

# SWOOSH

THE OFFICIAL SPARKS MAGAZINE

1st Edition



## THE RACE TO FOUR

FEATURE

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Meet your entertainment  
groups this year!

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Learn about the  
players that will bring  
the heat this season

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## UPCOMING GAMES

Friday, May 19  
2:00pm v Washington  
Championship Ring  
Ceremony

Tuesday, June 6  
7:00pm v Chicago  
Pride Night

Tuesday, June 13  
7:00pm v Dallas

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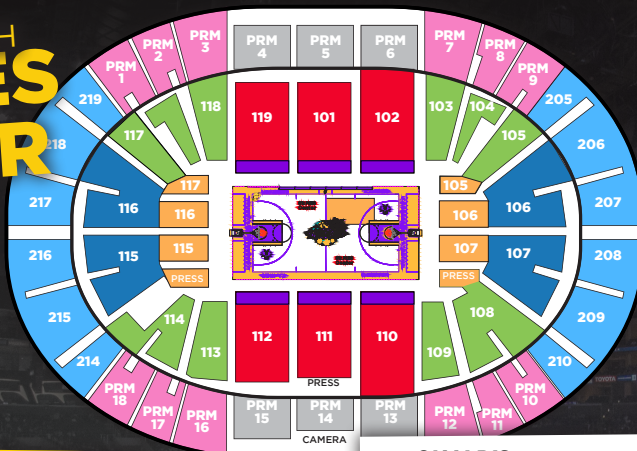
## DTLA

Across from Section 116  
Ballast Point, Golden Road,  
Goose Island, Firestone, Kona,  
Lagunitas, Stone

## FIGUEROA BAR

Across from Section 101  
Cocktails, Bud Light,  
Goose Island, Stella, Wine

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and safe atmosphere at  
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drink responsibly.



## MCDONALD'S

Across from Section 114  
Chicken nuggets, hamburgers, salads,  
french fries

## BLAZE PIZZA

Across from Section 109  
Pizza, salad, desserts, beverages

## WETZEL'S PRETZELS

Next to Section 103  
Gourmet pretzels, snacks, beverages

and  
**CONCESSION  
STANDS!**



# LEGACY. REDEFINED.

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**8.27.17**

In 2015 and 2016, we broke records and barriers by impacting the community through sport and setting a new franchise record for the first STAPLES Center sell-out in Sparks Franchise history. This was all made possible by our team of Ambassadors. These women and men were our voices to make a difference.

We are proud to have diverse Ambassadors that represent all things L.A. As we prepare for the 2017 #WeAreWomen game on 8.27.17, we challenge you to lead with the Sparks and become an Ambassador.

Become a 2017 #WeAreWomen Ambassador by contacting Melissa Lopez at  
mlopez@la-sparks.com or call 323.431.3101.

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Dear Loyal Sparks Fan,

Welcome to the 2017 season! We are extremely excited to show you what we have in store for you this year. We have been working diligently during this offseason to ensure we bring you the highest quality sports and entertainment that Los Angeles has to offer.

Coach Agler and GM & EVP Penny Toler have put together a team of world-class, competitive athletes while you've been away, and they are both excited to showcase our new additions to the 2016 WNBA Championship Team. We are confident that, as we strive to be the first to four championship titles this season, we will rise even higher than we did last year and bring LA another reason to celebrate!

As an organization committed to supporting the communities in which we live, work, and play, we strive to push positive change in our community and empower young women. This year, we are committed to redefining what it means to leave a legacy, as everyone comes from different walks of life and leaves their own positive impression on the world. On August 27th, we will host our 3rd annual #WeAreWomen game. On this day, and throughout the season, we will spotlight incredible women and girls who have followed their dreams, persevered through adversity and impacted their community. If you are interested in becoming a part of our Legacy, Redefined movement, contact our front office at (323) 431.3112.

Again, welcome back to STAPLES Center this season. We consider you all to be part of our Sparks family, and if we can do anything to make your experience more memorable, please don't hesitate to speak with one of our staff members.

