



News Release

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2008 USA Basketball Women's National Team Defeats Latvia 84-74 To Open 2008 FIBA Diamond Ball Play

HAINING, China (Aug. 3, 2008) -- **Sylvia Fowles** (Chicago Sky) scored 13 points, including eight in the final 4:07, to lead five players in double digits as the 2008 USA Basketball Women's National Team (1-0) defeated Latvia (1-1) 84-74 in its opening game at the 2008 FIBA Diamond Ball Tournament on Sunday night in Haining, China. Also aiding in the balanced scoring column were **Tina Thompson** (Houston Comets) with 12 points, **Seimone Augustus** (Minnesota Lynx) **Sue Bird** (Seattle Storm) pitched in 11 points apiece and **Lisa Leslie** (Los Angeles Sparks) added 10.

In today's first game Australia (1-0) defeated host China (1-1) 84-70.

The U.S. will face Russia (0-1) on Aug. 4 in its second preliminary round Group B game. Teams in Group A include Australia, Mali (0-1) and China. Following preliminary round play the teams will be seeded and the finals will be played on Aug. 5.

"I'm really pleased for our first time out that we got this win against a very good team," said USA head coach **Anne Donovan**, a three-time Olympian. "We did know coming in that Latvia was going to be a very good opponent having watched them beat Russia last night and having seen them play in the Olympic qualifier. We can play better, and we tend to play better as we go, but we certainly got all we could handle from Latvia."

The USA, which had four practices together before stepping on the court tonight, found itself on the trailing end of a 12-7 score 3:24 into the contest. However, receiving points from seven different players, the USA clamped down defensively and closed the first quarter on a 24-6 run to earn a 31-18 lead at the first break and never again trailed.

With the help of six points from Thompson the U.S. took its biggest lead of the game, 42-26, with 4:34 to go before halftime. But Latvia would not give in and held the Americans to a field goal during the remainder of the half, while cutting the margin to 47-38 at the midway break.

"For the most part, I think we started the game out with a lot of energy and it kind of died down in the second quarter until halftime," said Fowles. "We were just playing sluggish. We picked it up finally, but I think our defense needs to get much, much better. We need to keep our energy throughout the whole game."

Relying on its outside game and a perfect 4-of-4 from the line, the Europeans managed to get to within three, 60-57, with less than a minute to play in the third. With a refuse-to-lose attitude the USA's Leslie hit a pair of free throws and **Katie Smith** (Detroit Shock) knocked down a three with four seconds remaining to close the period up 65-57.

Four points was as close as the game would get in the final stanza, 71-67, after Anete Jekabsone-Zogota, who scored her side's final 10 points of the game, tossed in a 3-pointer with 7:19 to play. Bird countered with a three and Fowles took a Smith feed inside to up the ante to 76-67. Following a Jekabsone-Zogota three, Fowles scored the USA's next two buckets, the second on a put-back, and the USA's lead was back up to double digits, 80-70 with 2:36 left in the contest. Latvia never recovered, and the red, white and blue came away with the victory.

Tamika Catchings (Indiana Fever) and Fowles came up with four steals apiece as the U.S. collected 15 on 21 Latvian turnovers. Smith dished out five assists and Augustus pulled down a team-best six rebounds, while **Diana Taurasi** (Phoenix Mercury) had five boards to go with seven points.

The U.S., whistled for 21 infractions, was limited by foul trouble early as Leslie, **Cappie Pondexter** (Phoenix Mercury) and Taurasi each had two in the first quarter. Early in the second half, Leslie and Taurasi each picked up their third and Pondexter was called for her third with 14:11 left in the game.

The Americans shot an even 50 percent (34-68 FGs) from the field, 33.3 percent (4-12 3pt FGs) from 3-point and 66.7 percent (12-18 FTs) from the line, while holding Latvia to 41.4 percent (24-58 FGs) from the field. However, the Latvians hit a blazing 44 percent (11-25 3pt FGs) from beyond the arc and a near-perfect 93.8 percent (15-16 FTs) from the line to keep the game interesting. The USA outrebounded Latvia 39-30.

Jekabsone-Zogota, who hit for 34 points in Latvia's first ever victory over Russia last night, was held to 24 points and forced into seven turnovers.

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

Group A	W-L	Group B	W-L
Australia	1-0	USA	1-0
China	1-1	Latvia	1-1
Mali	0-1	Russia	0-1

Preliminary Round Play	Monday, August 4	
<p>Saturday, August 2 Latvia 75, Russia 69 China 91, Mali 67</p> <p>Sunday, August 3 Australia 84, China 70 USA 84, Latvia 74</p>	<p>3:30 p.m. Australia - Mali 7:30 p.m. USA - Russia</p> <p>Tuesday, August 5 2:00 p.m. 4:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Finals</p> <p><i>5th Place Game: A3 - B3</i> <i>Bronze Medal Game: A2 - B2</i> <i>Gold Medal Game: A1 - B1</i></p>

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

USA vs Latvia

08/03/08 7:30 p.m. at Haining, China

VISITORS: USA (1-0)

