

# Going places

**After adjusting to a bucolic setting, HELEN DARLING has matured into a big-time player for Penn State**

By Aaron Portzline  
Dispatch Sports Reporter

1-22-99

**A**s they sat in Donald Darling's living room in the winter of 1995, Rene Portland and Annie Troyer watched in amazement as the front door whirled like a turnstile.

Their intent was to entice Helen Darling, Donald's daughter and, at the time, a top-notch guard at Brookhaven High School, to attend Penn State, where Portland is the longtime head coach and Troyer her assistant.

But it wasn't the typical visit.

"It was like we were recruiting the entire neighborhood," Troyer said. "There were people coming and going nonstop, getting food out of the refrigerator, using the phone and just making themselves at home. They'd walk by, say hello to Helen, her parents and us on the sofa and keep right on going."

"You talk about pressure. Everybody on their block is like a family member, and they were all checking us out."

As it turned out, Portland and Troyer had nothing to worry about.

Despite the tight bond between Helen and her family and neighbors, Penn State was just the type of school the Darlings were looking for, even though it required Helen to move far from home.

"I said to myself, 'Donald, she's going to miss her friends.' But I knew deep down that this is what she needed," Donald Darling said.

"Helen has always been very mature, a very smart child. But if she stayed in Columbus . . . her friends would call, there would be parties to go to. This way, it would remove a lot of the temptation."

Granted, Columbus isn't exactly Manhattan, and State College is no Mayberry. But the two cities couldn't be more different.

State College, a town of fewer than 40,000 located in central Pennsylvania, is surrounded by mountains, rivers, farmland and Amish communities. It's a far cry from the traffic jams and strip malls that border the Darlings' North Side neighborhood.

"It's certainly a change of pace from what Helen was used to," Portland said. "But she's loved it here since day one. It's a beautiful part of the country, and Helen appreciates it."

"I've had some recruits laugh because we have cows and sheep and pigs right off campus. But I always ask them this: 'Do cows and sheep and pigs carry guns?'"

That tranquility impressed Donald Darling, and he has his reasons. A native of Columbus and a former player at Central High School, Darling has regrets about his playing days.

"I did only enough to stay on the team," he said. "I didn't realize my potential, what all was out there and available for kids, because I got sidetracked. Ever since she was young, I've been telling Helen that she can't make the same mistakes I did."

"I wanted her to get her education first. No matter what, I made her promise me that she would stay at Penn State through thick and thin for all four years."

Helen is taking advantage of all higher education has to offer.

"I thought I'd adapt to just about any environment," she said. "And I feel very comfortable here."

A 5-foot-7 junior point guard, Darling is a standout for the Nittany Lions (12-4, 4-2), averaging 12.2 points, 6.9 assists and 5.7

rebounds per game.

Meanwhile, her academic status continues to improve.

"It was not easy for Helen as a student when she first got here," Portland said. "But she worked hard. She found every tutor she could get her hands on."

"This last grading period, she saw the results. Her grades keep getting better and better. Now she's got it figured out; she's reached a balance and found a way to juggle a busy schedule. The best way to say it, she's matured."

Darling's social life has adapted, too. The self-proclaimed "mall rat" has found new ways to spend free time.

"Before I came to Penn State, I had only seen a pony," Darling said. "Now we go horseback riding with disabled kids."

"At first, I didn't want to do it. But it's very therapeutic. I love children, and it's a great feeling when you see how much it means to them."

Teammate Christine Portland, Rene's daughter and a lifelong State College resident, serves as a tour guide.

"It doesn't matter that we're out in no-man's land, Helen's a people person," Christine Portland said. "Everyone wants to be around her."

"She may not admit it, but Helen's a big-time bowler. She really gets into it. We play board games together,

which may sound boring to some people, but we just enjoy being together as a team."

**Junior guard Helen Darling leads the Big Ten in assists (6.9 per game). She is averaging 12.2 points and 5.7 rebounds.**

Every phone call home provides Donald Darling with another pleasant surprise.

"When she told me she went horseback riding, I was shocked," Donald said. "We're from the city. But Helen's out there doing things we've never even heard of before."

"This is a big part of the experience she's getting. Education, basketball and the social aspects. It's all working together, just as we'd hoped."

Darling's basketball skills never have been questioned. In high school, she simply overmatched opponents with quickness and strength, leading Brookhaven to a state championship her senior year.