Thanks again for being a part of our Sparks family. Go Sparks!



Sincerely,

Christine Simmons

# THE AMAZING RACE

Three WNBA teams fight for their fourth Championship Title

by Maria Boyle

The 2017 season has eyes to be one of the most exciting seasons yet, as the Los Angeles Sparks acquire top prospects such as Sydney Wiese in the draft, while also obtaining big-names Odyssey Sims and Tiffany Jackson-Jones through trades this offseason. Although these strong additions to the already-stacked 2016 WNBA Champion roster will offer some incredible basketball, this is also the season for three teams to frivolously fight for their fourth title.

Although the Phoenix Mercury barely clinched the playoffs last season with a final record of 16-18, they are not a team to trifle with. Brittney Griner, three-time All-Star, signed a long-term contract during the offseason, ensuring that she'll be a rock in Phoenix. This will bring Phoenix some much-needed stability and drive as she and Taurasi return from Russia, and this momentum will propel them into the 2017 season. It certainly won't be anything short of interesting watching these two veterans lead their team, and there's no doubt

they'll become a strong contender for the fourth trophy.

With a better record than the Sparks last season (28-6), the Minnesota Lynx are pawing at the opportunity to dig a grave for the Sparks this year. The Sparks can count on the Lynx forcing them to sweat over every single point. With four Olympian-athletes' ambitions strongly-embedded in the Lynx game-winning mindset, training camp showcased some incredible improvements. Minnesota shifted to transforming their shooting game during training camp, and an adjustment to Brunson's arc is already a promising edge to their offense. The Lynx are starving for a victory and redemption this season, and it's clear that a fourth trophy is the only thing that will satisfy this ravenous team.

***Meanwhile, the Los Angeles Sparks are welcoming straight, raw talent to their championship roster.***

Meanwhile, the Los Angeles Sparks are welcoming straight, raw talent to their championship roster. With the starting five already being a force to reckon with, the Sparks acquired Odyssey Sims and Tiffany Jackson-Jones during the offseason. Sims averaged 16.7 PPG while being awarded Rookie of the Month (twice) and being named to the WNBA All-Rookie Team in her first year. She averaged 21.3 PPG in the Turkish league during the offseason and will join the Sparks on the court with sure intensity. Jackson-Jones was the #5 pick in the 2007 draft and continued to bring power to her team in Israel with 16.7 PPG and 8.2 RPG this offseason once her final year with the Tulsa Shock came to a close. Los Angeles also looks forward to showcase draft picks Sydney Wiese (11th pick, point guard) and Saicha Grand-Allen (35th pick, center). These additions to the Los Angeles champions will bring new power and grit to the court as they combat Phoenix and Minnesota.

There's a lot to say about what's in store for the 2017 season, but "sensational" and "edge-of-your-seat anticipation" are a few of them, as we watch the race to be the first active WNBA team with four championship trophies.



### SPARKS VETERANS



**Alana BEARD**

Position: G-F  
Height: 5-11  
Age: 34 (5/14/82)  
Duke

**#0**



**Essence CARSON**

Position: F-G  
Height: 6-0  
Age: 30 (7/28/86)  
Rutgers

**#17**



**Chelsea GRAY**

Position: G  
Height: 5-11  
Age: 24 (10/8/92)  
Duke

**#12**



**Jantel LAVENDER**

Position: C  
Height: 6-4  
Age: 28 (11/12/88)  
Ohio State

**#42**



**Candace PARKER**

Position: F-C  
Height: 6-4  
Age: 31 (4/19/86)  
Tennessee

**#3**




**Nneka OGWUMIKE**

Position: F  
Height: 6-2  
Age: 26 (7/2/90)  
Stanford

**#30**

### THIS SEASON WE WELCOME



**Odyssey SIMS**

Position: G  
Height: 5-8  
Age: 24 (7/13/92)  
Baylor

**#1**



**Sydney WIESE**

Position: C  
Height: 6-0  
Age: 21 (6/16/95)  
Oregon State

**#6**



**Riquna WILLIAMS**

Position: G  
Height: 5-7  
Age: 25 (5/28/90)  
Miami

**#2**

Head Coach - Brian Agler (College - Wittenberg)  
Assistant Coach - Tonya Edwards (College - Tennessee)  
Assistant Coach - Bobbie Kelsey (College - Stanford)  
Athletic Trainer - Courtney Watson (College - California)  
Strength-and-Conditioning Coaching - Kelly Dormandy (College - Springfield)



