% (35-76) but ended up losing because the Gems shot 87.9% (29-33) from the free throw line.

New Jersey Gems																	Team Game #	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Blazejowski, Carol	12	43	12	24			16	16	3	1	4	3	1	4	1	0	40	1.233
Comerie, Debbie	34	Injured - Sprained Ankle																
Feeney, Eileen	55	Name Not in Newspapers																
Gregory, Anne	42	19	2	3			3	6	1	2	3	0	2	0	2	0	7	0.421
Harris, Willodean	40	44	10	19			0	0	5	7	12	2	5	0	2	2	20	0.773
Heiss, Tara	44	38	1	10			2	2	0	1	1	10	1	2	3	0	4	0.632
Marquis, Gail	24	33	5	7			3	3	0	4	4	1	2	2	2	0	13	0.576
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	14	0	2			3	4	0	1	1	3	4	0	1	0	3	0.643
Thomas, Janice	10	41	5	9			2	2	3	2	5	8	3	4	2	0	12	0.854
Van Ness, Joan	32	8	0	2			0	0	0	2	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0.250
Totals		240	35	76	0	0	29	33	12	20	32	27	18	13	14	2	99	0.767
			FG%	46.1%			FT%	87.9%		Team Rebs	8							
Special Notes:																		
Blazejowski Named Player of Week																		

New Orleans Pride																		Team Game #
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Andrykowski, Kathy	32	27	2	6			4	8	3	3	6	0	2	0	1	4	8	0.481
Bialock, Sybil	10	43	8	13			0	0	1	3	4	7	2	4	5	0	16	0.767
Brogdon, Cindy	44	19	3	7			0	0	0	0	0	2	5	1	0	1	6	0.579
Chapman, Vicky	30	21	3	5			2	2	2	0	2	0	6	0	1	0	8	0.429
Farrah, Sharon	11	23	3	6			0	0	0	3	3	1	1	1	2	0	6	0.435
Forest, Augusta	31	24	4	11			1	2	1	2	3	0	3	0	1	0	9	0.458
Hardy, Bertha	33	38	9	14			3	6	4	7	11	1	2	3	3	1	21	0.895
Nestor, Heidi	34	Name Not in Newspapers																
Peters, Sue	23	30	8	9			3	3	1	1	2	5	3	1	3	0	19	0.967
Wayment, Heidi	22	15	0	1			1	2	1	2	3	1	1	1	0	2	1	0.467
Totals		240	40	72	0	0	14	23	13	21	34	17	25	11	16	8	94	0.654
			FG%	55.6%			FT%	60.9%	Team Rebs	12								

Again, the Gems who were on a five-game winning streak, just weren't inspiring the fans as only 464 came out to their last regular season home game. The 464 was their lowest all year.

The Wednesday March 18th game had the Gems take a 28-17 1st quarter lead. But the 11-point lead dwindled to six as the Pride didn't quit and only trailed 47-41 at the half. A low scoring 3rd quarter, 14-14, made the score 61-55 going into the 4th quarter.

In a see-saw finale the Gems and Pride were tied at 79 when Tara Heiss scored. When the Pride didn't score the Gems had a chance to close things out. But they were forced to throw up a shot as the 24-second clock wound down. The Pride had the ball with three seconds left and they fed it to 6'3" Kathy Andrykowski, who was 4 of 6 shooting. But the Gems' Willodean Harris blocked her shot at the buzzer to preserve the 81-79 win and raised the Gems' record to 21-12. They accomplished this even though they shot a season low 7 of 9 free throws and a pathetic 41.1%.

With only three games remaining for each team the Gems secured 2nd place in the Coastal Division. But to the surprise of the New Orleans Pride, they were no longer eligible for the playoffs. It was decided on Wednesday (18th) in a special league meeting that the playoffs would only consist of the top two teams from each division.

Blazejowski not only scored 29 she also pulled down 11 rebounds. She also went 5 of 5 from the free throw line to run her personal streak to 23 in a row. (Unfortunately, with WBL stats being sketchy the league record for consecutive free throws is unknown.) Gail Marquis had 18 points and 12 rebounds. The dynamic guard duo of Heiss and Thomas had a combined 22 points and 17 assists.

The Pride who lost their sixth in a row had five players with double figures. One had 14, Sybil Bialock, and three others had 13, Vicky Chapman, Bertha Hardy, and Sue Peters.

New Jersey Gems																		Team Game #	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat	
Blazejowski, Carol	12	44	12	29			5	5	4	7	11	1	3	2	1	0	29	0.977	
Comerie, Debbie	34	Name Not in Newspapers										0						0	
Feeney, Eileen	55	6	0	1			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0.000	
Gregory, Anne	42	11	0	1			0	0	0	7	7	0	1	0	3	0	0	0.364	
Harris, Willodean	40	43	4	15			0	0	5	10	15	1	2	1	3	6	8	0.535	
Heiss, Tara	44	35	6	9			0	2	1	1	2	9	5	3	3	0	12	0.914	
Marquis, Gail	24	42	8	16			2	2	7	4	11	0	2	2	0	1	18	0.738	
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	12	2	4			0	0	0	1	1	0	2	1	1	0	4	0.417	
Thomas, Janice	10	41	5	13			0	0	4	5	9	8	1	2	1	0	10	0.878	
Van Ness, Joan	32	6	0	2			0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	-0.167	
Totals		240	37	90	0	0	7	9	21	35	56	19	18	12	14	7	81	0.721	
			FG%	41.1%			FT%	77.8%		Team Rebs	9								

New Orleans Pride																		Team Game #
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Andrykowski, Kathy	32	34	4	7			0	0	3	6	9	0	2	0	3	4	8	0.412
Blalock, Sybil	10	36	7	13			0	0	2	3	5	7	2	2	3	1	14	0.889
Brogdon, Cindy	44	24	2	6			0	0	0	3	3	2	2	0	0	0	4	0.458
Chapman, Vicky	30	29	4	13			5	6	2	1	3	1	2	2	1	0	13	0.655
Farrah, Sharon	11	28	4	11			3	5	1	0	1	1	1	2	1	0	11	0.536
Forest, Augusta	31	3	0	2			0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.667
Hardy, Bertha	33	35	4	10			5	7	1	5	6	3	4	0	1	0	13	0.686
Nestor, Heidi	34	Name not in Box Score																
Peters, Sue	23	32	6	14			1	1	2	1	3	1	4	2	5	0	13	0.469
Wayment, Heidi	22	19	1	5			1	2	1	5	6	2	1	1	2	1	3	0.632
Totals		240	32	81	0	0	15	21	13	25	38	17	18	9	16	6	79	0.600
			FG%	39.5%			FT%	71.4%		Team Rebs	7							

As of March 18th and owning a 21-12 record was there any chance the Gems could catch the Diamonds and gain the home court advantage? Definitely, because the Diamonds were only 21-9 with six games left. Now that the Gems had eliminated the Pride, they needed to concentrate on winning their next three games.