"We all knew in high school that

Helen was going to be a tremendous college player," said

Reggie Lee, Darling's coach at Brookhaven. "And she has not disappointed."

The adjustment to college took some time, but Darling settled in last season and has excelled this year, her third as the Nittany Lions' starting point guard. A Penn State co-captain, Darling leads the Big Ten in assists and provides a scoring and rebounding punch.

"Helen is an armored tank,"

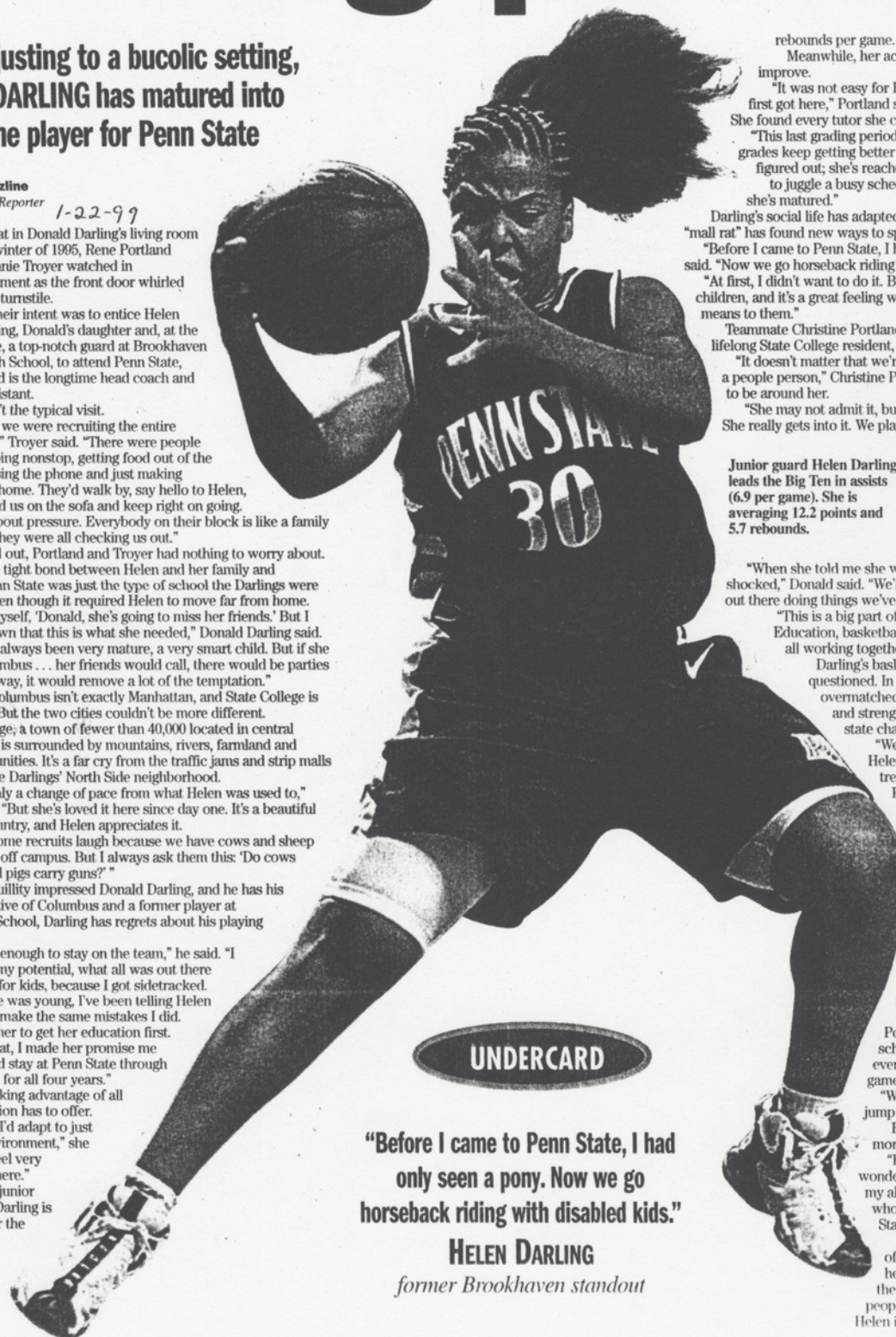
Portland said. "Even in high school she was stronger than everybody else, but the rest of her game has caught up now."

"When Helen gets the ball to the jump circle, she's unstoppable."