### SEATTLE STORM

NUM	PLAYER	POS	HEIGHT	FROM
10	Sue Bird	G	5-9	Connecticut
32	Alysha Clark	F	5-11	Middle Tennessee St.
54	Nikki Greene	C	6-4	Penn St.
1	Crystal Langhorne	F	6-2	Maryland
24	Jewell Loyd	G	5-10	Notre Dame
11	Lanay Montgomery	C	6-5	West Virginia
23	Kaleena Mosqueda-Lewis	F	5-11	Connecticut
4	Jenna O'Hea	F	6-1	Australia
0	Jennifer O'Neill	G	5-5	Kentucky
2	Alexis Peterson	G	5-7	Syracuse
45	Noelle Quinn	G	6-0	UCLA
30	Breanna Stewart	F	6-4	Connecticut
8	Carolyn Swords	C	6-6	Boston College
7	Ramu Tokashiki	F	6-3	Japan
3	Sami Witcomb	G	5-10	Washington

Head Coach Jenny Boucek (Virginia)  
Assistant Coach Gary Kloppenburg (UC San Diego)  
Assistant Coach Ryan Webb (Seattle U)

#### GAME MATCHUP

The Sparks and the Storm meet for the second year in a row on opening day to tip off the 2017 WNBA season.

The Sparks are coming off a historic third championship, and with added off-season acquisitions such as Riquna Williams and Odyssey Sims, are looking for nothing short of a repeat.

Seattle added Alexis Peterson to their roster as the 15th overall selection in the 2017 draft and are on the rise as a strong playoff contender.

Last season, the Sparks came out strong on opening day, defeating the Storm 96-66. This year, the Storm look to start their season strong with redemption while the Sparks seek to defend their title.

### WASHINGTON MYSTICS



#### GAME MATCHUP

Today's game kicks off what will be a hard fought matchup all season long. Washington made two off-season moves that stunned the league, adding both Christy Tolliver and Elena Delle Donne. Tolliver, who was an integral part of the Sparks 2016 Championship, is back in Staples Center wearing a Mystics uniform. Elena Delle Donne will provide strong and dominant inside presence for Washington's title pursuits.

