

POSTGAME NOTES



PHOENIX MERCURY vs. CHICAGO SKY US AIRWAYS CENTER | JULY 8, 2009

TEAM	SCORE	RECORD	HIGH POINTS	HIGH REBOUNDS	HIGH ASSISTS
Phoenix	90	9-4	Taurasi (22)	T. Smith (13)	Pondexter (6)
Chicago	70	6-6	Dupree (22)	Dupree (12)	Price (2)

- Phoenix took sole possession of the Western Conference, a half-game ahead of the Minnesota Lynx.
- The Mercury are 9-4 through the first 13 games of the season, the second-best 13-game start to a season in franchise history (1998, 10-3).
- Tonight's victory marked Phoenix's third-straight, which matches its longest winning streak of the season (June 13-19). Through the three-game win streak, the Mercury is averaging 95.7 points per contest.
- Phoenix picked up its seventh victory at home this season, making it the first team to earn seven wins on its home floor.
- The Mercury out-assisted the Sky 20-6. Phoenix is 7-0 this season when dishing more assists than its opponent.
- The Mercury improved to 7-0 all-time against the Sky. Phoenix remains the only team in the league undefeated against Chicago.
- Phoenix won the battle of the boards by outrebounding the Sky 46-39. The Mercury is 4-0 this season when grabbing more boards than its opponent.
- Phoenix started the game on fire, scoring 34 points in the first quarter on 12-of-17 (.706) shooting.

KEY STAT OF THE NIGHT

The Mercury won the race to the hoop tonight, outscoring the Sky 13-1 in fastbreak points. On the season, Phoenix is outscoring its opponents on the break, averaging 16.1 to their 7.9.

KEY RUN OF THE NIGHT

Phoenix outscored the Sky 22-2 in the first 4:18 of the game and continued its pace throughout the opening period, shooting 70.6 percent (12-of-17) from the field and finishing with 34 points, a Mercury season-high for points in the first quarter. The Sky was unable to cut the lead to less than 14 points the rest of the game.

MERCURY HIGHLIGHTS

- Phoenix guard **DIANA TAURASI** became the all-time franchise leader in career blocks after denying Sky guard **JIA PERKINS** with 2:40 left in the first quarter. Taurasi finished the game with 22 points on 8-of-10 (.800) shooting and one block. Taurasi also pulled down 10 boards for her first double-double on the year.
- Mercury center **TANGELA SMITH** grabbed a career-high-tying 13 boards and nearly recorded her first double-double of the season by scoring nine points on 3-of-9 (.333) shooting.

SKY HIGHLIGHTS

- Sky forward **CANDICE DUPREE** led Chicago with 22 points on 8-of-15 (.533) shooting. Dupree grabbed a season-high 12 rebounds, also a team-high.
- Chicago forward **BROOKE WYCKOFF** picked up a season-high six rebounds in 24 minutes.

NEXT GAME: The Mercury will visit the Sacramento Monarchs on July 11 at 7 p.m.

NEXT PRACTICE: The Mercury will NOT practice tomorrow.

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SKY HEAD COACH STEVEN KEY

On 1st Quarter Struggle: “When you give a good shooting team wide open shots and they knock them down you’re going to be down by X amount before they start missing. Part of it was driven by our offense because we weren’t getting good shots. They were running at the basket and we were scrambling to get back on defense and transition and that’s not a good thing when you play the Phoenix Mercury.”

On Moving Past Tonight’s Loss: “We have way too many games to just sit here and wonder what if and what could’ve happened. We have to worry about our upcoming games. We play Eastern Conference leaders Indiana [Fever] on Friday. Then we have to turn around on Saturday and travel back out west to play Seattle [Storm].”

SKY FORWARD CANDICE DUPREE22 POINTS, 12 REBOUNDS

On 1st Quarter Struggle: “We just didn’t come out aggressive. They [Mercury] came out and knocked down just about every three point shot they put up. We didn’t have enough ball pressure, we were too relaxed. I know this game was the 2nd in a back to back coming off of 2 road games already but we have to be able to step up.”

On Poor Shooting From the Field: “We were just taking too many jumpers. Coach Key kept telling us to put the ball down on the floor and get to the basket and we didn’t do it. We tried to rely on our outside shot too much and it isn’t always going to work.”

SKY GUARD JIA PERKINS..... 10 POINTS, 4 REBOUNDS

On 1st Quarter Struggle: “They [Mercury] came out and hit a lot of their shots and we couldn’t hit our shots. It’s tough when you play a team that hits threes consistently like that and it just took us awhile to get going.”

On Changes Made After the 1st Quarter: “We’ve been in this situation before, recently with San Antonio [Silver Stars] but the thing is you have to just keep fighting and keep playing through it. The good thing is we played against a team that shoots a lot of jumpers. Sometimes, you can shoot your way out and shoot your way in and hope that they start missing so we can get in our rhythm but they were on fire tonight.”

MERCURY HEAD COACH COREY GAINES

Opening Statement: “I’m pleased with the win, and I got to be honest with you when we came out like that I always set goals for us in scoring in halves and quarters and when I saw that Tangela, Dee, and Cappie were on I pictured a 70 point half for us. You gotta put expectations out there for us so I said 70, and then we just had a let down a little bit. We just didn’t have the same pop, but it was a good win.”

On Getting the Early Lead: “It should be easier to maintain it with the way we play. That’s what we’re programmed to do. To come out and keep on cause I really don’t want to slow us down. I gotta watch the film to see what happened.”

MERCURY GUARD DIANA TAURASI.....22 POINTS, 10 REBOUNDS

On the Quick Start: “If we can start like that every game it’ll make life pretty easy for us. When everything clicks on both ends it’s fun to play in that 3, 4 minutes stretch.”

On the Second Quarter: “They’re a good team. They started making some shots, slowing the game down a little bit. We missed a couple good shots. That’s just how games are, it’s about runs and you just hope to have more than the other team at the end of the night.”

On the Win: “A win is a win, especially right now every win is important for us. Going to Sac on Saturday we needed to take care of this one. When it comes to winning and losing I feel like if we play well, if we play good basketball the rest will take care of itself.”

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MERCURY GUARD CAPPIE PONDEXTER 16 POINTS, 6 ASSISTS

On the Transition Game: “I think our problems were more so just turning the ball over, I don’t think it was them making a big difference. Just poor decisions on the passes, and overthrowing it. It’s just something we’ll have to work on and get comfortable with each other with. But at the same time I think we did a solid job of getting back with them. Cause Jia Perkins and Dominique Canty those guys like to attack and I think we did a good job loading up on them.”

On the Early Lead: “It felt great, it was probably the best start that we’ve had since the season opened and its something we’ve talked about each and every game. It’s something that we’ve struggled to do but everything was just clicking for us. It’s especially good getting ready to go down to Sacramento.”