But Darling has grown even more off the court.

"First and foremost, she's a wonderful role model. She's one of my all-time favorites," said Portland, who is in her 19th season at Penn State.

"She knows she's making a lot of people proud right now. When her parents come watch her play, the pride coming off those two people when they look at their Helen is amazing."



## UNDERCARD

**"Before I came to Penn State, I had only seen a pony. Now we go horseback riding with disabled kids."**

**HELEN DARLING**

*former Brookhaven standout*





## KODAK ALL-AMERICA TEAM 2000 NOMINATION FORM

### PLAYER INFORMATION

Player Name Helen Darling  
School Penn State  
Height 5-7 Weight 165 Age 21 Uniform # 30 Year in School Sr. Position Point Guard  
Name of Coach Nominating Player Rene Portland School Penn State

### COACH INFORMATION

Name of Player's Coach Rene Portland  
School Address 146 Bryce Jordan Center, University Park, PA 16802  
School Phone (814 ) 863-2672 Home Phone ( 814 ) 237-6051  
School Fax 814/863-1221 E-mail -

### SCHOOL INFORMATION

Division ☒ NCAA I ☐ NCAA II ☐ NCAA III ☐ NAIA ☐ JC/CC  
Conference Big Ten WBCA Awards District # 6  
Won/Loss Record 19-3 Games Remaining 5

### SPECIAL AWARDS RECEIVED BY PLAYER THIS SEASON (please limit to space provided below)

The two-time team captain was a preseason all-Big Ten first-team selection...also a Street & Smith's preseason first-team All-American...set the Bryce Jordan Center record with perfect free throw shooting (6-6) vs. #12 Illinois...became just the 21st Lady Lion in school history to reach the 1,000-point career milestone...became the ONLY Lady Lion to ever record 1,000 points, 500 rebounds, AND 600 assists in her career...named to Duke's Basketball Classic all-Tournament team...has five double-doubles this season...has recorded double-figure assists seven times this year...team's best defensive player, helping No. 6 PSU to an 11-0 home record...candidate for the inaugural Nancy Lieberman-Cline Award as nation's top point guard.

### MEDIA INFORMATION

SID Contact Cathy Bongiovi Work Phone ( 814 ) 865-2152  
Home Phone( 814 ) 867-7371 Fax ( 814 ) 863-3165  
Newspaper Name Centre Daily Times  
Contact Steve Sampsell  
Address P.O. Box 89 City/State/Zip State College, PA 16804  
Phone ( 814 ) 231-4632 Fax ( 814 ) 235-3903

If there are additional media you would like to add, please list name, newspaper, phone and fax numbers on additional sheet.

Nominations must be received by the selection committee member in your district (see enclosed list) by  
**FEBRUARY 11, 2000**





# **PennState®**

## **Sports Information**

101D Bryce Jordan Center, University Park, PA 16802-7101 (814) 865-1757

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Cathy Bongiovi

## **HELEN DARLING NAMED BIG TEN PLAYER-OF-THE-YEAR**

### ***Portland Captures Second Coach-of-the-Year Honor From Peers***

**March 2, 2000; INDIANAPOLIS, Ind.**— Penn State point guard **Helen Darling** (Columbus, Ohio) became the first Lady Lion in school history to earn Big Ten Player-of-the-Year honors, conference officials announced Thursday prior to the first round of the 2000 Big Ten Women's Basketball Tournament.

Darling was also an unanimous first-team selection by both the coaches and the media. Joining Darling on the coaches' first team were senior **Andrea Garner** (Philadelphia, Pa.) and junior **Maren Walseth** (Bloomington, Minn.). Junior **Lisa Shepherd** (Richmond, Ind.) was an honorable mention selection. Lady Lion head coach **Rene Portland** also garnered Coach-of-the-Year accolades from her peers. The complete honors list follows.

A 5-7 guard, **Darling** was named preseason *Street & Smith's* first-team All-American as well as first-team all-Big Ten. The Kodak All-America candidate scored her 1,000th career point in the upset win over No. 6 Auburn. A member of Duke's Ronald McDonald Classic all-tourney team, Darling set the Bryce Jordan Center record for perfect free throw percentage on the most attempts, going 12-12 in the victory over No. 12 Purdue. Named co-National Player-of-the-Year by *USA Today's* Ann Meyers-Drysdale, she is also a candidate for the inaugural Nancy Lieberman-Cline Award, honoring the nation's best point guard, and for the Frances Pomeroy Naismith Award, honoring the nation's best player under 5-8. Darling averages 9.6 ppg and a Big Ten best 7.6 apg. She's ranked among the top three in the country in assists all season, holding the No. 1 spot twice. The two-year team captain was also recognized as a first-team all-Big Ten selection last season. Since 1982, Darling is the first-ever Big Ten Player-of-the-Year to earn the league's yearly honor without earning the league's Player-of-the-Week honor during the season.

