

Seattle University

ScholarWorks @ SeattleU

---

The Spectator Online

Newspapers

---

2-21-2024

## 2024-02-21 [OPINION] The Seattle Storm Have Won the WNBA's Free Agency Scramble

Bridget Lawrence  
*Seattle University*

Qasim Ali

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.seattleu.edu/spectator-online>

---

### Recommended Citation

Lawrence, Bridget and Ali, Qasim, "2024-02-21 [OPINION] The Seattle Storm Have Won the WNBA's Free Agency Scramble" (2024). *The Spectator Online*. 1204.  
<https://scholarworks.seattleu.edu/spectator-online/1204>

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Newspapers at ScholarWorks @ SeattleU. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Spectator Online by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ SeattleU.



The Spectator • February 21, 2024 • <https://seattlespectator.com/2024/02/21/opinion-the-seattle-storm-have-won-the-wnbas-free-agency-scramble/>

# [OPINION] The Seattle Storm Have Won the WNBA's Free Agency Scramble

Bridget Lawrence and Qasim Ali, Staff Reporter and Sports & Opinion Editor

February marks the start of the Women's National Basketball Association's (WNBA) free agency period and it means plenty of changes for rosters across the league. The Seattle Storm has had an especially successful free agency period thus far, acquiring two of the biggest names in the league.

Forward Nneka Ogumike, the 2016 WNBA MVP, signed with the Storm Feb. 5, leaving the Los Angeles Sparks. Her deal is for one year and she chose the Storm after considering other teams like the Phoenix Mercury, Chicago Sky, Atlanta Dream and New York Liberty.



Kay McHugh

Seattle also signed six-time All-Star, four-time First-Team All-WNBA selection and 2021 Olympian guard Skylar Diggins-Smith Feb. 1. Diggins-Smith did not compete in the 2023 season because she was on parental leave. She was an unrestricted free agent this offseason, which meant the Storm was saved from having to sacrifice any assets in a sign-and-trade. Diggins-Smith, as an unrestricted free agent, is limited to a regular max contract instead of a supermax contract, so her salary will be reduced by about \$25,000 from 2023.

The Storm's aggressive pursuits of Ogumike and Diggins-Smith will create a "big three" of sorts in Seattle, as they will join the Storm's longtime star guard, 2023 WNBA scoring champion and MVP candidate Jewell Loyd on the hardwood.

Diggins-Smith clarified in her introductory press conference with Ogumike Feb. 19 that getting to Seattle to specifically play with Ogumike and Loyd was a priority all along, even with a pay cut.

"I want to play with Jewell," Diggins-Smith said of her decision to come to Seattle. "This is the only team that I talked to, that I took a visit to... If I wasn't talking to Jewell, I was talking to Nneka, and so those are the two players I talked to the most."

Even after adding Diggins-Smith and Ogumike, the Storm have one more maximum salary slot available. The financial flexibility is a game-changer for Seattle after their rough 2023 season, where they went 11-29. It means that even after the most eventful offseason for the team in years, the Storm may not be done and could sign more big-name talent.

The moves have not only bolstered the roster's star power, but have added scoring and playmaking at much-needed positions. The Storm's point guard room has lacked any kind of star power since the departure of all-time legendary point guard Sue Bird in 2022,

but with Diggins-Smith's leadership and playmaking, Seattle may be on track to having a more successful team game in 2024.

The Storm finished last in assists in 2023, often relying on Loyd to score in isolation for them throughout entire games—in fact, no one took as many shots last season as Loyd. Having a battle-tested point guard to run the show could change that dynamic completely this season and free up the team's shooters, easing the burden on Loyd.

And with the team having Loyd, Diggins-Smith and Ogwumike, Seattle is looking stacked for next year in a similar way to when Loyd worked with Bird and Breanna Stewart to win WNBA Championships in 2018 and 2020.

Still, it seemed like an odd choice for Ogwumike to leave the Sparks, who had six more wins than the Storm last season. But the gaping holes in the Storm's roster should instantly upgrade with Ogwumike and Diggins-Smith around. Ogwumike, 33, explained her decision at the introductory press conference.

"I don't have a lot of years to play," Ogwumike said. "I wanted to be a part of an organization where I could finish really strong... there's been a lot of success here."

They certainly will have the talent to reach that goal. With three All-WNBA starters plus a fourth All-Star in center Ezi Magbegor, the Storm's starting lineup looks more talented on paper than any besides the Las Vegas Aces and the Liberty, who have been dominating the league as of late.

The new-look Storm will take the court in May in what promises to be a return to successful basketball in the Emerald City.