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COLETTE'S COMMENTARY: UPSETS FLIP THE WNBA PLAYOFF PICTURE

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The WNBA playoffs are officially underway, featuring some of the league's biggest stars and most anticipated matchups. But through the first round, the results have been anything but predictable. From eighth-seeded New York Liberty sweeping the top-seeded Minnesota Lynx to the Indiana Fever forcing a decisive Game 3 against the Las Vegas Aces, the opening days of the postseason have already delivered major upsets and statement performances. With several series still up for grabs, the race for the WNBA championship remains wide open.

Tuesday night captured the biggest upset of the tournament so far when No. 8 seed Liberty knocked off the No. 1 seed Lynx. The Lynx have been dominant all season and looked like a favorite for the championship with a 33-11 record. The Liberty — a largely dominant team in previous seasons — struggled throughout the regular season, largely due to absences from key players, finishing with a 26-18 record. Despite a season filled with struggle, the Liberty were able to clinch the final playoff spot, which matched them up with the No. 1 seed in the first round of the playoffs. New York came out dominant in Game 1, showing exactly why it earned a playoff spot, winning 91-75. Forward Breanna Stewart, who has been a leader on the team this season, led with 34 points and 12 rebounds. The dominance continued for Liberty into Tuesday's Game 2, where they completed the sweep, 85-71. In Game 2, Stewart continued to put on a masterclass, while center Jonquel Jones and guard Sabrina Ionescu added 21 and 18 points, respectively.

The upset was even more significant considering the individual accolades within Minnesota's organization. Lynx head coach Cheryl Reese was named Coach of the Year, while rookie Olivia Miles earned Rookie of the Year honors. Despite having both award winners on its roster and coaching staff, Minnesota became the first No. 1 seed to be eliminated by a No. 8 seed in WNBA playoff history.

While New York's run has grabbed attention, it has not been the only unexpected storyline of the postseason. The matchup between the Las Vegas Aces and Indiana Fever has also provided an exciting storyline, with both teams battling for a spot in the next round. No. 3 seed Aces dominated in Game 1 with a 102-85 win, behind Associated Press WNBA Player of the Year A'ja Wilson, who recorded 38 points and 16 rebounds. It looked like the Aces had complete control over the series, but the Fever completely changed the momentum in Game 2. Behind guard Caitlin Clark, who recorded 27 points and 15 assists, the team came out with a 99-89 win. The series now comes down to the third and final game, Thursday, Oct. 1.

Other teams have already made a statement and shown why they earned their spot in the postseason. The No. 2 seed Golden State Valkyries dominated the No. 7 seed Dallas Wings, winning Game 1 by 24 points. The Valkyries are already having a historic run, earning their first postseason win after being swept by the Lynx in their inaugural season. The Atlanta Dream and Washington Mystics provided a closer-seeded matchup as the No. 4 and No. 5 seeds, respectively. Atlanta took care of business, defeating Washington 92-77 in Game 1.

With New York already eliminating the regular-season No. 1 seed and Indiana and Las Vegas heading into a winner-take-all Game 3, the opening round has already delivered plenty of unexpected results. Golden State will look to build on its Game 1 win over Dallas in Game 2 Wednesday night, while Atlanta will look to extend its series lead over Washington. With the semifinals approaching, the remaining games will determine which teams continue their postseason runs and which unexpected storylines come to an end.



Jonquel Jones from the New York Liberty blocking Olivia Miles with the help of Breanna Stewart. Jones scored 21 points in the Liberty's 87-71 win on Sept. 29.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NEW YORK LIBERTY ON FACEBOOK



New York Liberty fans waiting to get a signature from UConn women's basketball alum, Breanna Stewart. The Liberty upset the No. 1 seed Minnesota Lynx after winning Game 3 87-71 on Sept. 29.

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