



NEWS RELEASE

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Los Angeles Sparks Make Head Coaching Change *Joe Bryant Promoted to Head Coach for Remainder of 2011 Season*

LOS ANGELES – The Los Angeles Sparks have made a change in their head coaching position with Joe “Jellybean” Bryant replacing Jennifer Gillom effective immediately, it was announced Sunday by Sparks Vice President and General Manager Penny Toler.

“This was a very difficult decision, but I felt it was necessary to take the team in a different direction at this point in the season. Joe’s familiarity with the Sparks organization puts us in the best possible position to compete going forward, and should make for a seamless transition,” Toler said. “We respect Jennifer’s commitment to the Sparks and understand she has faced adversity with player injuries during her tenure. That being said, with a short season and playing in the competitive Western Conference, winning games early in the year is critical and the Sparks’ goal remains to contend for a WNBA Championship.”

“I want to thank everyone in the Sparks organization for the opportunity to serve as head coach, especially Penny Toler,” Gillom said. “I enjoyed coaching the players and working alongside my staff, and am confident they will accomplish great things this season.”

Bryant, who previously served as Los Angeles’ head coach from August 2005 through the 2006 season, will assume control for the remainder of the 2011 campaign. He was hired as an assistant coach in March of this year along with Sandy Brondello, who remains on staff.

“I enjoyed working with Jennifer, and it’s never easy to replace your friend and respected colleague,” Bryant said. “What’s most important is the personnel on the floor hasn’t changed; we have the right mix of players to be a successful WNBA ballclub. Sandy and I are both competitive and this team understands the expectations we have for them the rest of the season.”

Beginning as an assistant with the Sparks in 2005, Bryant was promoted to head coach late that 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.

Before returning to L.A. this off-season, Bryant served as head coach of Raru Kamuy Hokkaido, a Japanese first division men’s team, and taught at a private basketball academy in Japan. He’s also held head coaching positions with the Tokyo Apache and Italy’s Sebastiani Rieti.

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.

The Sparks continue their current seven-game road trip this Tuesday, July 12 against the San Antonio Silver Stars. Tip-off is slated for 5 p.m., and the game can be seen live on NBA TV. After concluding the road swing on Friday, July 15 at Tulsa, Los Angeles returns to STAPLES Center for games against the Washington Mystics (Sunday, July 17) and San Antonio Silver Stars (Monday, July 18). Tickets for these and all remaining home games are available online at LASparks.com, by phone at 877-44-SPARKS

(772757), at the STAPLES Center box office and at all [Ticketmaster](#) outlets. Season tickets, as well as flexible mini-plan options, are also available.

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 (772757) or visit [LAsparks.com](#).