



Mad Seasons: The Story of the First Women's Professional Basketball League, 1978-1981

Karra Porter

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As the popularity of women's basketball burgeons, Karra Porter reminds us in *Mad Seasons* that today's Women's National Basketball Association, or WNBA had its origins in a ragtag league twenty years earlier. Porter tells the story of the Women's Professional Basketball League WBL, which pioneered a new era of women's sports.

Formed in 1978, the league included the not-so-storied Dallas Diamonds, Chicago Hustle, and Minnesota Fillies. Porter's book takes us into the heart of the WBL as teams struggled with nervous sponsors, an uncertain fan base, and indifferent sportswriters. Despite bouncing paychecks, having to sleep on floors, and being stranded on road games, the players endured and thrived.

Karra Porter brings to life the pioneers of the WBL: "Machine Gun" Molly Bolin, who set lasting scoring records—then faced an historic custody battle because of her basketball career; Connie Kunzmann, a popular player whose murder rocked the league; Liz Silcott, whose remarkable talents masked deeper problems off the court; Ann Meyers, who went from an NBA tryout to the league she had rebuffed; Nancy Lieberman, whose flashy play and marketing savvy were unlike anything the women's game had ever seen.

A story of hardship and sacrifice, but also of dedication and love for the game, *Mad Seasons* brings the WBL back to life and shows in colorful detail how this short-lived but pioneering league ignited the imagination of a new generation of female athletes and fans.

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