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Contact: Ben Alkaly, balkaly@la-sparks.com or 213-929-1313

Los Angeles Sparks Ink Ebony Hoffman to Free Agent Contract; Penicheiro and Quinn Re-Sign

Former USC Standout Returns Home for 2011 WNBA Season

LOS ANGELES – The Los Angeles Sparks have signed forward **Ebony Hoffman** – a Southern California native who starred collegiately at USC – to a free agent contract, while guards **Ticha Penicheiro** and **Noelle Quinn** have re-signed with the team, General Manager Penny Toler announced Wednesday.

Also joining the Sparks in 2011, the franchise's 15th season, are guard **Natasha Lacy** and forward **LaToya Pringle**. Per team policy, terms of all contracts are not disclosed.

The 6'2" **Hoffman** returns home after spending her first seven WNBA seasons (2004-10) as a member of the Indiana Fever. There she averaged 6.4 points and 4.8 rebounds in 232 career regular season games, starting 156 including 100 of a possible 102 contests over the past three seasons. The 2008 WNBA Most Improved Player, Hoffman ranks among the Fever's top-three players all-time in points scored, total rebounds, minutes and games started.

As a member of the USC Women of Troy from 2000-04, she was a three-time First Team All-Pac 10 selection and twice earned Kodak/WBCA All-Region honors. Hoffman prepped at Narbonne High School in Harbor City, leading the Gauchos to a California state title and *USA Today* No. 1 national ranking as a senior in 2000.

Hoffman is spending the current WNBA off-season with the Zhejiang Province Chozhou Bank Golden Bulls in China, averaging an impressive 26.3 and 9.8 rebounds through 13 games.

"The addition of Ebony gives us a tenacious rebounder and toughness in the paint," Toler said. "Not only can Ebony play with her back to the basket, she has the ability to stretch the defense with her jump shot, and that will add another dimension to the Sparks' offense."

"This is an amazing opportunity to come back home and play for the Sparks, and my excitement exceeds how I felt the day I got drafted," Hoffman said. "I will once again be surrounded by family, old friends and of course my USC family. I would personally like to thank the Sparks for helping me realize a life-long dream of playing in front of family and friends."

The WNBA's all-time leader in assists (2,398) and steals (728), **Penicheiro** returns for her second season as a Spark. A four-time WNBA All-Star, Penicheiro led Los Angeles with an average of 6.3 assists per game last season, her 13th in the league. Earlier in her career she helped the Sacramento Monarchs capture their only WNBA Championship in 2005, while collegiately Penicheiro led Old Dominion University to the 1997 NCAA title.

The native of Figueira da Foz, Portugal returned home this January to suit up for Alves, and is averaging 9.6 points, an impressive 9.4 rebounds and 5.6 assists through five Portuguese League games.

"I am elated that Ticha has chosen to re-sign with the Sparks. Her veteran leadership will be critical to our success this season," Toler said.

"I'm so excited to be back in LA and continue our mission of bringing a championship to our fans," Penicheiro said. "It's an honor to compete alongside players like Tina Thompson, Candace Parker and DeLisha Milton, and to play for a franchise with such tradition. I can't wait for the season to get underway!"

A South Bay native like Hoffman, [Quinn](#) enters her third season in Los Angeles in 2011. A starter at off-guard in all 34 regular season games last year, the 6'0" Quinn averaged a career-best 10.2 points and 4.0 rebounds while also dishing off 2.8 assists per contest. Her 1,104 minutes played in 2010 ranked fifth among all league players. In a four-year WNBA career that began in Minnesota, Quinn owns averages of 5.9 points, 2.4 assists and 3.9 rebounds per season.

A local standout at both Bishop Montgomery High School in Torrance and UCLA, Quinn is currently starting for perennial Russian powerhouse Spartak Moscow, averaging 7.4 points, 3.5 rebounds and 2.2 assists in domestic play and 6.3 points, 4.0 boards and 2.7 assists in the Euroleague.

"I feel blessed to continue wearing a Sparks' jersey and be a member of a great organization," Quinn said. "I'm very excited for the season and the opportunity to play alongside great players, and ultimately contend for a championship."

"We're proud to also re-sign Noelle Quinn, who played a key role in our run to the Playoffs last season. I look for her to continue to develop into one of our brightest stars," Toler stated.

[Lacy](#) saw action in 16 games as a rookie with the Tulsa Shock in 2010, while [Pringle](#) was a member of the Sparks' training camp roster last year after spending the 2008 and 2009 seasons with Phoenix and Minnesota, respectively.

"Lacy is a tough-as-nails guard who has a bright future in this league, while we look forward to seeing what a healthy LaToya Pringle can bring to the Sparks," said Toler.

The Sparks begin their 15th WNBA season on Friday, June 3, hosting Minnesota at STAPLES Center at 8 p.m. PT. For group and season ticket information, call 877-44-SPARKS or visit LASparks.com.

About the Los Angeles Sparks

The Los Angeles Sparks, an original Women's National Basketball Association team, enter their 15th season in 2011. The Sparks are one of six WNBA franchises that fall under the league's independent ownership model. Winner of back-to-back WNBA championships in 2001 and 2002, Los Angeles' roster of star athletes includes 2008 WNBA MVP and Rookie of the Year Candace Parker, four-time WNBA champion and all-time leading scorer Tina Thompson, and two-time WNBA champion DeLisha Milton-Jones. The Sparks play their home games at STAPLES Center in the heart of downtown Los Angeles. For ticket information, call (877) 44-SPARKS or visit LASparks.com.