The Gems next three games were against a demoralized Pride, and two against the Pioneers. As for Dallas they had six games: in St. Louis against the improving Streak on the 21st, in Minnesota on the 22nd, home against Chicago on the 23rd. Three games in three days. Then home against St. Louis on the 26th, home against Minnesota on the 28th, and then the season closer at home against the Wranglers.

With Dallas winning the season series against the Gems, 3-2, it would be necessary that the Diamonds finish 2-4 for the Gems to win the division. The best Gems' record would be 24-12 and if Dallas went 3-3 they would be 24-12, but own the tie-breaker.



GIANT GEMS — Lincoln Turner (center) of Montclair, vice-president of Essex County Freeholders, is dwarfed by Carol Blazejowski (left) and Debbie Comerie (right), two

An article appeared in the Passaic Herald-News that noted that the Gems may follow the lead of the Chicago Hustle, who were trying to sell shares of the club. The Hustle were offering shares at \$10 each, with a minimum purchase of 10 shares, with the hopes of raising \$750,000. Which translates to 7,500 units purchasing \$100 each. After one month the Hustle had raised \$160,000. The Gems' owner, Bob Milo, was willing to give up 30% of the Gems to shareholders for \$600,000. But in the WBL there was no guarantee that anyone would ever receive a dividend or recoup their money.

The Gems flew south for a Saturday March 21st game at the University of New Orleans. Only 558 came out to see the Gems take a 27-24 1st quarter lead. With a sense of urgency the lead increased to 58-51 by then half. The Pride came back with a 10-2 burst when Cindy Brogdon scored six of her 21 points in this stretch to take a 61-60 lead. Tara Heiss then led the way with nine points in a 22-13 end of the quarter spree. The Gems 82-74 3rd quarter lead ended up as a 105-91 victory. This was their 22nd victory of the year.

With their seventh win in a row the Gems began to mentally prepare for the playoffs. Blazejowski scored 28 points, which gave her 1,013 points for the year. She was only the 2nd person to ever top 1,000 points in a season. Of course, the first was Molly Bolin with 1,179.

Note: After 28 seasons (1997-2024) of WNBA basketball they finally had a player break 1,000 points. A'ja Wilson had 1,021, but it took a 40 game season to do it. With the WNBA expanding to 44 games a player will only have to average 26.8 to break the Women's Pro Basketball record.

As for the rest of the team Tara Heiss had 26 points and five assists, while Willodean Harris had 17 points and 12 rebounds. Gail Marquis's 17 rebounds led the team, while she was also scoring 14 points.

For the (17-17) New Orleans Pride who had lost their 8th game in a row Cindy Brogdon led the way with 21 points while three others could manage just 11, 10, and 10.

New Jersey Gems																	Team Game #							
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat						
Blazejowski, Carol	12	37	10	22			8	10		11	11	3	3				28	1.216						
Comerie, Debbie	34	11	0	0			0	0		0	0	0	0				0	0.000						
Feeney, Eileen	55	5	0	1			0	0		0	0	0	2				0	0.000						
Gregory, Anne	42	10	1	2			0	0		2	2	1	4				2	0.600						
Harris, Willodean	40	39	7	15			3	10		12	12	2	5				17	0.846						
Heiss, Tara	44	46	9	15			8	9		3	3	5	3				26	0.848						
Marquis, Gail	24	36	4	11			6	13		17	17	2	3				14	0.972						
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	21	2	3			4	5		3	3	2	3				8	0.714						
Thomas, Janice	10	31	5	11			0	0		7	7	4	2				10	0.806						
Van Ness, Joan	32	4	0	1			0	0		0	0	1	1				0	0.500						
Adjustment																								
Totals		240	38	81	0	0	29	47	0	55	55	20	26	0	19	0	105	0.754						
			FG%	46.9%				FT%	61.7%	Team Rebs		13												

New Orleans Pride																	Team Game #							
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat						
Andrykowski, Kathy	32	18	3	6			1	1		9	9	4	3				7	1.333						
Blalock, Sybil	10	29	5	10			0	2		5	5	5	6				10	0.862						
Brogdon, Cindy	44	34	9	16			3	4		2	2	3	2				21	0.853						
Chapman, Vicky	30	24	4	10			3	7		8	8	3	4				11	1.042						
Farrah, Sharon	11	32	2	11			2	2		6	6	3	1				6	0.563						
Forest, Augusta	31	18	3	6			2	5		5	5	2	2				8	0.944						
Hardy, Bertha	33	22	2	4			4	4		6	6	0	2				8	0.636						
Nestor, Heidi	34	8	0	3			2	2		0	0	1	2				2	0.500						
Peters, Sue	23	35	5	12			0	0		2	2	2	3				10	0.457						
Wayment, Heidi	22	20	3	7			2	3		6	6	3	6				8	1.000						
Adjustment																								
Totals		240	36	85	0	0	19	30	0	49	49	26	31	0	0	0	91	0.800						
			FG%	42.4%				FT%	63.3%	Team Rebs		6												

Meanwhile the Diamonds went into St. Louis and easily beat the Streak 106-94. But the most disruptive part of March 21st took place in Chicago. The (7-23) Fillies staged a walk-out right in front of Commissioner Sherwin Fischer and the Hustle fans, because of lack of payment. Just like the Gulls' walk-out in January the players felt they could only go so many weeks without a paycheck.

The March 22nd game for the Dallas Diamonds against Minnesota needed to be re-scheduled while the situation was resolved. This meant Dallas wouldn't be playing three games in three days. For the Gems, who wouldn't play for four days, prepared to travel to San Francisco. They could only sit back and see what took place.

One thing that took place was the location of the Gems' playoff games as the team secured the Yanitelli Center on the campus of St. Peter's College. The team was dissatisfied with not only the rent, but the lack of heat in South Mountain Arena. The reason for the change was that the league announced the playoff schedule.

The Gems would host the Diamonds on Friday April 3rd. Game two would be in Dallas on Saturday April 4th and if necessary Game three would be in Dallas Monday April 6th. If the Gems went on to the Championship series it would be held from April 10th to April 20th.

Also back in New Jersey, in the Morristown Daily Record, an interesting article appeared called:

Gain By Blacks Soon To Come in Basketball

The article centered on the lack of black female players in college and the pros. The writer, Cyndi Mack, noted that while black men dominated college and the pros the number of women was scarce. Several factors were presented – first it was tough for young ladies to get outdoor court time to develop their skills. 2nd top notch colleges were sometimes reluctant to recruit black players, because many wanted to stay close to home. Also, inner city schools were slower in developing their programs than the suburban schools. Yet the fact that Title IX was only 7 years old at this point meant the number of opportunities were just beginning to grow.