A 6-3 center, **Garner** also earned first-team all-conference recognition last season. The pre-season Big Ten Player-of-the-Year is a GTE District Academic All-American, a three-time Academic All-Big Ten honoree, and Dean's List selection. She earned Big Ten Player-of-the-Week accolades three times this season, while pacing the squad with 14.9 ppg and a team-best 8.8 rpg. She also has 37 blocks. A Kodak All-America candidate, she shared co-National Player-of-the-Year by *USA Today's* Ann Meyers-Drysdale with Darling. Garner ranks in the Top 10 on every PSU career chart.

— more —



## **ALL-BIG TEN HONORS— page 2**

A 6-3 forward, **Walseth** earned two Big Ten Player-of-the-Week honors during the season. A GTE Academic All-America nominee, the starter tallied a Bryce Jordan Center record 35 points in the win over Michigan, the most points by a PSU men's or women's player. Standing second in team scoring with 14.1 ppg, Walseth has reached double-figure scoring in all but three contests.

A 6-1 guard, **Shepherd** was recognized as an honorable mention pick for the second straight year. Named to Duke's Ronald McDonald Classic all-tournament team, the starter was a pre-season *Street & Smith's* honorable mention All-American. The Big Ten leader in three-point shooting (.418), Shepherd needs just six treys to become PSU's career three-point bucket leader.

The two-time national Coach-of-the-Year, **Portland** has guided the Lady Lions to three Big Ten championships and two conference tournament crowns. In her 20th season at the school, and 24th overall, she stands 460-154 (.749) at PSU. During her tenure, Portland has coached Penn State to 16 seasons of 20 wins and 15 NCAA tournament appearances. She is a candidate for the 2000 Naismith National Coach-of-the-Year Award.

The No. 5 and Big Ten champion Lady Lions (24-3 overall, 15-1 Big Ten) are the top seed for this weekend's Big Ten Tournament in Indianapolis. Penn State will face either No. 8 Indiana or No. 9 Ohio State in quarterfinal action on Friday, March 3 at approximately 2:30 p.m. The Penn State (radio) Sports Network will broadcast each of PSU's tourney games live.

### ***2000 Big Ten Women's Basketball Tournament***

**Thursday, March 2—Sunday, March 5**  
**Conseco Fieldhouse, Indianapolis, Ind.**  
***Penn State Sports Network (radio)***

#### **Thursday, March 2— FIRST ROUND: (All game times are EASTERN)**

Game 1:	#8 Indiana vs. #9 Ohio State	4 p.m.
Game 2:	#7 Iowa vs. #10 Northwestern	6 p.m.
Game 3:	#6 Wisconsin vs. #11 Minnesota	8 p.m.

#### **Friday, March 3— QUARTERFINALS: (All games on Fox Sports Chicago)**

Game 4:	#4 Illinois vs. #5 Michigan State	Noon
<b>Game 5:</b>	<b>#1 PENN STATE vs. Game 1 winner</b>	<b>approx. 2:30 p.m.</b>
Game 6:	#2 Michigan vs. Game 2 winner	6 p.m.
Game 7:	#3 Purdue vs. Game 3 winner	approx. 8:30 p.m.

#### **Saturday, March 4— SEMIFINALS: (All games on Fox Sports Chicago)**

Game 8:	Winners of Games 4 & 5	4 p.m.
Game 9:	Winners of Games 6 & 7	approx. 6:30 p.m.

