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## **SPARKS SIGN WNBA VETERAN TICHA PENICHEIRO**

*Penicheiro Joins Sparks For Her 13<sup>th</sup> WNBA Season*

**LOS ANGELES** - The Los Angeles Sparks announced today that they have signed WNBA veteran and 2005 WNBA Champion Ticha Penicheiro. Per team policy, terms of the deal were not disclosed.

Penicheiro has spent her entire 12-year WNBA career with the Sacramento Monarchs leading them to their only WNBA Championship in 2005. Averaging 6.4 points, 5.9 assists, 3.4 rebounds and 1.9 steals per game for her career, she helped the Monarchs reach the playoffs in nine of her 12 seasons with the team.

"We are so thrilled to have Ticha in Los Angeles to fill a vital role on our team," said Sparks head coach Jennifer Gillom. "She is well-respected around the league, an incredible leader and a tremendous point guard. She knows the league, the players and will be an immediate impact player from day one."

Originally selected #2 overall in the 1998 WNBA Draft by the Monarchs, Penicheiro has become one of the greatest point guards in WNBA history and a legend in her own right. A four-time All-Star, Penicheiro is the WNBA's all-time leader in assists, (2,178) and steals, (685), and has amassed more than 2,300 points and 1,200 rebounds in 369 career games.

"I am very excited to be part of the Sparks family," said Penicheiro. "It's any point guard's dream to play with a roster like the one we have in Los Angeles. I am really looking forward to contributing to our goal of winning a WNBA Championship."

A native of Figueira da Foz, Portugal, Penicheiro played college basketball at Old Dominion University from 1994-98 and helped lead the Lady Monarchs to the 1997 NCAA Championship game. During her playing time at ODU, she collected 1,304 career points and finished her career as ODU's all-time steals leader with 591. She is second all-time at ODU on the career assist list with 939 and is the Colonial Athletic Association's all-time leader in steals.

Penicheiro was a two-time Kodak All-American (1997, 1998) and became ODU's second winner of the prestigious Lifetime/Wade Trophy and the first international player to win the honor. A four-time All-CAA honoree, she was named the conference's Player-of-the Year in 1995-96 and 1996-97 while also claiming the Rookie of the Year award in 1994-95. She was inducted into the ODU Sports Hall of Fame in 2006.

With the addition of Penicheiro, the Sparks add an extremely talented player to a star-studded roster that includes Olympians Candace Parker, Tina Thompson and DeLisha Milton-Jones. The Sparks current roster, including Penicheiro, has five All-Stars and owns eight WNBA Championships.

Penicheiro will wear #21 when the Sparks open the 2010 WNBA season on May 15<sup>th</sup> in Phoenix

against the Defending WNBA Champion Mercury at 11:00am. To find out how you can join "The 21 Club" and sit in Ticha's special section, call 1-877-44-SPARKS or visit [www.LASparks.com](http://www.LASparks.com).

**About the Los Angeles Sparks**

The Los Angeles Sparks are entering their 14th season in the Women's National Basketball Association. The Sparks are one of the five original teams still operating in the WNBA. In December 2006, the Sparks were purchased by a group of investors, led by Carla Christofferson and Kathy Goodman and they are one of six WNBA teams owned and operated independent of NBA teams. The Sparks won back-to-back WNBA Championships in 2001 & 2002. The team's roster of star athletes includes 2008 WNBA MVP & Rookie of the Year Candace Parker, All-Star DeLisha Milton-Jones, four-time WNBA Champion Tina Thompson and 2005 WNBA Champion Ticha Penicheiro. The Sparks play their home games at STAPLES Center in the heart of downtown Los Angeles. For Sparks ticket information, call 1-877-44-SPARKS