On Monday March 23rd the (22-9) Diamonds hosted the (17-15) 2nd place Chicago Hustle and beat them by 28, 118-90. At 23-9 Dallas was now one win away from locking up the Coastal Division crown and home court advantage in the playoffs. When the league office gave the Diamonds a forfeit win for their game against the Fillies the Coastal crown was secured for Dallas.

As for the Minnesota Fillies situation, all of their players and Coach Terry Kunze were suspended by the WBL. This forced the Fillies front office to assemble any 10-12 players that would allow them to keep their franchise. The “new” Fillies were assembled in 36 hours. They then went out and lost to the St. Louis Streak 128-80 and 121-79 over the next 48 hours.

On Wednesday March 25th the Gems played the (10-21) Pioneers in front of 1,402 Civic Auditorium fans. The Pioneers entered this game thriving with confidence because just two days earlier they had beaten the (26-6) Nebraska Wranglers, 104-98.

With 2nd place secure and no possibility of 1st place the Gems ran into a buzz saw as the Pioneers put 41 on the board in the 1st quarter. The Gems’ 31 was nice, but nowhere near adequate. An even 25-25 2nd quarter made the score 66-56 at the half.

The Pioneers went ahead by 13 after three quarters, 103-90 and they made sure there were no 4th quarter Blaze explosions. The 128-117 final score stopped the Gems seven game winning streak and dropped their record to 22-13.

The Gems had six players in double figures including: Blazejowski 31, Harris 19, Heiss 17, Thomas 15, Marquis 12, and Anne Gregory 10. Willodean pulled down 16 rebounds and Janice Thomas had 13 assists, which gave her a season total of 317 (per the newspaper) before she fouled out.

The Pioneers' Molly Bolin showed why she led the league in scoring last year as she put up 40 on 19 of 33 from the field. Molly's lifetime teammate Doris Draving had 16 points and 20 rebounds, while Musiette McKinney had 18 points and 11 assists.

New Jersey Gems																	Team Game #		
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat	
Blazejowski, Carol	12	35	10	22			11	14		6	6	2	3				31	1.171	
Comerie, Debbie	34	9	1	2			0	0		1	1	0	0				2	0.333	
Feeney, Eileen	55	Name not in Newspaper																	
Gregory, Anne	42	13	2	2			6	8		5	5	0	3				10	1.154	
Harris, Willodean	40	45	9	13			1	3		16	16	0	5				19	0.778	
Heiss, Tara	44	34	6	12			5	7		1	1	7	4				17	0.941	
Marquis, Gail	24	29	3	8			6	7		3	3	1	4				12	0.586	
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	20	2	4			3	5		2	2	0	3				7	0.450	
Thomas, Janice	10	46	7	10			1	1		3	3	13	6	3			15	1.022	
Van Ness, Joan	32	9	2	3			0	0		0	0	1	0	1			4	0.778	
Adjustment															18				
Totals		240	42	76	0	0	33	45	0	37	37	24	28	4	18	0	117	0.783	
			FG%	55.3%				FT%	73.3%	Team Rebs									
Special Notes:																			
Technical: Coach Kathy Mosolino																			

San Francisco Pioneers																	Team Game #		
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat	
Bolin, Molly	44	43	19	33			2	3		3	3	1	1	1			40	1.070	
Booker, Gerry	51	Name not in Newspaper																	
Draving, Doris	50	45	7	13			6	11		16	16	2	3				20	0.889	
Haugejorde, Cindy	43	31	8	15			1	1		3	3	2	5	1			17	0.806	
Hicks, Cardie	10	21	6	14			0	0		8	8	6	5	2			12	1.619	
McKinney, Musiette	33	36	4	12			10	15		5	5	11	3	1			18	1.278	
Pate, Sheryl	40	23	3	5			2	2		2	2	0	6				8	0.435	
Rajcula, Jody	11	3	0	0			0	0		0	0	0	2				0	0.000	
Uhl, Joan	24	26	5	5			1	2		9	9	3	5	1			11	1.038	
Williams, Roberta	1	12	1	2			0	0		0	0	1	2	1			2	0.417	
Adjustment															18				
Totals		240	53	99	0	0	22	34	0	46	46	26	32	7	18	0	128	0.896	
			FG%	53.5%				FT%	64.7%	Team Rebs									

The (11-21) Pioneers were enjoying a four-game winning streak, even though one of those wins was a forfeit by the St. Louis Streak on Saturday March 14th. The Streak owner thought it was cheaper to not go to San Francisco and face whatever fine the WBL levied than to fly out, put up the players in a hotel, and provide meal money.

(Note: the end of the season fine by the WBL was the equivalent of the trip to San Francisco, plus they lost their 1981 first round draft pick.)

For the Gems their next, and last regular season game was in three days on Saturday March 28th. But before that game could take place the New Orleans Pride came into San Francisco to face the Pioneers. The Thursday March 26th game meant that the Pioneers, Gems, and Pride were all in San Francisco together. And considering two of the three teams were just playing out the string I wonder if there was any big-time partying going on. All three teams' players were getting paid, so I hope they enjoyed themselves.

Did the Gems watch the Pioneers win their 5th in a row, 93-81?

Were the Pride counted in the crowd of 2,067 that paid to get into the Civic Auditorium for the Gems-Pioneers game on the 28th? Afterall, they had to stay in town for a Sunday game on March 29th.

As opposed to the last game with 72 1st quarter points, the Gems found themselves behind 22-21 after one quarter. But with the Pioneers' offense ignoring their own Molly Bolin, who was averaging 27 points, the Gems outscored the Pioneers 27-18, because of a 10-2 spurt.

The halftime score of 48-40 increased to 63-51 until the Pioneers' scored six to make it 63-57 with 4:25 remaining. As the Gems scored the next 10 in a row they pushed the score to 75-59 going into the 4th quarter.

The 16-point lead became 20 at 79-59 with 10:35 left and with this being in the last game of the year it was assumed the Pioneers would pack it up and go home.

But then Cardie Hicks took over, because this was her night. Cardie sang the National Anthem before the game and then was honored by her fan club at halftime. Even though Cardie was 0-6 in the first half, she came through with 15 4th quarter points as the Pioneers crept back.

With under a minute the Gems led 95-94 when Blazejowski was fouled. But she hit only one of three free throws for a 96-94 advantage. The Pioneers' Coach Meminger designed a play for Molly Bolin to drive to the basket with eight seconds left. Instead, she took an off-balance jumper that fell to the side and Doris Draving's put back attempt rolled off the rim. The Gems 96-94 victory gave them a final season record of 23-13. For the Pioneers their record was almost a mirrored image at 12-22.

The Blaze's 23 points gave her 1,067 for the season, the 2nd highest in WBL history. Gail Marquis showed her All-Star ability with a 20-20, 28 points and 20 rebounds. Willodean Harris came through with 19 points and nine rebounds before she fouled out.

Cindy Haugejorde led the Pioneers with 24 points and Molly Bolin returned to this stratosphere with 16 points on 8 of 22 from the floor and 0 free throws. Cardie Hicks ended with 17 points and Doris Draving pulled down 20 rebounds as well.

