



# News Release

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\*This release is also available on USA Basketball's World Wide Web homepage - <http://www.usabasketball.com>.

## **USA Women Earn Hard-Fought 71-67 Victory Over Australia**

### **-- Sue Bird, Diana Taurasi, Candace Parker Named To All-Tournament Team --**

**HAINING, China (Aug. 5, 2008)** -- Paced by the double-double of three-time Olympic gold medalist **Lisa Leslie** (Los Angeles Sparks), who recorded 14 points and 10 boards, the 2008 USA Basketball Women's National Team (3-0) survived a classic battle against world champion Australia (2-1) for a 71-67 victory and the 2008 FIBA Diamond Ball gold medal on Tuesday night in Haining, China.

**Sue Bird** (Seattle Storm), who shot 5-of-6 from the field for 11 points; **Diana Taurasi** (Phoenix Mercury), who had six points and three assists against Australia; and **Candace Parker** (Los Angeles Sparks), who notched 12 points and eight boards, were named to the 2008 FIBA Diamond Ball All-Tournament Team. The trio was joined by China forward Sui Feifei and tournament MVP Lauren Jackson of Australia.

In consolation play Russia (1-2) defeated Mali (0-3) 79-52 for fifth place, and host China (2-1) took the bronze medal with a 63-51 victory over Latvia (1-2).

"Definitely (these two teams) bring out the best in each other," said USA head coach **Anne Donovan**, a three-time Olympian and an assistant coach on the 2004 U.S. Olympic Team. "I think the familiarity for our players with Australia for us, both in the WNBA and internationally when they play in the leagues in the winter, I think they just know each other very well. The top level athlete is so competitive, and they have so much pride, that it wouldn't matter if they were playing for marbles. I think they'd go just as hard. This was great to see, and it was great preparation. Absolutely the best preparation we could have going into next week."

As is expected every time these two teams face each other the game is a battle from the tip, and this one was no exception. The first quarter alone featured five lead changes and four knotted scores as the U.S. edged Australia 16-15. Australia retook the lead with the second quarter's first basket to go up 17-16. **Kara Lawson** (Sacramento Monarchs) hit a three to kick-off a 9-0 run, and the U.S. was up 25-17, never again falling behind. By the 1:47 mark the USA's lead grew to its largest of the night, 35-23.

However, with 34.9 seconds before the break, Penny Taylor was sent to the line. After making both, Tully Bevilaqua stole the inbounds pass and Australia got two quick points. Australia then came up with the rebound after a Suzy Batkivic block, Taylor banked in an off-balanced shot with two seconds remaining, and by halftime the USA's lead was clipped to 35-29.

"Tonight was a tough one. Australia is a very, very good team and we were fortunate to pull it out," said Bird. "We've only had five, six practices together, this was our third game as a unit and we've gotten better every game. That's a good sign. We still have eight more to go but as long as we continue to get better, get after it out there and work towards our talent, I think we'll be okay."

Foul trouble again plagued the United States, which had five players whistled for two fouls apiece in the first half. At 8:59 in the third quarter **Katie Smith** (Detroit Shock) was pulled after her third infraction. By the 3:11 mark in the

third **Seimone Augustus** (Minnesota Lynx), **Sylvia Fowles** (Chicago Sky) and Leslie had all picked up their third fouls. Australia took advantage of the USA's sitting stars and knotted the score twice, the second at 50-all at 1:24.

The refuse-to-lose attitude honed by years of championship play by U.S. veterans and younger players alike spurred a 6-0 run in the final minute of the quarter to bring the score to 56-50 with 10 minutes to play. Parker worked her way inside and converted on an offensive board, Lawson snared the ball away from the Aussies, was fouled sprinting up the court and swished in both of her free throws, and Taurasi ended the quarter on a driving layup.

Australia continued to claw back, but the U.S. would not back down. With the Americans up 67-65, Bird came up with a loose ball, passed it up the court to Taurasi, who hit Leslie with a no-look pass to up the ante to 69-65 at 2:10. Taylor scored on the other end, but **Tina Thompson** (Houston Comets) had an answer for the game's final points at 1:09.

From there, the USA's relentless defense forced a shot-clock violation but the Americans coughed the ball up shortly after. With 10 seconds to go Thompson stripped Kristi Harrower, and the USA dribbled out the clock to collect the gold medal.

**Tamika Catchings** (Indiana Fever), who recently returned from an Achilles injury, was given the night off to rest for the Olympic Games next week.

While the USA was outrebounded by Australia by a narrow 41-39 margin, the U.S. defense held the Aussies to 35.8 percent (24-67 FGs) of its tries from the floor while connecting on 42.6 percent (29-68 FGs) of its own. Both teams were red-hot from the foul line with the U.S. hitting a near-perfect 11-of-12 and Australia making 17-of-19.

Taylor was Australia's top scorer with 19 points, while Jackson added 16.

Donovan is being assisted by University of Texas head coach **Gail Goestenkors**, University of South Carolina head coach **Dawn Staley** and Connecticut Sun head coach **Mike Thibault**.

The women's Olympic basketball competition tips off on Aug. 9, and the U.S. women open against the Czech Republic at 8:00 p.m. (8:00 a.m. EDT), followed by a clash against host China on Aug. 11 at 8:00 p.m. (8:00 a.m. EDT) and a 10:15 p.m. (10:15 a.m.) tip-off against Mali on Aug. 13. On Aug. 15, the U.S. will face Spain at 8:00 p.m. (8:00 a.m. EDT) and close preliminary round play against New Zealand at 10:15 p.m. (10:15 a.m. EDT) on July 17.

