



# Lenita Sanford Chooses CAL

*By Viet Nguyen , Staff writer Scout.com  
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**Lenita Sanford, the #24 player in the 2007 class according to Hoopgurlz (#9 according to All-Star Girls Report), has made a verbal commitment to Joanne Boyle and the California Golden Bears women's basketball program.**

A 6'2 power forward, Sanford hails from Lynwood High School in Southern California, where she averaged 20 points, 15 rebounds, and four blocks last season. She also plays for the Finest Basketball Club (FBC), a powerhouse club team.

Sanford made her decision Sunday night after returning from her visit to Rutgers.

"I sat down with my mom and we talked it over," said Sanford. "We just thought that Cal was the best fit overall. It's a great place educationally, and also playing-wise. I think I will get playing time as a freshman. And I won't have to play center at Cal; I will get to play the 4 or even the 3."



Sanford enjoyed her visit to Rutgers but ultimately decided that it was "too far." Many thought hometown USC was the front-runner in her recruitment, but Sanford had eliminated the Trojans even before her visit to Rutgers. Asked why she dropped USC she responded, "I just changed my mind."

As for the impact she hopes to make at Cal, Sanford said, "I'll bring a lot to the table - defense and offense both!"

Sanford's high school coach, Ellis Barfield, who has coached her since the seventh grade, was much more specific in his analysis of her game. "Lenita has improved every year. She is a double-digit scorer and rebounder and is tremendous on the defensive end. She is extremely athletic and mobile, and she really gets up and down the floor. She is really gifted for her size, and she has great anticipation and reaction when it comes to blocking shots. She has a mid-range jumper, but she's really crafty around the basket. And she's got a great upside too. Lenita is very soft-spoken, but very bright. She is friendly and is funny



once you get to know her. And she is really mature well beyond her years."

Barfield believes that Sanford will fit in well at Cal. "When we played in a tourney in Oakland last year, we dropped by for a visit. It was a very nice atmosphere. She really felt comfortable. And the coaches did a great job staying on top of her, to let her know that she was wanted. Our whole team and the coaching staff are so happy with her decision. Lenita will be the first player from our school to play in the Pac-10."

On her official visit to Cal last month, Sanford was hosted by senior guard [Keanna Levy](#), and she already knew [Devanei Hampton](#) and [Alexis Gray-Lawson](#) from playing against them. "I talked to the players about the academics at Cal," said Sanford. "And I met and talked to an academic advisor too. I found out that I would have tutors whenever I needed them." Sanford said that she is already fully qualified for Cal. She is interested in studying business- "I hope to have my own business someday." Sanford's family- mom, dad, and brother- are excited about her choice of school. Sanford also has an aunt who lives in Oakland, so she'll have some family nearby during college.

Before she gets to Cal, however, Sanford hopes to work on her ball handling and her jump shot. "I just want to work on my game and play better than ever."

With Sanford's verbal, the Bears now have three commitments for the 2007 class, including Tucson's [Rachelle Federico](#) and Canada's [Kelsey Adrian](#). Cal has three scholarships still available.

Sanford's commitment may have other positive effects for the Bears. Besides being arguably the top player in Southern California, Sanford may provide Boyle a foothold in that hotbed of girls' basketball, as Cal has not had much recruiting success there in recent years.

With the focus on wings and posts this year, Cal will need some guards in the 2008 class, and Sanford's FBC teammate [Nikki Speed](#) should be a prime target. In addition, the Bears are a finalist for the services of Sacramento's Vicky Baugh, one of the best players in the country. Baugh, who is 6'4 but wants to play on the wing in college, may be assured that she won't be forced to play down low with [Lenita Sanford](#) now in the fold. But don't look for Sanford to sway her friend [Danielle Robinson](#) from her commitment to Oklahoma. "We had talked about the idea of going to the same school, but it didn't work out. But I wasn't surprised when she chose Oklahoma."