New Jersey Gems																	Team Game #		
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat	
Blazejowski, Carol	12	44	7	18			9	12		11	11	5	3	2			23	1.045	
Comerie, Debbie	34	Name not in Newspaper																	
Feeny, Eileen	55	Name not in Newspaper																	
Gregory, Anne	42	12	1	1			0	0		3	3	0	2				2	0.417	
Harris, Willodean	40	38	9	15			1	1		9	9	0	6	1			19	0.763	
Heiss, Tara	44	42	4	8			2	2		5	5	8	2				10	0.738	
Marquis, Gail	24	46	11	21			6	9		20	20	1	2	3			28	1.152	
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	10	0	0			0	0		0	0	0	1				0	0.000	
Thomas, Janice	10	43	3	7			3	5		3	3	6	4	2			9	0.605	
Van Ness, Joan	32	5	1	1			3	4		0	0	0	0	1			5	1.200	
Adjustment																	26		
Totals		240	36	71	0	0	24	33	0	51	51	20	20	9	26	0	96	0.708	
			FG%	50.7%				FT%	72.7%	Team Rebs									

San Francisco Pioneers																		Team Game #	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat	
Bolin, Molly	44	36	8	22			0	0		4	4	3	3	1			16	0.750	
Booker, Gerry	51	12	0	2			0	0		4	4	0	0	1			0	0.417	
Draving , Doris	50	27	4	14			0	2		20	20	0	3				8	1.037	
Haugejorde, Cindy	43	36	8	20			8	9		2	2	4	3	2			24	1.000	
Hicks, Cardie	10	27	7	17			3	4		3	3	1	3	2			17	0.889	
McKinney, Musiette	33	36	5	14			0	1		3	3	6	4				10	0.694	
Pate, Sheryl	40	27	1	2			0	0		7	7	0	4				2	0.333	
Rajcula, Jody	11	5	1	3			2	2		3	3	0	0				4	1.400	
Uhl, Joan	24	16	2	4			0	0		5	5	2	4	1			4	0.875	
Williams, Roberta	1	18	4	5			1	2		1	1	2	6	1			9	0.833	
Adjustment															18				
Totals		240	40	103	0	0	14	20	0	52	52	18	30	8	18	0	94	0.717	
			FG%	38.8%			FT%	70.0%	Team Rebs										

As of March 28th the Diamonds had been awarded a forfeit win for their game against the Minnesota Fillies. They also beat the "new" Fillies 114-70, which was two days after they had beaten the St. Louis Streak 133-115.

The (26-9) Diamonds' last game was against the (26-8) Nebraska Wranglers with a possible home court advantage riding on the outcome. A Dallas victory would make them 27-9 and the Wranglers 26-9. If they each ended up 27-9 then the home court would go to the team with the most points scored in head-to-head matchup. The Wranglers had a 26-point advantage going into the March 30th game.

Dallas won the last game by 23, 108-85 to finish the year with an eight-game winning streak.

Statistically the Gems regular season results were as follows:

	At Home			On Road			TOTALS		
Dallas	2-1	307	295	0-2	176	207	2-3	483	502
New England	1-0	108	82	1-0	103	86	2-0	211	168
New Orleans	3-0	280	262	2-2	379	386	5-2	659	648
San Francisco	4-0	467	400	1-1	213	222	5-1	680	622
Chicago	1-1	190	193	1-1	167	164	2-2	357	357
Minnesota	2-0	467	400	1-1	210	217	3-1	409	389
Nebraska	1-1	180	183	0-2	173	179	1-3	353	362
St. Louis	1-0	105	91	2-1	266	271	3-1	371	362
	15-3	1,836	1,678	8-10	1,687	1,732	23-13	3,523	3,410
	.833	102.0	93.2	.444	93.7	96.2	.639	97.9	94.7

As opposed to last year's Gems' stats – these stats were a joy to post

Player	No.	GP	Min	M.p.G	FGM	FGA	FG %	3FGM	3FG	FTM	FTA	FT %	Off Reb	Def Reb	Tot Reb	Reb Avg	Ast	Ast Avg	PF	PF Avg	Stl	TO	TO Avg	BS	PTS	Avg	Eff. Rat.	
Blazejowski, Carol	12	36	1,439	39.97	404	806	0.501	0	4	259	304	0.852	98	176	274	7.61	110	3.06	108	3.0	83	98	2.72	13	1,067	29.64	1.074	
Comerie, Debra	34	33	867	26.27	113	223	0.507			64	94	0.681	102	100	202	6.12	38	1.15	141	4.3	29	64	1.94	15	290	8.79	0.615	
Feeney, Eileen	22	7	32	4.57	1	10	0.100			1	2	0.500	2	1	3	0.43	1	0.14	6	0.9	2	1	0.14		3	0.43	0.281	
Gregory, Anne	42	25	353	14.12	41	94	0.436	0	1	25	48	0.521	24	53	77	3.08	14	0.56	57	2.3	2	26	1.04	6	107	4.28	0.533	
Harris, Willodean	40	28	833	29.75	159	325	0.489			72	106	0.679	76	188	264	9.43	25	0.89	89	3.2	20	54	1.93	45	390	13.93	0.804	
Heiss, Tara	44	36	1,403	38.97	231	470	0.491	4	12	104	133	0.782	34	76	110	3.06	225	6.25	116	3.2	50	170	4.72		570	15.83	0.720	
Jeffrey, Jill	14	5	35	7.00	4	5	0.800			3	4	0.750	0	2	2	0.40	3	0.60	2	0.4	1	6	1.20		11	2.20	0.400	
Marquis, Gail	24	36	1,138	31.61	157	336	0.467			93	147	0.633	87	232	319	8.86	32	0.89	98	2.7	40	78	2.17	14	407	11.31	0.661	
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	36	554	15.39	48	137	0.350			40	50	0.800	24	52	76	2.11	35	0.97	75	2.1	64	59	1.64	2	136	3.78	0.518	
Tatterson, Gail	33	11	134	12.18	16	38	0.421			11	16	0.688	16	11	27	2.45	8	0.73	16	1.5	2	5	0.45	1	43	3.91	0.619	
Thomas, Janice	10	36	1,435	39.86	177	392	0.452	1	8	55	74	0.743	52	103	155	4.31	323	8.97	103	2.9	110	124	3.44	6	410	11.39	0.834	
Van Ness, Joan	32	32	320	10.00	20	56	0.357			8	16	0.500	6	37	43	1.34	36	1.13	23	0.7	22	40	1.25	2	48	1.50	0.453	
Young, Faye	22	12	79	6.58	15	24	0.625	0	1	7	12	0.583	3	7	10	0.83	14	1.17	8	0.7	1	6	0.50		37	3.08	0.886	
Young, Kaye	20	10	43	4.30	6	16	0.375	0	1	3	4	0.750	0	3	3	0.30	8	0.80	7	0.7	2	7	0.70		15	1.50	0.674	
Adjustment					-1		#DIV/0!			-9															-11			
		36	8,665		1,391	2,932	0.474	5	27	736	1,010	0.729	524	1,041	1,565	43.47	872	24.22	849	23.6	428	738	20.50	104	3,523	97.86	0.753	

