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**CORRECTION TO THIS ARTICLE**

A May 13 Sports article incorrectly identified who caught the touchdown pass in the D.C. Divas' victory Saturday in a National Women's Football League game. Brooke Hargrove caught the pass.

# D.C. Divas of Women's League Notch Historic Victory

Divas 10, Crush 6

By Kathy Orton  
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A 37-year-old mother of two from Fairfax caught the game-winning touchdown to lead the D.C. Divas of the National Women's Football League to a 10-6 victory over the Connecticut Crush in their home opener yesterday at Eastern High School in Northeast.

Karen Hulme's 15-yard reception with two minutes remaining in the game was the first offensive touchdown in the history of the Divas (1-2), who are part of the inaugural 10-team league that kicked off in April.

"I felt alone," said Hulme, who had two catches for 22 yards. "We tried [running the route] in the first half and I couldn't quite get to [the pass]. I felt really bad about that. Coach said, 'Keep your head up. We need you.' He had the faith in me to run it two more times."

An enthusiastic crowd of 496 -- similar to turnouts at DCIAA high school football games -- saw a spirited, rugged game.

The Divas play in the shadows of RFK Stadium and wear burgundy and gold uniforms like the Washington Redskins. But most of the women are still adjusting to wearing helmets and football pads.

"They can't throw as far [as men]," D.C. General Manager Joe Dolan said. "But the speed is the same, the intensity."

In January, 85 women tried out for the 45 roster spots. Those who made it range in age from 21 to 43. Their only football experience is playing flag football, rugby or in the backyard with their brothers. They come from the District, Virginia and Maryland. They are private investigators, stockbrokers and nurses, who spent their lives wanting to hit somebody on a football field and were told they couldn't because they were girls.

"I was five years old and said I want to be big like my grandfather so I can play football," Donna Wilkinson said. "Everyone laughed then. I get the last laugh now. . . . It's the best thing I've ever done."

Wilkinson, a 26-year-old wellness consultant from Germantown, is the Divas' best player. Normally a linebacker, she played on offense for the first time, at tight end. Not only did she rush for 27 yards on four carries to set up the Divas' touchdown in the fourth quarter, Wilkinson also had six tackles, two sacks and a fumble recovery.

"She's just a special player," Divas Coach Ezra Cooper said. "She doesn't come off the field."

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Connecticut (0-3) scored first on a one-yard quarterback keeper up the middle in the first quarter. The Crush led 6-0 after a bad snap forced the kicker to pick up the ball and run on the extra point attempt.

Wilkinson got the Divas on the scoreboard when she sacked Connecticut quarterback Leslee Frederickson in the end zone for a safety in the second quarter. She also ran in the two-point conversion after the touchdown in the fourth quarter to secure the victory.

The Divas' 5-foot-3, 130-pound quarterback Debra Troell faced a heavy blitz most of the game. She was sacked eight times, but managed to complete 5 of 16 passes for 62 yards.

"It's one of the most rewarding experiences I've had," Cooper said of coaching the Divas. "I'm so proud of them."

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