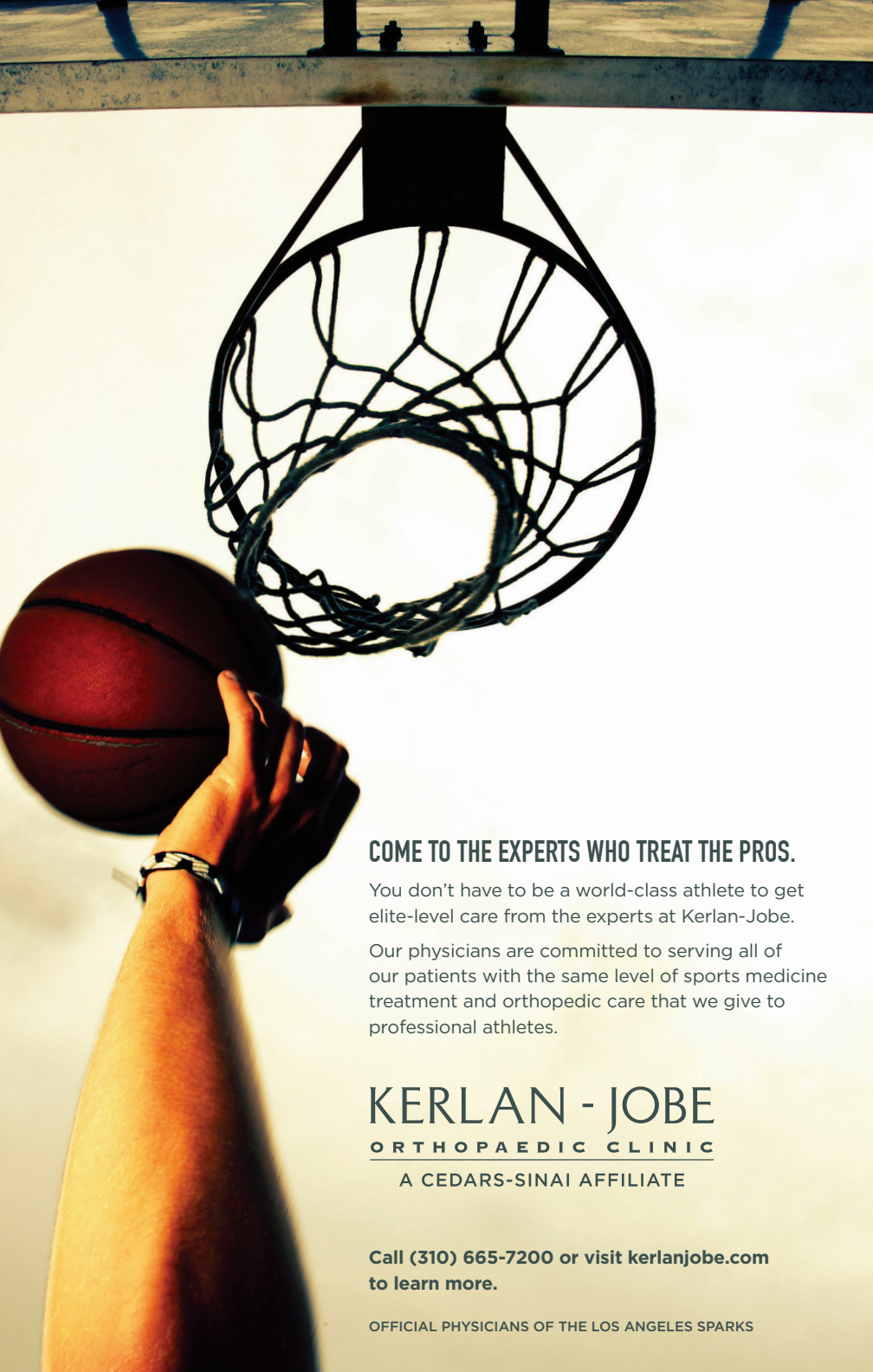
The Sparks off-season acquisitions include two backcourt gems, Odyssey Sims and Riquna Williams. Sims, 24, was the second overall pick in 2014 while Williams had returned from an injury stronger than ever.

Los Angeles swept the Mystics last year in all three regular season games, but with the new matchups for each team, the series is sure to be an exciting one all year long.

NUM	PLAYER	POS	HEIGHT	FROM
9	Natasha Cloud	G	6-0	St. Joseph's
11	Elena Delle Donne	F-G	6-5	Delaware
21	Tianna Hawkins	F	6-3	Maryland
4	Taylor Hill	G	5-9	Ohio State
10	Mehryn Kraker	G	6-0	WIS - Green Bay
12	Ivory Latta	G	5-6	North Carolina
22	Ally Malott	F	6-4	Dayton
33	Emma Meesseman	C	6-4	Belgium
1	Ashley Morrissetta	G	5-9	Purdue
14	Tierra Ruffin-Pratt	G	5-10	North Carolina
30	LaToya Sanders	F-C	6-3	North Carolina
25	Jennie Simms	G	6-0	Old Dominion
31	Asia Taylor	F	6-1	Louisville
34	Krystal Thomas	C	6-5	Duke
20	Kristi Toliver	G	5-7	Maryland
32	Shatori Walker-Kimbrough	G	5-11	Maryland
3	Caira Washington	F	6-2	George Washington