Player	College	Ht.
Blazejowski, Carol	Montclair State Univ.	5'10"
Comerie, Debra	William Paterson	6'1"
Feeney, Eileen	Kansas State	5'11"
Gregory, Anne	Fordham	6'1"
Harris, Willodean	Alabama State	6'5"
Heiss, Tara	Univ. Maryland	5'6"
Jeffrey, Jill	Montclair State Univ.	5'0"
Marquis, Gail	Queens College	6'0"
Szeremeta, Wanda	Montclair State Univ.	5'10"
Tatterson, Gail	Salisbury State	6'1"
Thomas, Janice	Long Island Univ.	5'3"
Van Ness, Joan	So. Connecticut State	5'8"
Young, Faye	No. Carolina State	5'11"
Young, Kaye	No. Carolina State	5'11"

1981 Playoffs

The Gems were the last of the three-year WBL teams to make it to the playoffs. But they felt the time was right and they were ready. While they lost the season series to the Diamonds 3-2, they were going into the playoffs 8-2 in their last 10 games. Dallas was also 8-2 in their last 10 games, except Dallas had ended their season with an 8-game winning streak.

A hidden advantage for the Gems was going to be experience. Gail Marquis, who was often called "Ms. World" because of her European travel experience had recently been playing like she was "All-World." Her 16 points and 11 rebounds a game as she ended the season meant

"We have been playing very well the past two weeks," said the Queens College graduate of her team, which has shot better than 50% from the floor the past nine games. "We're hitting our peak now and we are definitely ready for Dallas," she said."



Gail was also a member of the 1979-80 World Champion New York Stars. One of her New York teammates, Janice Thomas, also had two years of playoff experience. Janice's 323 assists for the season set a WBL record and showed her floor leadership. The international experience for both Carol Blazejowski and Tara Heiss would also play a strong role.

This was in contrast with Dallas who had seven rookies and the only person with WBL playoff experience was Katrina Sacoco who played sparingly in three games. The only rookie with international experience was Nancy Lieberman.

With the series being in a 1-2 format, the Gems felt they were in a great position to advance to the WBL Finals. All eyes were going to be on the Blazejowski-Lieberman match-up. This would be Blaze's opportunity to let the world know who was the WBL's best player. While Blaze led the league in scoring with a 29.6 average, it was Lieberman who was 2nd with a 26.3 average.

The Gems were successful in changing to St. Peter's College for this opening playoff game. A crowd of 1,683 came out to the 3,200 capacity Yanitelli's Center for this Friday April 3rd game.

The Gems took a strong 27-21 1st quarter lead, with Tara Heiss scoring six of the first nine Gem points. Yet the Dallas defense didn't allow Blazejowski a shot until eight minutes had gone by. But in the final four minutes she added eight points.

The 2nd quarter was a return to an old problem for the Gems as they had difficulty handling the press. Again, Blaze didn't score a point until 1:15 remained in the half. She finished the quarter with four points and the Gems were outscored 24-13 to trail at the half 45-40.

But the 3rd quarter press breaking adjustments, by Coach Mosolino, allowed the Gems to go on a 16-5 run in the first six minutes. The 56-50 lead was because Janice Thomas' experience allowed her to take over and settle her team down. Her seven steals and seven assists in the 2nd half were what the Gems needed. But during this time something took place that might have played a role in the future:

As the basketball rolled out of bounds early in the third quarter, Janice Thomas accidentally stepped on it and fell to the ground.

The New Jersey Gems guard was writhing in pain, and it looked as though she would be finished in Friday night's game. But this was the playoffs, a time when adrenaline becomes a painkiller.

"It was just a sprain," said Thomas. "I'm more psyched up because it's the playoffs."

So, Thomas stood up, and slowly took a few steps. Forget that she limped while she walked. Forget that she hopped the first two trips up and down the court. Just remember that during the playoffs, pain becomes a battle with the mind.

"It hurt somewhat, but I tried to block it out of my mind," Thomas said. "Since this is the playoffs, it was easier to forget about it."

The teams finished the quarter fairly evenly as the Gems had a 70-65 3rd quarter lead. Blazejowski finished the quarter with 15 of the Gems' 30 points.

The point differential stayed at five, with the Gems ahead 78-73 with five minutes to play when they went on an 8-0 run for an 86-73 lead. But a counterattack of 9-0 by Dallas, with Lieberman scoring seven, brought the score to 86-82 with three minutes left.

The score was eventually tied at 86, when Thomas and Blazejowski scored to make it 90-86 with 33 seconds remaining. In the end the Gems came through with a 91-86 victory.



Carol Blazejowski of the New Jersey Gems tries to drive past the Dallas Diamonds' Nancy Lieberman.

Despite the strangling defense focused on Blazejowski she put on a strong performance as she had 35 points on 13 of 20 from the floor, along with 12 rebounds for a 1.128 Eff. Rating in her 47 minutes on the floor.

Guard Janice Thomas did what she does best in her 43 minutes as she was 1 steal away from a playoff Triple-Double. Janice had 12 points, 15 assists, and nine steals. The latter two were WBL playoff records. Her 1.233 Eff. Rating was also fantastic. Surprisingly, Gail Marquis had a sub-par game in her 38 minutes with seven points and 10 rebounds for

a .395 Eff. Rating.

As a team the Gems shot 49.4% (38-77) to keep control of the game.

For the Diamonds, who were now one game away from elimination, almost all of their players, except Lieberman, were so tight they "couldn't pee a drop", as Houston Angels' coach Don Knodel used to say. Nine of the ten Diamonds all had Eff. Ratings below .636. Lieberman's 33 points, 16 rebounds, and three steals in 41 minutes (a 1.488 Eff. Rating) made the game close enough to be respectable.

