



2018 LOS ANGELES SPARKS GAME NOTES

WNBA CHAMPIONS 2001 • 2002 • 2016

2018 Regular-Season Schedule

May

| | | | |
|----|--------------|---------|---------|
| 20 | @Minnesota | ESPN2 | 2:00 PM |
| 22 | @Indiana | Twitter | 4:00 PM |
| 24 | @Connecticut | ESPN2 | 4:00 PM |
| 27 | Phoenix | SpecSN | 2:00 PM |

June

| | | | |
|----|-------------|--------|---------|
| 3 | Minnesota | SpecSN | 2:00 PM |
| 7 | Seattle | ESPN2 | 7:30 PM |
| 10 | Chicago | SpecSN | 2:00 PM |
| 12 | Atlanta | SpecSN | 7:30 PM |
| 15 | @Washington | SpecSN | 4:00 PM |
| 17 | @Chicago | SpecSN | 3:00 PM |
| 19 | Indiana | SpecSN | 7:30 PM |
| 22 | @Dallas | | 5:00 PM |
| 24 | New York | SpecSN | 2:00 PM |
| 26 | Dallas | SpecSN | 7:30 PM |
| 28 | @Seattle | ESPN2 | 6:00 PM |
| 29 | @Las Vegas | SpecSN | 7:30 PM |

July

| | | | |
|----|-------------|--------|----------|
| 1 | Las Vegas | SpecSN | 2:00 PM |
| 3 | Connecticut | SpecSN | 7:30 PM |
| 5 | @Minnesota | ESPN2 | 5:00 PM |
| 7 | Washington | SpecSN | 4:00 PM |
| 10 | @Seattle | SpecSN | 12:00 PM |
| 12 | Dallas | SpecSN | 12:30 PM |
| 15 | @Las Vegas | SpecSN | 3:00 PM |
| 20 | Indiana | SpecSN | 7:30 PM |
| 22 | @Chicago | SpecSN | 3:00 PM |
| 24 | Atlanta | SpecSN | 7:30 PM |

August

| | | | |
|----|--------------|--------|----------|
| 2 | Minnesota | ESPN2 | 7:00 PM |
| 5 | Phoenix | SpecSN | 4:00 PM |
| 8 | @New York | SpecSN | 4:00 PM |
| 9 | @Atlanta | NBATV | 4:00 PM |
| 12 | @Phoenix | ESPN2 | 4:00 PM |
| 14 | New York | SpecSN | 7:30 PM |
| 17 | @Washington | SpecSN | 4:00 PM |
| 19 | @Connecticut | SpecSN | 12:00 PM |

All times listed are Pacific Time.

**SPECTRUM
SPORTSNET**

Opening Tip

The Los Angeles Sparks are set to tip off their 2018 regular season on the road this Sunday, May 20, when they take on the Minnesota Lynx in the latest chapter of the WNBA's premier rivalry. ESPN2 will provide live coverage of the showdown, set for a 2 p.m. (PT) tip at Target Center. The Sparks and Lynx have squared off in the WNBA Finals each of the last two years, with Los Angeles raising its third trophy in 2016 and Minnesota its fourth in 2017. Each series went the maximum five games. This year's introductory meeting is part of a six-game Sunday slate and marks the first of the season on the ESPN family of networks.

Series History

Los Angeles holds an all-time record of 43-27 versus Minnesota in regular-season games, as well as an 8-10 mark in postseason action. The Sparks won two out of three in the 2017 regular season before another epic series on the league's biggest stage. Guard Chelsea Gray knocked down a jumper with two seconds remaining in Game 1 of the WNBA Finals to give the Sparks a series edge before the Lynx countered with a two-point victory of their own in Game 2. The teams continued trading wins through Game 4, but the home-court advantage and 2017 Most Valuable Player Sylvia Fowles would prove too much in Game 5.

Preseason Wrap

The Sparks ended the preseason with a bang, taking down the China National Team by an 82-61 score at Pasadena City College's Hutto-Patterson Gym (May 12). A 25-8 first quarter keyed the convincing close to the three-game slate, which saw Los Angeles drop its first two games by a combined nine points. Gray starred in the victory, totaling 17 points and 10 assists. Forward/center Candace Parker racked up five steals in her only 13 minutes of the preseason, as the Sparks forced 26 turnovers. Los Angeles previously dropped a 68-65 decision to the Connecticut Sun (May 7) before falling to the New York Liberty, 81-75, one day later. Both games were played at the Mohegan Sun Arena in Uncasville, Conn.

