

By Kikue Higuchi

Diamond DeShields found the rim at will against the Dream Wednesday night, splitting her defenders with ease and seemingly showing signs of returning to her usual self after struggling with injuries during the 2020 season.

“I feel a lot more comfortable being out there,” DeShields said. “I’m still trying to take my time with things, but I’ve put in a lot of work and I trust the work I’ve put in.”

Azura Stevens, who was struggling with a foot injury early this season, has also started a slow return to the court. Stevens registered a season-high 19 minutes and 11 points against the Dream. DeShields grabbed 17 points, her third straight game in double-digits.

However, with the return of DeShields and Stevens came the exit of superstar Candace Parker and the former all-time leading scorer Allie Quigley. The loss of Parker and Quigley due to injuries were felt acutely in the Sky’s 90-83 loss to Atlanta.

Kahleah Copper, who led the Sky with 21 points, attributed the loss to a lack of possession time.

“They got extra possessions,” Copper said. “They beat us to the board on offensive rebounds and we turned the ball over 21 times.”

Parker currently leads the Sky in rebounds per game. Meanwhile, Quigley is one of Chicago’s best playmakers and a mainstay of their backcourt. Both help the Sky finish at the rim and beyond the arc.

DeShields says the loss of Parker really showed against the Dream, but in the end it’s irrelevant.

“We don’t make those types of excuses,” she said. “We still believe that what we have is good enough to go out and win games in this league. We gotta make do with what we got and I’m more than confident in that.”

Stevens is also looking forward to Parker and Quigley’s return but says she still found all the minutes against the Dream meaningful for the team.

“We’re getting a lot of good experience. The rookies are being thrown in the fire at the moment because we’re not at full strength and we’re relying on them to come in and get crucial minutes,” she said. “In the long run that’s really going to help us out. Down the road, whoever is off the bench, they’re going to be primed and ready to go. I think it’s really adding to our depth.”