New Jersey Gems																		Team Game #
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Blazejowski, Carol	12	47	13	20			9	11	2	10	12	4	2	1	3	0	35	1.128
Comerie, Debbie	34	28	6	10			1	2	0	3	3	0	4	0	4	1	13	0.429
Feeney, Eileen	55	Name Not in Newspapers																
Gregory, Anne	42	15	1	2			0	0	1	2	3	1	0	0	1	1	2	0.400
Harris, Willodean	40	15	2	9			1	6	3	2	5	0	1	0	1	0	5	0.600
Heiss, Tara	44	40	7	13			0	0	0	0	0	6	0	2	4	1	14	0.600
Marquis, Gail	24	38	2	8			3	3	3	7	10	0	2	0	2	1	7	0.395
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	2	0	0			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000
Thomas, Janice	10	43	6	13			0	0	1	5	6	15	3	9	4	0	12	1.233
Van Ness, Joan	32	12	1	2			1	2	2	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	3	0.583
Totals		240	38	77	0	0	15	24	12	29	41	27	13	12	19	4	91	0.746
			FG%	49.4%			FT%	62.5%		Team Rebs	11							
Special Notes:																		
Technical: Coach Kathy Mosolino 3rd Qtr 6:47																		

Dallas Diamonds																		Team Game #
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Barnes, Vanessa	11	12	0	2			0	0	0	0	0	3	2	0	1	0	0	0.417
Browning, Hattie	22	11	3	4			0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	6	0.636
Buettel, Kim	14	30	2	8			3	6	0	1	1	2	5	0	2	0	7	0.333
Gillom, Peggie	42	12	3	7			0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	6	0.417
French, Joanie	32	Name Not in Newspaper																
Jennings, Rosalind	15	35	3	8			0	0	3	2	5	6	2	2	3	0	6	0.629
Jones, Sharon	54	Name Not in Newspaper																
Lieberman, Nancy	10	41	15	28	0	1	3	3	4	12	16	7	3	3	5	0	33	1.488
Sacoco, Katrina	33	25	4	6			0	0	2	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	8	0.480
Shoemaker, Cathy	24	23	2	6			0	0	1	0	1	1	2	0	2	0	4	0.217
Swindell, Retha	35	29	4	8			0	0	2	6	8	1	4	1	1	2	8	0.621
Walker, Gwen	40	22	4	11			0	0	1	1	2	0	3	1	0	0	8	0.500
Totals		240	40	88	0	1	6	9	13	25	38	20	23	7	15	2	86	0.650
			FG%	45.5%			FT%	66.7%		Team Rebs	9							

With the next game being the next day in Dallas, at Moody Coliseum, the advantage was all New Jersey's. There was no time for the Diamonds to regroup, make adjustment, or mature. It was going to be up to their coach, Greg Williams, who had 10 games of WBL playoff experience to get his team back on the right track.

The Saturday game attracted 3,278 fans and they saw their team take a 29-21 1st quarter lead. Blaze found herself being hounded by guard Rosalind Jennings and after playing 47 minutes the game before points were not easy to come by. The Gems didn't collapse in the 2nd quarter as they cut off two points to trail 49-43 at the half. Their usually strong 3rd quarter was played basically evenly as the Gems lost their two points to trail 73-65 going into the 4th quarter.

In the end the Gems found the series tied as they lost by almost the same score they won by 92-85. For the Gems Blazejowski had 26 points and 11 rebounds in 46 minutes for a .935 rating. Guard Tara Heiss had 24 points, but only one assist and one rebound in her 43 minutes on the floor, for a below average .581 rating. Holding up her end was Janice Thomas who had 16 points, 10 assists, and a technical in her 42 minutes for a .833 rating. All-World Gail Marquis' minutes were limited to 22 as she went 1 of 5 from the floor with six rebounds for a .273 rating.

For Dallas Nancy Lieberman, as expected, came through with 32 points and 14 rebounds in her 44 minutes for a 1.205 rating. But the one who woke up was their other All-Star representative, Rosalind Jennings. In 39 minutes she was one point away from a playoff Triple-Double with nine points, 16 rebounds, and 12 assists, and five steals for a 1.308 rating.

The Gems outshot the Diamonds 44.9% to 38.9% from the floor. Yet the Gems were not only outrebounded 62-30, they gave up 35 offensive rebounds. The attacking the glass technique would also explain why Dallas had a 28 to 17 advantage at the free throw line.

New Jersey Gems																		Team Game #	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat	
Blazejowski, Carol	12	46	10	23			6	7	6	5	11	3	4	2	2	0	26	0.935	
Comerie, Debbie	34	26	2	5			0	0	1	0	1	3	5	3	1	2	4	0.500	
Feeney, Eileen	55	Name Not in Newspapers																	
Gregory, Anne	42	12	1	1			2	2	0	1	1	0	2	0	1	0	4	0.333	
Harris, Willodean	40	29	2	10			2	2	2	3	5	0	1	0	0	1	6	0.379	
Heiss, Tara	44	43	10	18	0	1	4	4	0	1	1	1	1	2	4	0	24	0.581	
Marquis, Gail	24	22	1	5			1	2	2	4	6	0	1	0	3	0	3	0.273	
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	9	0	2			0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0.111	
Thomas, Janice	10	42	8	13			0	0	0	2	2	10	4	2	5	0	16	0.833	
Van Ness, Joan	32	11	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	0	3	0	2	0.182	
Totals		240	35	78	0	2	15	17	11	19	30	18	20	9	20	3	85	0.583	
			FG%	44.9%			FT%	88.2%		Team Rebs	7								
Special Notes:																			
Technical Foul: Janice Thomas																			

Dallas Diamonds																		Team Game #	
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat	
Barnes, Vanessa	11	14	2	7			1	2	3	1	4	0	1	0	2	0	5	0.500	
Browning, Hattie	22	12	1	5			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	2	0.083	
Buettel, Kim	14	18	2	7			2	2	2	2	4	2	3	0	1	0	6	0.722	
French, Joanie	32	Name Not in Newspapers																	
Gillom, Peggie	42	13	0	3			0	0	0	3	3	1	1	0	1	0	0	0.308	
Jennings, Rosalind	15	39	3	9			3	5	11	5	16	12	1	5	3	0	9	1.308	
Jones, Sharon	54	Name Not in Newspapers																	
Lieberman, Nancy	10	44	14	32			4	4	8	6	14	3	2	3	2	0	32	1.205	
Sacoco, Katrina	33	12	1	4			5	8	3	1	4	0	2	0	0	0	7	0.917	
Shoemaker, Cathy	24	28	7	14			0	0	1	1	2	2	0	3	3	0	14	0.714	
Swindell, Retha	35	37	4	9			2	4	4	7	11	1	3	2	2	0	10	0.622	
Walker, Gwen	40	23	3	5			1	3	3	1	4	0	4	1	4	0	7	0.348	
Totals		240	37	95	0	0	18	28	35	27	62	21	17	15	20	0	92	0.796	
			FG%	38.9%			FT%	64.3%		Team Rebs	6								

The winner "take-all" show down was held on Monday April 6th at Moody Coliseum. The Diamonds' fans recognized the importance of this game as 4,482 fans came out. This was the 14th highest attended game in WBL history.

Now that the inexperienced Dallas team had two games of experience under their belt, it was going to be up to the Gems regulars to overcome the crowd's energy and the Diamonds' pressure.

The first quarter saw the Gems take a 10-3 lead, which became 18-9 with 4:33 left. When Dallas brought in Katrina Sacoco, she began to muscle her way in for rebounds and trips to the free throw line. In the last 4:33 the Diamonds went on a 12-4 run to get within 22-21 after one quarter. Eight of those 22 belonged to Blaze.

