

Australia | News | Sport | WA News | Basketball

Perth Lynx court a change for women's sport



Steve Butler | The West Australian
Fri, 19 February 2016 9:36AM



Determined: The Perth Lynx players. Credit: Bill Hatto/ The West Australian

WA's most elite female basketballers are set on striking a blow for gender equality by smashing their way through the glass backboard.

Unlike many other women's sports scrambling for publicity and profile in the traditionally male-dominated market, the Perth Lynx are refusing to sell sexy in their chase for the success that has eluded them for more than two decades.

The Lynx, for so long the easy-beats of the Women's National Basketball League, will next week embark on their first playoffs series for 16 seasons and are optimistic they can add a second championship to their sole success in 1992.

But according to club chief executive Nick Marvin, who last April orchestrated a move to merge the Lynx with the men's Perth Wildcats, on-court success is just part of the plan. He said club owner Jack Bendat had given the players a non-negotiable ultimatum to live out the branding as well as commit to a community-based social conscience.

THE NIGHTLY

Get in front of tomorrow's news for FREE

Journalism for the curious Australian across politics, business, culture and opinion.

READ NOW

“Jack’s intentions were that they needed to be powerful women who would represent sport like the men do in every way,” Mr Marvin said.

“We want them to be powerful and strong women in society and as educated, professional women with a life after basketball. It’s amazing how quickly they have adapted to what we’re trying to do, they’ve taken it as a welcome change, assumed all the responsibility we’ve given them and done more than we’ve asked them to do.

“They are excited because the really are the pioneers of full-time women’s sport in Australia.”

Mr Marvin said Mr Bendat was adamant the Lynx players should be afforded the same resources as the Wildcats, a ground-breaking commitment in the WNBL. It includes access to the Western Force gymnasium, physiotherapists and massage staff and training day meals, as well as paying for any study fees.

Players are all full-time, earn an average annual wage of about \$45,000 to \$50,000 and all of them are paid at least what their male counterparts get under the NBL’s minimum wage. They are also actively involved in the community through projects such as regular visits to Bandyup Women’s Prison.

The Lynx’s success this season has also tripled their home game attendances in comparison to last year with an average of about 1100 fans. Mr Marvin said that while the financial platform for success was credited almost exclusively to Mr Bendat and his wife Eleanor, he was optimistic they would soon lure more corporate support to make them sustainable by 2018.

But the club’s foray into women’s sport had made him “more sympathetic” to the difficulties it faced.

“If you take away tennis and a bit of women’s golf, it’s actually hard to sustain it,” he said. “But the needle is starting to turn with women’s cricket and soccer and hopefully with women’s basketball and our commitment is long-term.”

Lynx captain Tessa Lavey said the team was committed to living out the club’s rigid branding in the hope of inspiring others.

“I just hope we can provide a good image for girls to look up to,” Lavey said.

“You don’t often get a role model team you can look up to. I’m hopeful that the people who come along and support us can see that image that we’re hard-working and we’re dedicated and that they want to be like us. You want to show you’re strong individuals and strong as a team.”

Lavey was born a year after the team’s last championship and said the sustained lack of success would put a little extra “fire in the belly” for the playoffs.


“We didn’t know what to expect coming into this year so for us to be making finals, we’re very happy with ourselves and hopeful that the finals can bring good things for us as well,” she said. “Our girls are very hungry for this because it’s been a long time coming for the club. We just want to show how much we appreciate what the club has done for us and play hard. We could get this championship and we want to get this championship.”

The Lynx play their final regular season game in a top-of-the-table clash with Townsville at the Jack Bendat Basketball Centre tonight.


Get the latest news from thewest.com.au in your inbox.

SIGN UP FOR OUR EMAILS


TOP STORIES



EXCLUSIVE | CRIME +
'He wouldn't let them go': Family of cable tied kids speak



LIVE | US ELECTION +
Trump looks to sweep Super Tuesday in US presidential race



EXCLUSIVE | CRIME +
Crack team established to catch predators behind the badge

MANDURAH

CRAB FEST

A CITY OF MANDURAH EVENT

16 – 17 MARCH

crabfest.com.au

Find Out More

The Channel 7 Mandurah Crab Fest is back with delicious fresh food, cooking demos, celebrities, fireworks and FREE live entertainment.

Find Out More

- FROM AROUND THE SITE
- ▶ [Body of Aussie surfer found in Indonesia](#) +

▶ [Optus fined \\$1.5m after 'alarming' breach](#)

▶ [Boss learns fate after horror truck crash](#) +

▶ [New survey reveals seven types of vaping behaviours in teens](#)

▶ [Doolittle saw success in Wildcats future when he signed](#) +

▶ ['He wouldn't let them go': Family of cable tied kids speak](#) +

OUR NETWORK

West Rewards
West Regional Network
West Announcements
West Classifieds
WestBusiness Events
West Travel Club
The Game
Media Education
The Nightly
PerthNow
7plus
7NEWS
TV Guide
Streamer

OUR PARTNERS

Real Estate View
Healthengine
Huddle Insurance
Carbar
CarExpert
Raiz Invest
Institchu
Starts at 60
MoneyMe
Iseekplant

SUBSCRIBE TO

The West Australian Newspaper
The West Email Newsletters

CONNECT WITH US

Send us a message