

CHIP OFF THE OLD BLOCK

WENDY SZCZERBIAK LEADS CSH TO L.I. TITLE

BY JOSHUA CASPER

Wendy Szczerbiak is your average teenage girl. She worries about history exams, hangs with her friends and likes boys. She just also happens to have one of the most famous basketball names on Long Island, and the skills to match.

While her older brother Wally, a local high school legend and an All-Star guard for the Minnesota Timberwolves, is a tough act to follow, Cold Spring Harbor High School's 6-foot-2 sophomore forward has proven she can run the show, leading CSH to its first-ever LI Girls Class B Championship. In its first appearance in the State Tournament, CSH fell to Rye, but Szczerbiak set a state record for rebounds in a state tournament game with 23, and netted 19 points.

"No one has had an answer to Wendy," says head coach Gran Roe. "They front her, they double team her, they just can't defend her. She has a perimeter game and a post game. She even hits threes. She has

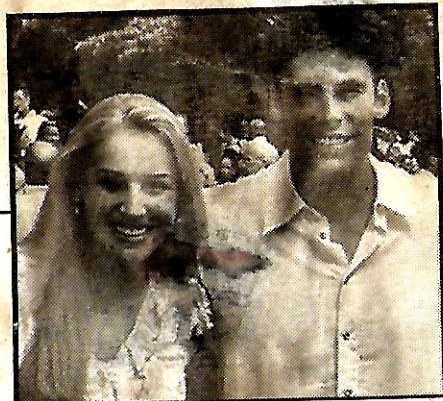
just been steady."

Szczerbiak notched 26 points and 25 rebounds against rival Malverne in the Nassau Class B Finals, and followed that with a 20-point effort in the LI Finals against Wyandanch. She also averaged 19 points and 15 boards for the second consecutive year, her fourth season on varsity. Szczerbiak and teammate Kate Harrison have been on the varsity team since seventh grade.

"She just improves every year," says Harrison, Wendy's closest friend, who has played with her since third grade. "She brings a lot of hustle to the court and she has confidence."

The ability to have fun has been the key to Szczerbiak's success, who's often judged by the name on the back of her jersey.

"There's a little pressure," Wendy explains. "If I walk into a gym it gives me a little edge. I get respect. Coming on the court, I have something to live up to. Girls are like, 'You're not as good as your brother.'"



Wendy Szczerbiak with brother Wally

While she loves basketball, Wendy is aware it's an extracurricular activity, and spends much of her time with friends and family away from the court. Her father Walt, who played a year in the ABA before going to Spain, where he set the single-game scoring record of 65 points and won three championships with Real Madrid, agrees with Wendy's philosophy, as does her brother Wally.

"She enjoys the game... She is handling [the pressure] very well," says Wally. "I was the same way—a normal teenager. I studied a lot and had a social life in school the same way she does. She enjoys her friends and family. Basketball is just an extension of it." 📍