



# NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – March 11, 2011

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## **Joe Bryant and Sandy Brondello Join Los Angeles Sparks' Coaching Staff** *Duo Brings a Combined Eight Years of WNBA Coaching Experience to Sparks' Bench*

LOS ANGELES – The Los Angeles Sparks have completed their 2011 coaching staff with the hiring of Joe “Jellybean” Bryant and Sandy Brondello as assistant coaches, it was announced today.

Bryant, who previously served as Sparks' head coach from late-2005 through the 2006 season, and Brondello – bringing six years of experience from the San Antonio Silver Stars' staff – will work alongside second-year head coach Jennifer Gillom. Combined, the trio boasts over a decade of WNBA coaching experience, while all three have also played basketball at the highest level.

“I feel we've assembled a strong and diverse coaching staff, one that compliments our talented roster and can guide the Sparks to a WNBA title in 2011,” General Manager Penny Toler said. “Jennifer, Joe and Sandy are all exceptionally skilled in both player development and game management, and are excited to begin working together.”

Bryant begins his second tour of duty with the Sparks after most recently serving as head coach of Raru Kamuy Hokkaido, a Japanese first division men's team, and teaching at a private basketball academy in Japan. He's also held head coaching positions with the Tokyo Apache and Italy's Sebastiani Rieti.

Beginning as an assistant with the Sparks in 2005, Bryant was promoted to head coach late in the season and guided them to a WNBA Playoff appearance. The following year, Los Angeles finished atop the Western Conference at 25-9 – the second-best record in the league – and reached the Conference Finals.

As a player, Bryant enjoyed an eight-year NBA career before spending nearly a decade in Italy. He is the father of Los Angeles Lakers' superstar Kobe Bryant.

“I'm really happy to join Jennifer's staff and be back with the Sparks' organization. The pieces are all in place to bring a trophy to Los Angeles this season,” Bryant said. “Personally, I've always enjoyed coaching women and being a part of the WNBA.”

Brondello comes to Los Angeles after serving as the Silver Stars' head coach in 2010, guiding them to a Western Conference Semifinal berth. Previously she served as an assistant in San Antonio for five years (2005-2009), helping the team earn its first Western Conference Championship and trip to the WNBA Finals in 2008.

A WNBA veteran, she played five seasons with the Seattle Storm (2003), Miami Sol (2001-02) and the Detroit Shock (1998-99), averaging 11.4 points and 2.3 assists in 155 career games. Brondello played in the inaugural WNBA All-Star Game in 1999, and ranks fourth in league history with her 41.0% career three-point percentage. She has also represented her native Australia at the highest level, winning silver medals at the 2000 and 2004 Summer Olympics as well as a bronze in 1996.

“I'm excited to continue my coaching career in the WNBA, and particularly excited to work with the team that Penny and Jennifer have assembled here in Los Angeles,” Brondello said.

The Sparks begin their 15<sup>th</sup> WNBA season on Friday, June 3, hosting the Minnesota Lynx at STAPLES Center at 8 p.m. PT. For group and season ticket information, call 877-44-SPARKS (772757) or visit [LASparks.com](http://LASparks.com).

**About the Los Angeles Sparks**

The Los Angeles Sparks, an original Women's National Basketball Association team, enter their 15<sup>th</sup> 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 (772757) or visit [LASparks.com](http://LASparks.com).