##	Player Name	TOT-FG			3-PT			REBOUNDS			PF	TP	A	TO	BLK	S	MIN					
		FG	FGA	FG%	FG	FGA	FG%	OF	DE	TOT												
06	Bird, Sue..... *	4	6	66.7%	3	4	75.0%	0	0	0	1	3	4	0	11	2	1	0	2	19		
09	Leslie, Lisa..... *	3	9	33.3%	0	0	0.0%	4	6	66.7%	0	3	3	5	10	1	2	0	2	19		
11	Thompson, Tina..... *	6	10	60.0%	0	1	0.0%	0	0	0.0%	1	2	3	1	12	2	5	0	1	18		
12	Taurasi, Diana..... *	3	5	60.0%	0	2	0.0%	1	1	50.0%	0	5	5	4	7	1	2	0	0	17		
14	Smith, Katie..... *	1	3	33.3%	1	2	50.0%	0	0	0.0%	1	1	2	0	3	5	0	0	0	25		
04	Pondexter, Cappie...	2	4	50.0%	0	0	0.0%	1	1	50.0%	1	2	3	3	5	0	2	0	0	11		
05	Augustus, Seimone...	5	9	55.6%	0	1	0.0%	1	2	50.0%	3	3	6	0	11	2	2	0	1	25		
07	Lawson, Kara.....	0	2	0.0%	0	1	0.0%	0	0	0.0%	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	8		
08	Milton-Jones, DeLish	2	6	33.3%	0	0	0.0%	1	2	33.3%	1	2	3	3	4	0	1	0	1	12		
10	Catchings, Tamika...	0	2	0.0%	0	1	0.0%	0	1	0.0%	0	1	1	3	0	3	0	0	4	22		
13	Fowles, Sylvia.....	5	9	55.6%	0	0	0.0%	3	6	50.0%	2	1	3	1	13	0	2	0	4	15		
15	Parker, Candace.....	3	3	100.0%	0	0	0.0%	2	2	100.0%	1	1	2	1	8	1	0	0	0	9		
TEAM.....								3			3											
Totals.....		34	68	50.0%	4	12	33.3%	12	18	66.7%	14	25	39	21	84	17	18	0	15	200		

TOTAL FG% 1st Half:	0-0	0.0%	2nd Half:	34-68	50.0%	Game:	50.0%	DEADB
3-Pt. FG% 1st Half:	0-0	0.0%	2nd Half:	4-12	33.3%	Game:	33.3%	REBS
F Throw % 1st Half:	0-0	0.0%	2nd Half:	12-18	66.7%	Game:	66.7%	3

HOME TEAM: Latvia (1-1)

##	Player Name	TOT-FG			3-PT			REBOUNDS			PF	TP	A	TO	BLK	S	MIN					
		FG	FGA	FG%	FG	FGA	FG%	OF	DE	TOT												
06	Eglite, Zane..... *	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	1					
07	Tamane, Zane..... *	5	10	50.0%	0	0	0.0%	2	2	100.0%	1	4	5	3	12	2	4	1	1	30		
08	Basko, Gunta..... *	3	4	75.0%	2	3	66.7%	0	0	0.0%	0	2	2	1	8	0	2	0	0	9		
10	Jekabsone, Anete.... *	8	16	50.0%	5	8	62.5%	3	4	75.0%	0	3	3	0	24	3	7	0	5	40		
14	Kublina, Ieva..... *	2	5	40.0%	2	4	50.0%	4	4	100.0%	1	3	4	3	10	1	1	0	1	28		
04	Babkina, Elina.....	3	4	75.0%	1	2	50.0%	2	2	100.0%	0	1	1	1	9	0	2	0	1	15		
05	Eibele, Anda.....	1	6	16.7%	0	3	0.0%	0	0	0.0%	0	5	5	2	2	0	0	0	0	22		
09	Jansone, Liene.....	2	7	28.6%	1	4	25.0%	0	0	0.0%	0	1	1	1	5	0	2	0	0	16		
11	Putnina, Aija.....	0	1	0.0%	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0.0%	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	5		
12	Krumberga, Dita.....	0	4	0.0%	4	4	100.0%	2	1	33.3%	2	1	3	2	4	1	1	0	0	25		
13	Tare, Ieva.....	0	1	0.0%	0	1	0.0%	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	4		
15	Brumermane, Aija....	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	5		
TEAM.....								4			1			5			1					
Totals.....		24	58	41.4%	11	25	44.0%	15	16	93.8%	8	22	30	17	74	7	21	1	8	200		

TOTAL FG% 1st Half:	0-0	0.0%	2nd Half:	24-58	41.4%	Game:	41.4%	DEADB
3-Pt. FG% 1st Half:	0-0	0.0%	2nd Half:	11-25	44.0%	Game:	44.0%	REBS
F Throw % 1st Half:	0-0	0.0%	2nd Half:	15-16	93.8%	Game:	93.8%	0

Officials: N. Zavlanos (GRE), L. Bin (CHN), M. Aylen (AUS)

Technical fouls: USA-None. Latvia-None.

Attendance:

Score by Periods	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Total
USA.....	31	16	18	19	- 84
Latvia.....	18	20	19	17	- 74