Head Coach  
Assistant Coach  
Assistant Coach

Mike Thibault (St. Martin's)  
Marianne Stanley (Immaculata College)  
Eric Thibault (Missouri)



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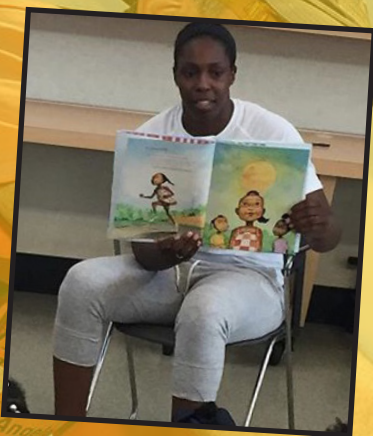
# COMMUNITY CORNER

by Andrea Moiseve

What do you want your legacy to be? On the court, we're ALL-STARS, MVPs, and 3xTitle CHAMPIONS who work hard for every win. Off the court, we're COMMUNITY WARRIORS who work hard for everyone.

The Los Angeles Sparks organization takes great pride in the positive impact that our players and front office have had in the community over the last 20 years. From our annual game ticket and merchandise donation programs to our on-the-ground impact and event series' focused on: Health & Wellness, Education, Military & Veterans' Affairs, Youth Sports, Financial Literacy, and Women & Girls Community platforms --- #WeAreWomen and #WeAreStrong.

Join with us at [www.sparks.wnba.com/community/](http://www.sparks.wnba.com/community/)



## A FEW HIGHLIGHTS FROM LAST SEASON:

- Our #WeAreWomen Ambassador Program launched last April and welcomed 75 women members. Leaders of industry from all sectors of the Los Angeles business and nonprofit community - our Sparks Ambassadors came together for a series of networking and empowerment experiences that were held all season long.
- Our Sparks players came together for an all-day Habitat-for-Humanity Home Build Project last May. Through a bit of elbow grease and dash of Sparkle, the finishing touches were finalized and the most-deserving of families were welcomed into their new home.
- Chelsea Gray hosted her annual Have-A-Sole shoe drive. It was a stomping success, outfitting the feet of over 50 people fighting to survive on the streets of Los Angeles.
- The Sparks front office brought the Sparkle back to the grounds of Dorsey High School during January's MLK Clean-up Day. Tidying and repainting never felt so good!
- The Sparks front office hosted our Dr. Seuss Literacy Day in March. Deeply immersed in the wonderful world of literature, they spent the day reading a collection of stories to 600 of our youngest fans enrolled at two local schools.
- In conjunction with Mayor Garcetti's office - Coach Agler, Penny Toler, Sparky, and our Championship Trophy swung through downtown Los Angeles last month to spend time with a group of Downtown Women's Center graduates. Rising out of homelessness and into self-sufficiency these women serve as sparkling examples of the power and resiliency of women everywhere.

Stay tuned for more! #LegacyRedefined

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# 2017

## ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

### SPARKIDS

Check out our youngest and talented group - The LA SparKids! It takes a lot of sugar to keep up with this energetic bunch. They have their own Hollywood personalities that mesh together to create a one-of-a-kind performance for games and events. The future is beyond bright for these SparKids.  
Director: Galit Friedlander  
Instagram: @la\_sparkids



### OLE' SKOOL CREW

Catch our vivacious group of 40+ young-hearted LA Sparks Ole Skool Dancers. This fan favorite has set the tone for how we party at STAPLES Center. They bring the energy, moves and experience every time they perform during games and events. They will show you have fabulous being 40+ can be!  
Director: G Madison  
Instagram: @la\_oleskoolcrew



### SPARKS CREW

Meet the uber talented and ultra exciting interactive break dancing/cheer group - The Sparks Crew. They bring the pop-locking, head spinning, flipping and fancy footwork to every game. All we can say is sit back, and watch them work.  
Director: Aerick Luckie  
Instagram: @la\_sparkscrow