Dallas took over with a 31-25 2nd quarter behind 11 points from Gwen Walker and eight from Lieberman. The score was 52-47 Dallas at the half. One of these two teams only had 24 minutes remaining in their season.

Dallas kept up the pressure to try and close out this game as they went up 62-51 with 8:42 left. But when Rosalind Jennings picked up her 4th foul, Dallas Coach Greg William went ballistic and slammed his hand on the scoring table and picked up a technical. His assistant, Tom Davis, panicked that Williams would pick up another and get ejected.

This was what the Gems needed, one of Dallas' good players on the bench and a chance to measure out who they were. The Gems went on a 13-2 run to tie the score at 64. The score was also tied at 66, 68 and then 70 after three quarters. Blazejowski's nine 3rd quarter points gave her 26 for the game. Janice Thomas also came through with six in the quarter.

Talk about two evenly matched teams - the point differential was 248-246 after 11 quarters of playoff basketball. The set-up was perfect for a star to rise. The question was, "Who would it be?"

With the 4,482 fans giving their team several standing ovations the often overlooked Dallas defense went out with a special intensity and played extra physical.

As quickly as the Gems had a hot streak of 13-2 it turned into a cold streak of zero for four minutes. The Diamonds took off on a 12-0 burst, which eventually became a 20-3 run to begin the 4th quarter. This gave Dallas a 90-73 lead. In the end the Gems were outscored 37-18 to lose 107-88.

Blazejowski came through with 36 points on 15 of 26 (.577) in 43 minutes. Willodean Harris had 12 points and 15 rebounds in 39 minutes, but she shot only 6 of 19 from the field. Tara Heiss had 14 points on 6 of 16 from the field.

While Gail Marquis had another brutal performance with one point in 16 minutes for a .188 rating, it was Janice Thomas' performance that produced another surprise. In her 34 minutes she had eight points on 4 of 12 from the field, but only three assists, before she fouled out. Without her distributing to everybody the Gems offense just died.

As a team the Gems again were outrebounded 60-41, which led to a free throw discrepancy of 42-17. The two game total for free throws was Dallas 70 and New Jersey 34. Yet there was only a difference of eight personal fouls called between the two teams (49-41).

New Jersey Gems																		Team Game #
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Blazejowski, Carol	12	43	15	26	0	1	6	7	4	1	5	0	4	0	2	0	36	0.907
Comerie, Debbie	34	35	3	6			3	5	4	3	7	1	3	1	3	2	9	0.457
Feeney, Eileen	55	Name Not in Newspapers																
Gregory, Anne	42	6	1	2			0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	0.833
Harris, Willodean	40	39	6	19			0	0	6	9	15	0	5	0	1	2	12	0.667
Heiss, Tara	44	42	6	16	1	4	1	2	2	3	5	3	5	0	5	0	14	0.476
Marquis, Gail	24	16	0	2			1	1	0	3	3	1	2	0	3	0	1	0.188
Szeremeta, Wanda	23	11	2	3			2	2	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	6	0.909
Thomas, Janice	10	34	4	12	0	1	0	0	1	4	5	3	6	3	4	0	8	0.529
Van Ness, Joan	32	14	0	1			0	0	0	0	0	4	1	0	2	1	0	0.429
Adjustment																		
Totals		240	37	87	1	6	13	17	18	23	41	15	29	4	20	5	88	0.596
			FG%	42.5%			FT%	76.5%		Team Rebs	3							
Special Notes:																		
Technical: Anne Gregory																		

Dallas Diamonds																		Team Game #
Name	No.	Min	FGM	FGA	3-M	3-A	FTM	FTA	OFR	DFR	Tot Rb	Ast	PF	St	TO	BS	Pts	Eff Rat
Barnes, Vanessa	11	13	2	3			0	0	1	2	3	1	1	0	2	0	4	0.538
Browning, Hattie	22	1	0	0			4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4.000
Buettel, Kim	14	28	2	5			1	1	2	6	8	4	4	1	3	0	5	0.679
French, Joanie	32	1	0	0			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.000
Gillom, Peggie	42	8	0	1			0	3	0	3	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	0.625
Jennings, Rosalind	15	37	4	11			3	4	7	3	10	8	4	4	5	0	11	0.973
Jones, Sharon	54	1	0	0			3	4	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	3.000
Lieberman, Nancy	10	45	14	28	0	1	7	9	4	6	10	6	4	2	2	0	35	1.267
Sacoco, Katrina	33	22	3	9			6	6	6	1	7	0	1	4	2	0	12	0.955
Shoemaker, Cathy	24	26	4	11			1	2	2	2	4	2	1	1	2	0	9	0.615
Swindell, Retha	35	40	4	9			1	2	3	6	9	0	3	3	1	1	9	0.500
Walker, Gwen	40	18	5	6			5	7	2	4	6	1	4	0	1	0	15	1.222
Totals		240	38	83	0	1	31	42	27	33	60	23	24	15	18	1	107	0.875
			FG%	45.8%			FT%	73.8%		Team Rebs	0							
Special Notes:																		
Technical: Coach Greg Williams																		

In the head to head Blazejowski-Lieberman match up the finals stats were

	Mins-Avg	FGM-FGA Pct	FTM-FTA Pct	OR-DR TOT	Ast	Fls	Stls	TO	Blks	Pts Avg	Eff Rat				
Blazejowski	136	45.3	38-69 .55	21-25 .84	12	16	28	7	10	3	7	0	97	32.3	.993
Lieberman	130	42.7	43-88 .49	14-16 .88	16	24	40	16	9	8	9	0	100	33.3	1.315

Janice Thomas was averaging 12.5 assists in the first two games, but after getting only three in the last game she ended up right around her seasonal average of 9.3. Most of the other Gems played to their seasonal averages, except Gail Marquis who went from 12 points and nine rebounds per game down to 3.7 points and 6.3 rebounds per game.

Dallas went on to lose in the WBL Finals 3 – 2 to the Nebraska Wranglers.

After the season Coach Mosolino gave a summary which said she was pleased that a team with only 28 wins over two seasons was able to win 24 this year. She was also highly optimistic because the core of the team was so solid and the players in the next draft were going to help improve the team.

It would be up to the Gems to make wise draft choices as their #1 pick from last year, Helen Shreda, never played a minute of WBL basketball.

