

# Staley predicts WNBA title

Charlotte Sting guard Dawn Staley is as good as any guard in the WNBA. She ranks among WNBA leaders in assists, free-throw percentage, minutes per game, minutes, assists and assists per turnover in her WNBA career. She also became the first professional basketball player to record 1,000 assists back in 2001.



Staley

She was a three-time Kodak All-American while starring at the University of Virginia (1989-1992), where she helped the team to a 110-21 record and four appearances in the NCAA Tournament — three of which led to the Final Four. She still holds the NCAA record for steals (454) and, among the numerous honors she garnered, was named the National Player of the Year in 1991 and 1992.

Dawn was the only Sting to make the All-Star team, and she finished the game with a game-high seven assists and scored five points as her East squad fell to the West 84-75 Saturday. I hooked up with Dawn for this interview on Tuesday to see how she thinks the team will do after the All-Star break and how far she envisions the team going this season.

**Anthony:** How are you, Dawn?

**Dawn:** Fine.

**Anthony:** Is everything going OK in your life?

**Dawn:** Everything is going great.

**Anthony:** You played well in the All-Star game last weekend. You didn't have many points, but you led the team in assists. How do you feel about your performance?

**Dawn:** Um. I feel good. I think any time you bring so much talent together it creates a lot of opportunity, especially for me. It helps me do the things that I love to do, and that's pass the basketball. I had a lot of options out there, and they were able to deliver.

**Anthony:** OK. How do you feel like the season is going thus far for the Sting?

**Dawn:** The season is going great, but the season is only

halfway done. We have to take care of the second half of the season. That's when we'll prove to be the better experienced team.

## One-on-One

with Anthony Hill

**Anthony:** Now, Dawn, you all were picked sixth in the pre-season conference standings, and you're first right now. Did you all feel like the team had something to prove when the season started? Did you want to show everyone that we are the team?

**Dawn:** Um. (Pause.) Yeah. Well, yes and no. I think being picked sixth in the Eastern Conference, with what we've done in the past is utterly ridiculous. And I just thought that whoever decided to put us in that position didn't really know basketball. I really took offense to it.

**Anthony:** Really?

**Dawn:** Yeah. But I know that we don't get any credit, playing basketball in Charlotte. We've always had to prove ourselves. It's not really a position that we haven't been in, but I really thought that was a slap in the face.

**Anthony:** Can this team maintain the top spot and make a run after this All-Star break?

**Dawn:** We're focused, we're ready, we're intense, and we know that the people in our organization know what type of team we're capable of being. We just have to put it out there on the

floor. I think we've moved toward winning a WNBA title. We have the fire power and the coaching staff to win it.

**Anthony:** Well, how great is it for you and the team to have a coach like Trudi Lacey?

**Dawn:** Oh, we're very excited to have Trudi as our coach. The organization did a good job in keeping Trudi here. It would've taken a lot of time for us to get used to a new coach.

**Anthony:** Well, let's talk about your other job for a moment. You were recently given a five-year contract extension as the head coach of the Temple Owls women's hoop team. How good does that make you feel for the institution? to have that much confidence in you?

**Dawn:** It's always a confidence booster when you know that you're wanted. But I know that I have to keep it in perspective. It could all be gone tomorrow. I coach because I truly get fulfillment from working with our youth. This is what I see myself doing for the rest of my life.

**Anthony:** How difficult is it to be a professional athlete and the head coach of a major college team?

**Dawn:** It's as difficult as you want it to be. I can easily say that it's tiring or exhausting, and I don't want to deal with my team at times. But I have to be realistic about it. I took the job, knowing that I was still going to play. I knew that I was gonna try to be the best I could in both areas. I've surrounded myself with people that I trust. We're in constant contact with each other, we communicate, and when you do that, things can run a lot smoother.

**Anthony:** You're right. OK. Now you were a great player at Virginia. Has anything changed with your game since your days as a Cavalier?