The defending Olympic champs, the USA women in fact will be vying for a fourth consecutive Olympic gold. Since women's basketball was officially staged at the 1976 Olympics, the Americans have collected a record five gold medals, one silver and one bronze medal, while compiling a 42-3 (.933) overall record in seven Olympic appearances (the United States chose not to participate in the 1980 Olympic Games).

## 2008 FIBA Diamond Ball Tournament

### Preliminary Round Final Standings

<u>Group A</u>	<u>W-L</u>	<u>Group B</u>	<u>W-L</u>
1. Australia	2-0	1. USA	2-0
2. China	1-1	2. Latvia	1-1
3. Mali	0-2	3. Russia	0-2

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### Preliminary Round Play

#### Saturday, August 2

Latvia 75, Russia 69  
China 91, Mali 67

#### Sunday, August 3

Australia 84, China 70  
USA 84, Latvia 74

#### Monday, August 4

Australia 112, Mali 43  
USA 93, Russia 58

### Finals

#### Tuesday, August 5

*5th Place Game:* Russia 79, Mali 52

*Bronze Medal Game:* China 63, Latvia 51

*Gold Medal Game:* USA 71, Australia 67

### Final Standings

1. USA (3-0)
2. Australia (2-1)
3. China (2-1)
4. Latvia (1-2)
5. Russia (1-2)
6. Mali (0-3)

Official Basketball Box Score -- GAME TOTALS -- FINAL STATISTICS

USA vs Australia

08/05/08 7:30 p.m. at Haining, China

VISITORS: USA (3-0)

## Player Name	TOT-FG			3-PT			REBOUNDS			PF	TP	A	TO	BLK	S	MIN
	FG-FGA	FG-FGA	FT-FTA	OF	DE	TOT	OF	DE	TOT							
06 Bird, Sue..... *	5-6	1-2	0-0	0	1	1	2	11	1	1	0	2	30			
09 Leslie, Lisa..... *	6-13	0-0	2-2	4	6	10	4	14	0	5	0	0	22			
11 Thompson, Tina..... *	4-13	0-3	0-0	2	6	8	1	8	1	2	0	1	29			
12 Taurasi, Diana..... *	3-10	0-2	0-0	0	1	1	2	6	3	4	0	1	31			
14 Smith, Katie..... *	2-6	0-3	2-2	0	1	1	4	6	0	1	0	0	22			
04 Pondexter, Cappie...	1-3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	5			
05 Augustus, Seimone...	2-5	0-0	2-2	0	2	2	3	6	1	1	0	0	18			
07 Lawson, Kara.....	1-3	1-3	2-2	0	1	1	0	5	1	0	0	1	11			
08 Milton-Jones, DeLish	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	6			
13 Fowles, Sylvia.....	0-0	0-0	1-2	0	2	2	3	1	0	0	0	0	6			
15 Parker, Candace.....	5-9	0-0	2-2	3	5	8	1	12	0	1	0	2	20			
TEAM.....				2	3	5										
Totals.....	29-68	2-13	11-12	11	28	39	22	71	8	16	0	7	200			

TOTAL FG% 1st Half:	0-0	0.0%	2nd Half:	29-68	42.6%	Game:	42.6%	DEADB
3-Pt. FG% 1st Half:	0-0	0.0%	2nd Half:	2-13	15.4%	Game:	15.4%	REBS
F Throw % 1st Half:	0-0	0.0%	2nd Half:	11-12	91.7%	Game:	91.7%	1

HOME TEAM: Australia (2-1)

## Player Name	TOT-FG			3-PT			REBOUNDS			PF	TP	A	TO	BLK	S	MIN
	FG-FGA	FG-FGA	FT-FTA	OF	DE	TOT	OF	DE	TOT							
07 Taylor, Penny..... *	5-11	0-2	9-9	2	3	5	0	19	0	3	0	4	31			
08 Batkovic, Suzy..... *	2-12	0-1	1-2	2	3	5	3	5	3	2	1	0	21			
10 Harrower, Kristi.... *	1-7	0-3	1-2	0	5	5	1	3	4	3	0	0	32			
12 Snell, Belinda..... *	2-8	1-3	1-1	4	2	6	3	6	2	3	0	0	28			
15 Jackson, Lauren..... *	7-13	1-4	1-1	2	6	8	3	16	0	4	0	0	30			
05 Bevilaqua, Tully....	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	2	8			
06 Screen, Jennifer....	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	10			
09 Grima, Hollie.....	2-4	0-1	2-2	2	2	4	1	6	1	0	0	0	11			
11 Summerton, Laura....	4-7	0-0	2-2	0	0	0	1	10	0	2	0	1	15			
13 Randall, Emma.....	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3			
14 Cox, Rohanee.....	1-4	0-1	0-0	1	1	2	3	2	0	1	0	2	11			
TEAM.....				1	3	4				1						
Totals.....	24-67	2-15	17-19	14	27	41	18	67	11	19	1	9	200			

TOTAL FG% 1st Half:	0-0	0.0%	2nd Half:	24-67	35.8%	Game:	35.8%	DEADB
3-Pt. FG% 1st Half:	0-0	0.0%	2nd Half:	2-15	13.3%	Game:	13.3%	REBS
F Throw % 1st Half:	0-0	0.0%	2nd Half:	17-19	89.5%	Game:	89.5%	1

Officials: N. Zavlanos (GRE), E. Chernova (RUS), L. Qiao (CHN)

Technical fouls: USA-None. Australia-None.

Attendance:

Score by Periods	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Total
USA.....	16	19	21	15	- 71
Australia.....	15	14	21	17	- 67

2008 FIBA Diamond Ball Gold Medal Game