# THE BUZZER BEATER

by Christy Calvin



## CANDACE PARKER

Candace Parker had a stellar and healthy 2016 season in which she started all 34 games and recorded a regular season high 34 points against the Seattle Storm. Over the course of her brilliant season, Candace was unstoppable, scoring double figures in 25 of 34 regular season games, recording six double-doubles and on ten occasions, Candace scored 20 points or more. The WNBA recognized her outstanding play by naming her the Western Conference Player of the Week twice in May and June. Moving into the 2016 WNBA playoffs, Candace elevated her game and fans witnessed the growth and poised veteran leadership on and off the court, which led the Sparks to

their third WNBA championship in franchise history. Credited to her dominant play, Candace was named the WNBA Finals MVP. She finished in the top 10 in the league in points, rebounds, assists, and steals per game.

Returning from the Fenerbahce team in Istanbul, Candace and her teammates are ready to get back on the hardwood and start the season and defend their WNBA title. It's going to be a tough challenge, but with their veteran leadership, experience and another year playing together should make them a cohesive unit on their quest to bring home a back-to-back WNBA championship in 2017.



Nneka Ogumike epitomizes the all around player in the women's game today. With her mental toughness and tenacity, Nneka took her game to the next level. During the 2016 season, she shot a league-best 66.5 percent from the floor, marking the second highest all-time. Nneka averaged a career-best 19.7 points and 9.1 boards to secure the second best record in the league. She also set a league record when she made 23 consecutive field goals during one stretch, including a perfect 12-for-12 in a game against Dallas. Her positive attitude has been infectious to the team as they embarked on an outstanding playoff run. Certainly can't forget that amazing game winning jump shot in Game 5 with seconds remaining to give the Sparks a one-point victory over the Minnesota Lynx capturing the WNBA Championship. Coming back to the Sparks this year look for WNBA players' union president Nneka to bring her unselfish play, infectious and positive attitude to the team.

## NNEKA OGWUMIKE



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<b>ORANGE</b>	<b>\$640</b>
<b>GREEN</b>	<b>\$400</b>
<b>BLUE</b>	<b>\$192</b>

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# 2017 SPARKS SCHEDULE

SATURDAY, MAY 13	2PM	SEATTLE STORM	CHAMPIONSHIP BANNER UNVEILING
FRIDAY, MAY 19	7:30PM	WASHINGTON MYSTICS	CHAMPIONSHIP RING CEREMONY
TUESDAY, JUNE 6	7:30PM	CHICAGO SKY	PRIDE NIGHT
TUESDAY, JUNE 13	7PM	DALLAS WINGS	
THURSDAY, JUNE 15	7:30PM	SAN ANTONIO STARS	
SUNDAY, JUNE 18	2PM	PHOENIX MERCURY	SERVICE NIGHT
SUNDAY, JULY 2	2PM	WASHINGTON MYSTICS	
THURSDAY, JULY 13	7:30PM	CONNECTICUT SUN	
MONDAY, JULY 17	7:30PM	INDIANA FEVER	
THURSDAY, JULY 20	12:30PM	CHICAGO SKY	
TUESDAY, JULY 25	7:30PM	SEATTLE STORM	
SUNDAY, JULY 30	2PM	DALLAS WINGS	LATINA LEADERS OF LA
FRIDAY, AUGUST 4	7:30PM	NEW YORK LIBERTY	GOSPEL NIGHT
FRIDAY, AUGUST 18	5:30PM	CHICAGO SKY	
TUESDAY, AUGUST 22	7:30PM	SAN ANTONIO STARS	BREAST AND HEALTH AWARENESS
SUNDAY, AUGUST 27	4PM	MINNESOTA LYNX	#WEAREWOMEN
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 1	7:30PM	ATLANTA DREAM	
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 3	1PM	CONNECTICUT SUN	FAN APPRECIATION



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