#### **Sunday, March 5— FINAL:**

Game 10:	Semifinal Winners (espn2)	7 p.m.
----------	---------------------------	--------

— more —



## 1999-2000 ALL-BIG TEN HONORS

### COACHES' SELECTIONS

#### *First-Team*

\*Tauja Catchings, Illinois  
\*HELEN DARLING, Penn State  
\*Katie Douglas, Purdue  
\*Stacey Thomas, Michigan  
ANDREA GARNER, Penn State  
Kristen Rasmussen, Michigan State  
MAREN WALSETH, Penn State  
Maxann Reese, Michigan State

*\*unanimous*

#### *Second-Team*

Camille Cooper, Purdue  
Lindsey Meder, Iowa  
Cara Consuegra, Iowa  
Susan Blausner, Illinois  
Allison Curtin, Illinois  
Anne Thorius, Michigan  
Jessie Stomski, Wisconsin  
LaToya Turner, Ohio State

#### *Honorable Mention*

Heather Cassady, Indiana  
Jill Chapman, Indiana  
Alayne Ingram, Michigan  
Becky Cummings, Michigan State  
LISA SHEPHERD, Penn State  
Tamara Moore, Wisconsin  
LaTonya Sims, Wisconsin

#### *Player-of-the-Year*

HELEN DARLING, Penn State

#### *Freshman-of-the-Year*

LaToya Turner, Ohio State

#### *Defensive Player-of-the-Year*

Stacey Thomas, Michigan

#### *Coach-of-the-Year*

RENE PORTLAND, Penn State

#### *All-Freshman Team*

LaToya Turner, Ohio State  
LeeAnn Bies, Michigan  
Shavonna Hunter, Illinois  
Jill Hartman, Indiana  
Vnemina Reese, Michigan State

### MEDIA SELECTIONS

#### *First-Team*

\*HELEN DARLING, Penn State  
\*Katie Douglas, Purdue  
ANDREA GARNER, Penn State  
Stacey Thomas, Michigan  
Tauja Catchings, Illinois  
Kristen Rasmussen, Michigan State  
Allison Curtin, Illinois  
Camille Cooper, Purdue

#### *Second-Team*

Cara Consuegra, Iowa  
Lindsey Meder, Iowa  
MAREN WALSETH, Penn State  
Susan Blausner, Illinois  
Jill Chapman, Indiana  
LaTonya Sims, Wisconsin  
Becky Cummings, Michigan State  
Maxann Reese, Michigan State

#### *Honorable Mention*

Heather Cassady, Indiana  
Raina Goodlow, Michigan  
Alayne Ingram, Michigan  
Anne Thorius, Michigan  
Tami Sears, Northwestern  
Tomeka Brown, Ohio State  
LISA SHEPHERD, Penn State  
Kelly Komara, Purdue  
Tamara Moore, Wisconsin  
Jessie Stomski, Wisconsin

#### *Player-of-the-Year*

Katie Douglas, Purdue

#### *Freshman-of-the-Year*

LaToya Turner, Ohio State

#### *Defensive Player-of-the-Year*

Stacey Thomas, Michigan

#### *Coach-of-the-Year*

Sue Guevara, Michigan

— LADY LIONS —





# **PennState®**

## **Sports Information**

101D Bryce Jordan Center, University Park, PA 16802-7101 (814) 865-1757

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact: Cathy Bongiovi**

**NOTE TO MEDIA:** Helen Darling and Andrea Garner will meet the media on **Wednesday, April 26 at 1 p.m.** in Room 101 Bryce Jordan Center (Sports Information Office). Media wishing to access the teleconference can call **(814) 863-2330**. This number is **NOT** for public release.

## **DARLING & GARNER SELECTED IN 2000 WNBA DRAFT**

### ***Both Lady Lions Go in Second Round; Begin Pro Careers in Two Weeks***

**April 25, 2000; SECAUCUS, N.J.**— Penn State senior captains **Helen Darling** (Columbus, Ohio) and **Andrea Garner** (Philadelphia, Pa.) were selected in the second round of the 2000 WNBA Draft at the NBA Entertainment Studio in Secaucus, N.J., on Tuesday.

Darling, the first pick of the second round and 17th pick overall, will begin her professional career with the Cleveland Rockers in her native state of Ohio. Garner, the final selection of the round and 32nd pick overall, will join the three-time WNBA champion Houston Comets.

"I'm very excited," Darling said following her selection. "My father and my family wanted me to play for Cleveland."

A 5-7 point guard, **Darling** won the Frances Pomeroy Naismith Award presented annually to the nation's most outstanding female senior collegiate basketball player 5'8" or under. She was also one of four finalists for the inaugural Nancy Lieberman-Cline Award, honoring the nation's top point guard, and a nominee for the prestigious Wade Trophy. The first-team Kodak All-American became the first Lady Lion in school history to earn Big Ten Player-of-the-Year accolades. She was also an unanimous first-team all-Big Ten honoree by both the coaches and media. As a senior, Darling averaged 10.5 ppg and 7.8 assists per game. The two-year team captain finished the year as the national assists leader (274, 7.82 apg).

