

FITNESS FACTS

Be Smart, Be Fit, Be Yourself, Says WNBA Star

(NAPSA)—Reaching your goals may require a little more than pure talent.

That's what one of the most dominant players in women's basketball learned in her record-breaking rookie year.

After one of the most impressive rookie seasons in league history, WNBA star Diana Taurasi of the Phoenix Mercury was named 2004 WNBA Rookie of the Year. Also in her Rookie year, she won an ESPY Award for "Best Female Athlete" and became an Olympian, helping the USA Basketball Women's Senior National Team bring home its third gold medal.

"Early on in my career, I realized that nutrition was just as important as my basketball workouts and weight training," said Taurasi. "While in season, our schedules are packed with training and travel. If I didn't pay attention to my eating habits, I found that I'd have a low energy level and it would take me longer to recover from hard workouts. I learned that in order to keep up with my WNBA schedule—with practices and back-to-back games—I'd really have to watch my food intake and maintain balanced meals."

Taurasi's dedication to health and fitness makes her well-suited to be the Phoenix Mercury spokesperson for the WNBA Be Smart-Be Fit-Be Yourself program, which serves as a "call to action" for women and young people to be fit and healthy.

The program shows young people and women how being fit can improve health, self-image and overall well-being through workshops focused on fitness, nutrition



Diana Taurasi, WNBA Rookie of the Year, learned firsthand about the importance of nutrition and fitness.

and self-image; in arena awareness nights and public service announcements. Each team has a spokesperson, as well as an athletic trainer to help execute the program.

Recent statistics show the necessity for such a program. Data from the 1999-2002 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey shows that among children and teens ages 6 to 19, 16 percent (over nine million) are overweight, while 33 percent of adult women are obese.

"Nutrition and exercise should be a big part of every kid's schedule," said Taurasi. "Watching what you eat and exercising not only keeps your body healthy, but can also create a sense of balance in your life. Exercise can help keep young people mentally fresh because it helps release energy. And, most of all, it's lots of fun."

For more information on the WNBA Be Smart-Be Fit-Be Yourself program, log onto www.wnba.com.