Following the game with Seattle on Sunday, the Connecticut Sun had only one thing on their minds; two days off.

"We've been looking forward to it, feels good," said guard Shekinna Stricklen with a smile.

Monday and Tuesday went by quick. The Sun were back on the practice floor the past two days, getting ready for a 7:30 p.m. home game tonight at Mohegan Sun Arena against Atlanta and what lies beyond.

Practice was a bit of a luxury for Connecticut. The coaching staff of the Sun to be more specific.

Coming off five games in 11 days, Connecticut finally had a stretch of four days without a game.

"Wednesday's practice was important," Sun coach and general manager Curt Miller said.

It was the only time in the next nine days that the Sun will practice two days in row. The Sun begin a four game in nine days stretch tonight with the next three on the road in Chicago, Dallas and Washington.

"We were able to add some things, able to talk about some things that we were kind of letting slip and getting back to some of the fundamentals and basics," Miller said.

Important to Miller. Not so much for the players.

"I think we would prefer no practice," Alyssa Thomas said with a laugh after the win over Seattle which was accomplished without a day of practice or even a shoot around. "It just comes down to attention to details. The coaches try to prepare us the best they can with video and the rest is up to us to go out there and execute."

Of course, it's probably easier to get a team that's riding a six-game win streak and is sitting on top of the overall WNBA standings with an 8-1 record to buy into a practice or two.

"You pick your places in this league," Miller said. "It's not an easy league to get practices in and it's not an easy league to have long practices. You can do things well in a short amount of time."

The Sun went only 65 minutes in their practice on Thursday. That included shooting drills and "skeleton" work where there was no defense so, in all, the Sun put in only 40 minutes of practice time.

But, the work was done.

"It was intense," Miller said. "There was a method to the madness of a 40-minute practice. We were cleaning up some of our philosophies but also working on preparation for what we need to do to have success against Atlanta. It's not, necessarily the length or duration but the opportunity to do things well in a short period that seems to grab the player's attention more in this league."

There was one unfortunate event. Sun guard Layshia Clarendon, who has been playing very well spelling Jasmine Thomas
at the point, injured her ankle on Wednesday. Miller said on Thursday that he is doubtful that Clarendon would play tonight.

The Dream have been without star Angel McCoughtry. She has been sidelined for the season thus far with a knee injury suffered in the last year's playoffs.

Atlanta also recently lost former Sun guard Alex Bentley for the next couple of weeks to the Eurobasket competition.

On Wednesday, Atlanta signed one of Connecticut's second-round draft picks, Natisha Hiedeman, as a temporary replacement for Bentley. Heideman, the Big East Player of the Year at Marquette, was waived by the Sun at the end of training camp. The addition of Heideman means the Dream (2-5) will have 11 players in uniform.

Atlanta head coach and former Sun assistant, Nicki Collen, used only eight players in an 88-78 win over Indiana Wednesday. The win broke a five-game losing streak for Atlanta.

Miller said despite their recent struggles and their record, it would not be wise to look past the Dream.

"There is no overlooking this team that swept us last year and has the talent they have," Miller said. "They are as athletic and explosive as any team in the league. They pose problems because of their uber-athleticism."

Miller quickly pointed to the Dream's re-discovered ability to score from beyond the arc. Former UConn standouts Tiffany Hayes and Renee Montgomery, also a former Sun player, both hit four 3-pointers in the win over Indiana. Add a pair by Maite Cazorla and the Dream shot 10-for-22 (45 percent) from 3-point land.

"You realize that it was only a matter of time for them to get their shooting touch going and their confidence at the offensive end," Miller said. "They are also one of the true elite defensive teams in the league. We know how dangerous they can be."

In the first six games prior to that, Atlanta had made only 23 percent of its 3-pointers including a dismal 3-for-18 performance in a 65-59 loss to the Sun on June 9. Atlanta made only 32 percent of all of its shots in that first meeting with Connecticut.

The Sun, believe it or not, were even worse at 28 percent but still won.

"That was a grind-out game in which neither team played really well offensively," Miller added. "We just happened to make a few more plays in the fourth quarter than they did. I don't what this game will be like whether it will be a grind it out game or both offenses will play a little bit better but we know how tough a matchup this is."

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