**Dawn:** (Laughs.) Yeah, I think it's changed. I'm not as fast or quick as I used to be.

**Anthony:** Ah, come on now.

**Dawn:** (Smiles.) But I'm also not as dumb as I used to be. (Both laugh.) There (is) some balance in

See **One-on-One** on B8

# A 'Hollywood' kind of day

Tory Woodbury has birthday to remember

BY ANTHONY HILL  
THE CHRONICLE

What a weekend it was for Tory "Hollywood" Woodbury and the kids of the Happy Hills community. Woodbury helped make Happy Hill Gardens look a lot like Hollywood with his special guests on hand and vehicles that many of the kids have only seen on television.

"I had fun seeing the kids' reactions," Woodbury said. "I know they had fun at least one day out of their lives. And I know that I was a part of that. I can say that July 11th, Tory Woodbury Day. I made an impact on someone. I see a whole lot of myself in these kids. I'm a professional athlete, but at the same time, I'm a regular person."



Doretha Woodbury

Woodbury began the festivities with a celebrity basketball game, which his team won 83-80 last Friday. Some of the players on hand for the game were N.C. A&T's Shaun Jones; former WSSU players Deron Alexander and Willie Crite; and a few other notable players. Woodbury's team came away with the three-point lead after Aaron Bailey, Carl Russell director and former St. Paul baller, connected with two-straight 3-pointers to give the Green team the lead for good.

"Man, I'm on Tory Woodbury's team," Bailey said as he gasped for air after the game. "I'm trying to do anything I can to get him back to New York with a win. This was real fun to see some of the celebrities come out and show support. All the kids are excited too. Look at me, I'm drenched. These football players are athletes. Athletes can play anything."

The game took place in the same neighborhood where Woodbury grew up. He said that he wanted to celebrate his birthday with the kids of his community more than anything. "This is real life, here in the projects," Woodbury said. "That's why I wanted to have this event here. I grew up right here, in Happy Hill Gardens. There were a lot of hard times while I was coming up. My grandmother (Doretha Woodbury) is my Earth angel from God. She's the reason why I'm the man that I am now."

Woodbury ate birthday cake after he paid a visit to Ray Agnew Field to talk with the players of his former Pop Warner team, the Tiny Indians, on Saturday. He talked to them about the importance of staying in school and how to avoid being sucked into doing bad things due to peer pressure.

"I remember how it was to be their age," Woodbury said. "I go up to them now and tell them to pull their pants up and stuff. I used to be the same way. They'll eventually grow out of it, just like I did. I also want to make sure that they don't give up, no matter what."



Photo By Anthony Hill

Tory Woodbury receives cake from Tiny Indians on Saturday during Pop Warner football sign-ups.

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"I'm proud to be from Happy Hill. I wouldn't change nothin' about my upbringing. Times were hard, but I'm blessed. I'm very blessed. Look at how good it looks around here today."

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Woodbury even joked with them about playing a position that he wasn't exactly happy to play, but he made the most out of the opportunity.

"I used to play center and guard," Woodbury said while smiling. "I never thought of myself as a lineman, but it was just as fun back when I first started playing."

Woodbury is getting ready to make another position transition. He will be moved to wide receiver this season. He also will change his number to fit the position requirements.

"I'll be telling people to look out for No. 89 at wide receiver this season," Woodbury said. "I'm still at quarterback right now, but the Jets think I can make an impact at wide receiver. So that's what I'm gonna do. Hopefully I'll be back at quarterback at some point in my career. I've been playing wide receiver for two years now. Even when I was at quarterback I played a little wide-out."

"I go with the quarterbacks during drills. I would go to the scout team when we were short on receivers. I was usually the No. 1 guy. When we played the Raiders, I was Jerry Rice. When we played the Dolphins, I was Oronde (Gadsden), and so on. I used to kill the squad every day. I've been blessed to play many positions."

Today, Woodbury is in camp, trying to move up on the Jets' depth charts. No matter how far he makes it up that list, he'll be tops in most of people's minds in Winston-Salem and number one in the hearts of many others.

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