On April 15th the WBL announced their final end of the year stats leaders. They were:

Scoring	Carol Blazejowski	1,067 pts	29.6
Rebounding	Althea Gwyn		13.6
Assists	Janice Thomas	323 asts	9.0
Steals	Nancy Lieberman		3.6
Blocks	Inge Nissen	106	3.3
FG %	Rosie Walker		64.1%
FT%	Carol Blazejowski		85.0%

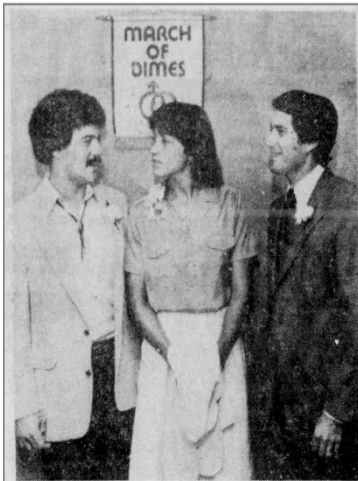


Photo by Richard Chu
AWARDS DINNER — Attending the March of Dimes sports awards dinner at the Meadowlands Hilton in Secaucus are, from left, Yankees catcher Rick Cerone; New Jersey Gems star Carol Blazejowski and Joseph J. Murphy Jr. of Saddle River, dinner chairman.

In the middle of May a former Gem and New York Star Faye Young signed a contract to become the head coach of the Manhattan Lady Jaspers.

For Carol Blazejowski the demand for her time and presence didn't end with the season. After being named one of six "New Jersey Citizens of the Year" along with 3 other sports personalities and 2 governors, Carol was giving clinics. The June 13th free clinic for athletes under 18 would take place at St. Peter's, the site of the Gems' last triumph in the WBL.

The publicity for the Gems continued with Coach Mosolino being a guest speaker at a local sports award dinner.

A June 25th article in the Hackensack Record gave the first indication that things were not going well for either the Gems or the WBL. The fact that the 4th Annual WBL Draft was delayed was not addressed, but the fact that Bob Milo had lost \$800,000 over the last two years was acknowledged. He was putting out a plea for at least two people to join him for \$500,000 each to become 1/3 owners.

While his advertising business was expanding, the Gems front office was closing for the summer. Individuals like public relations director Russ Mensch, director of operations Linda Primerano, and general manager Ed Kozma were all being given extensive, I'm assuming unpaid, vacations.

With the Meadowlands not ready yet, the Gems were planning to play at St. Peter's or in Montclair. They were also being courted by Resorts International to play half (9 games) in Atlantic City, with Resorts picking up the tab.

In an outside ruling that benefited the Gems an arbitrator ruled that both Ann Meyers and the Gems violated Ann's contract. Therefore, the Gems needed to pay Ann \$1,300, but Ann would remain the property of the Gems and become a free agent. Bob Milo noted that 7-Up, who Ann had been doing commercials for with Magic Johnson, needed to be playing this next year in

order to keep her endorsements. To Bob Milo, Ann was the missing ingredient to a championship team.

Meanwhile outside of New Jersey, the WBL's headquarters had moved (again) from Chicago to Dallas, because of the resignation of Sherwin Fischer. Milo speculated that the league would appoint a well-known woman athlete as commissioner in November.

The WBL draft had been moved from June to the 3rd week of July. But to the WBL leaders there were no Lieberman's or Blazejowski's coming out who were nationally known.

And what difference would that make? General Manager Kozma put it this way:

"Nancy did tremendous things for Dallas," said Kozma, who is preparing for a return to action at the draft. "She would walk around hotels with the Diamonds uniform on, she made public appearances, she really caught on. I think one of our problems was that our star, Carol Blazejowski, had been out of the spotlight for two years."

As the WBL off season drug on with no news of a draft, no news of new teams or no news of new owners the Gems were hit with another breach of contract claim. This time it was the supposed highest paid WBL player, Carol Blazejowski. With several payments being delinquent Blazejowski believed she had every right to declare herself a free agent.

There was no Gems front office to call to confirm any details, as there were very few WBL offices open around the whole league. It seemed as if bankruptcy was the word of the month in many WBL cities. But fear of bankruptcy never stifled rumors and another one about the Gems was that Coach Mosolino would be released, after a very successful season, and replaced by the volatile St. Louis Streak coach Larry Gillman.

Where a rumor like that got started was unknown, but it did travel around in certain circles.

Therefore, as the WBL struggled many newspapers across the country jumped on the "Pay Me or Trade Me" bandwagon of Blazejowski. Just like the articles all year about WBL teams walking off the court the media went for anything negative. Yet it wasn't Blazejowski's fault that they chose this route, she had to make the best decision for herself.

In mid-August Bob Milo continued his appeal for millionaires willing to invest, because he needed \$300,000 by November 30th if the team was to survive. He gave credit to his players as they gave free clinics, marched in parades, did advertising, and made free appearances.

Milo also was excited, because the league found a new commissioner. His name was Arnold William Haarlow and his experience included 40 years as a managerial consultant for AT&T, and he was also a college basketball commissioner. Even though Haarlow hadn't been confirmed yet he was looking for new owners, because he wanted to have a 12-team league that began the season on January 15th.



Milo knew the next year had to be the year to make a profit, because his 11 investors had already lost enough. A major factor for Milo would be the return of Ann Meyers, because in Milo's eyes Blazejowski was a New Jersey star, while Ann Meyers was a national star.

The Gems had also created a new executive position called Assistant to the President and it was going to be filled by the afore mentioned, Larry Gillman. All of the articles through the end of October had Larry Gillman as the spokesman for the Gems.

By the end of September the longest mainstay of the Gems, Wanda Szeremeta, took a job as the assistant women's coach at Georgetown University. Carol Blazejowski was looking into playing in Italy. Joan Van Ness became the softball coach at Auburn University.

As the WBL came to an unofficial close on September 29, 1981, when acting commissioner David Almstead shut it down, there were a couple of ironies in the air.

1st was the fact that the WBL Board of Directors never got together to officially shut down the WBL. Therefore, the WBL still exists in perpetuity.

The other irony was a last-ditch effort by Bob Milo to try and expose the real cause of the WBL's demise. The Newark Star-Ledger had the following article:

"Pressure from the NBA was at the root of a TV blackout on women's professional basketball, which caused the downfall of the Women's Basketball League," Robert Milo, president of the New Jersey Gems, charged yesterday.

"It was a conspiracy to deny women's professional team sports," Milo told The Star Ledger. "I believe the blackout can be traced to jealousy by the NBA, which never wanted another league operating."

Milo filed suit in federal court this week against three television networks - CBS, NBC and ABC - blaming the collapse of the WBL on their lack of coverage. Yesterday, he said the NBA was behind the blackout.

"The TV stations were definitely under pressure from the NBA not to put our results on. Ultimately, after three years without your product being presented to the public, you just can't continue. It's economic disaster," said Milo, a Chatham advertising executive.

New Jersey, like most of the other remaining WBL teams, dried up like a raisin in the sun. There were no headlines, no letters to the editors, no fanfare, no articles.

Maybe the history of the WBL and the New Jersey Gems IS best summarized by that famous poem from Langston Hughes

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up

Like a raisin in the sun?

Or fester like a sore--

And then run?

Does it stink like rotten meat?

Or crust and sugar over--

like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags

like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

So Concludes the Story of the NEW JERSEY GEMS