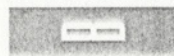
"We were quite surprised that she was still available," Cleveland head coach **Dan Hughes** said, who also selected center Ann Wauters as the draft's top pick overall. "We feel we've gotten two first round picks."

"We're so happy right now. I'm so happy with this choice," Houston head coach **Van Chancellor** said. "We've looked at Garner from day one. She's got the longest arms."

A 6-3 center, **Garner** was a two-time first-team all-Big Ten honoree. The preseason Big Ten Player-of-the-Year was also a third-team GTE Academic All-American, a three-time Academic All-Big Ten honoree,

— more —





P-O softball team  
tops Indian Valley  
to stay undefeated  
See page 3B

[www.centredaily.com/sports](http://www.centredaily.com/sports)

# SPORTS

## COMING UP

Thursday: David Comer  
Friday: Kimberly Jones & That's Racin'  
Saturday: Andy Elder  
Sunday: Outdoors & Ron Bracken  
Monday: Michael Palm  
Tuesday: Campus Corner

## Pair of Lady Lions picked in second round of WNBA draft

*Cleveland Rockers choose point guard Helen Darling; Houston Comets take center Andrea Garner*

From CDT staff and wire reports

SECAUCUS, N.J. — Former Penn State women's basketball players Helen Darling and Andrea Garner, who led the Lady Lions to their first Final Four appearance this past season, were both selected in the second round of the 2000 WNBA Draft on Tuesday.

The Cleveland Rockers took Darling, a 5-foot-7 point guard, with the first pick of the second round and the 17th overall. And the Houston Comets picked Garner, a 6-foot-3 center, with the final selection of the second round and 32nd overall. "I'm very excited," said Darling, an Ohio native who grew up in

Columbus. "My father and my family wanted me to play for Cleveland." The Rockers, who have Penn State graduate Suzie McConnell Serio on their roster, were thrilled to have the chance to draft Darling, a first-team Kodak All-American and the Big Ten player of the year.

"We were quite surprised that she was still available," said Cleveland head coach Dan Hughes, who also selected 6-foot-4 center Ann Wauters with the first pick in the 64-player draft. "We feel we've gotten two first-round picks."

Garner, twice a first-team All-Big Ten choice, led Penn State in scoring at 14.7 points a game and rebounding at 8.6 a game as a senior. She also had

78 blocks during the season.

"We're so happy right now. I'm so happy with this choice," Houston coach Van Chancellor said. "We've looked at Garner from Day 1. ... I usually don't get this excited about draft choices. Andrea's a good runner and a great kid. We think she's a great pick for this basketball team."

Penn State currently has four players on WNBA rosters. In addition to Darling, Garner and McConnell Serio, forward Angie Pothoff is a member of the Minnesota Lynx.

Darling and Garner were two of the main reasons the 1999-00 Lady Lions set a school record with 30 wins, won their first outright Big Ten

title and finished with a No. 3 national ranking.

"I'm really excited about what's happened for both of them," Penn State coach Rene Portland said.

Another player with local ties, Lock Haven native Jess Zinobile who played her college basketball at St. Francis College, was picked by the Sacramento Monarchs in the fourth round. The 6-foot Zinobile, a guard/forward who finished her college career with 2,338 points, was the 62nd overall selection.

In the draft post players were at a premium as the league expands to 16 teams this season, adding franchises in Miami, Indiana, Seattle and Portland, Ore.

Eight college seniors, five international players and three former ABL players were chosen in the first round.

The 20-year-old Wauters averaged 13.8 points and 6.8 points for USV Orchids in France. She'll bring an inside threat to a Cleveland team that finished 7-25 last season.

Following Wauters, Washington chose 6-3 center Tausha Mills, who dominated the pre-draft camp. ABL players not selected in last season's draft are considered free agents who can be added to rosters after the draft.

The WNBA, which opens training camps May 3, begins its fourth season May 29.

### AT A GLANCE



Darling

Garner



Helen Darling

- 5-foot-7
- Point guard
- Big Ten player of the year
- 1st pick of second round
- 17th overall



Andrea Garner

- 6-foot-3
- Center
- Two-time first-team All-Big Ten choice
- 16th pick of second round
- 32nd overall