Overseas Adventures

The Sparks will be without center Jantel Lavender to start the 2018 campaign, as the veteran is in search of a KBSL title with Yakın Dogu Üniversitesi in Turkey. The team is currently battling Fenerbahçe for the biggest prize in Turkish women's professional basketball. Lavender is looking to join Sparks teammate Sydney Wiese as an overseas champion, as the sharpshooting guard from Oregon State won the WNBL title with the Townsville Fire (Australia) in January. Forward Nneke Ogwumike and center Maria Vadeeva teamed for Dynamo Kursk (Russia), which reached the EuroLeague semi-finals before falling to UMMC Ekaterinburg. Other overseas Sparks included Gray (Botas – Turkey), guard Odyssey Sims (Adana ASKI – Turkey) and guard Riquna Williams (Venezia – Italy).

New Faces

Los Angeles adds a WNBA legend to the fold in guard Cappie Pondexter. Pondexter, who was named one of the league's Top 15 Players of All Time in 2011, ranks in the league all-time top 10 in points scored, assists distributed and free throw percentage. She has also been part of two WNBA Championship teams, winning WNBA Finals Most Valuable Player with the Phoenix Mercury in 2007. By way of the draft, Los Angeles picked up Vadeeva (Russia) with the 11th overall pick of the first round. She will join the Sparks soon after the start of the regular season.

It All Starts Up Front

Back for its seventh season together is the frontcourt triumvirate of Parker, Ogwumike and Lavender. Parker maintained her spot among the WNBA's best in 2017, earning the ESPY Award for Best

Probable Starters

| NUM | PLAYER | 2017 STATS |
|-----|------------------|----------------------------|
| 0 | Alana Beard | 6.9 PPG, 3.5 RPG, 2.6 APG |
| 12 | Chelsea Gray | 14.8 PPG, 3.3 RPG, 4.4 APG |
| 30 | Nneka Ogumike | 18.8 PPG, 7.7 RPG, 2.1 APG |
| 3 | Candace Parker | 16.9 PPG, 8.4 RPG, 4.3 APG |
| 25 | Cappie Pondexter | 9.6 PPG, 2.9 RPG, 4.3 APG* |

* - with Chicago

Where Did You Come From?

| PLAYER | HOW ACQUIRED |
|------------------|-------------------|
| Alana Beard | Free Agent (2012) |
| Essence Carson | Free Agent (2016) |
| Chelsea Gray | Trade (2016) |
| Jantel Lavender | Draft (2011) |
| Nneka Ogumike | Draft (2012) |
| Candace Parker | Draft (2008) |
| Cappie Pondexter | Free Agent (2018) |
| Odyssey Sims | Trade (2017) |
| Maria Vadeeva | Draft (2018) |
| Sydney Wiese | Draft (2017) |
| Riquna Williams | Trade (2016) |

Milestone Watch

| PLAYER | MILESTONE (CURRENT) |
|------------------|--|
| Alana Beard | 5000 Points (4567) 1000 Assists (988) |
| Chelsea Gray | 1000 Points (932) |
| Candace Parker | 5000 Points (4558) |
| Cappie Pondexter | 7000 Points (6591) |
| Odyssey Sims | 2000 Points (1712) |

Pronunciation Guide

| PLAYER/COACH | Pronunciation |
|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Brian Agler | AGG-ler |
| Alana Beard | ah-LAY-nah |
| Nneka Ogumike | NEH-kuh Oh-gwoo-MIH-kay |
| Maria Vadeeva | vuh-DEE-vuh |
| Sydney Wiese | WEECE (rhymes with REESE) |
| Riquna Williams | rih-QUAHN-uh |

WNBA Player after ranking in or near the top 10 of every major statistical per-game category. Ogwu-mike also registered an elite-level 2017, failing to miss a beat following a 2016 that saw her capture the league's Most Valuable Player award. She averaged just shy of 19 points per game. Lavender, meanwhile, again claimed her spot as one of the league's best bench players, as the 2016 Sixth Woman of the Year scored in double figures nine different times. The trio was pivotal to the Sparks posting the WNBA's top field goal percentage of 47.9.

AB's D

Guard/forward Alana Beard accomplished a first for her storied career in 2017, earning the WNBA's Defensive Player of the Year award as voted on by a panel of national writers and broadcasters. She became just the second Sparks player to earn the award, joining Lisa Leslie (2004, 2008). Entering her 13th season in 2018, Beard started all 34 regular-season games for a second consecutive season last year. She was the catalyst of a Sparks team defense that led the league in steals per game (9.3) and opponents' turnovers per game (16.4). Beard personally played the passing lanes to the tune of a league-leading 2.1 steals per game.

Gray Scale

It was a breakout 2017 for guard Gray, who turned in career-best performances across the board in her first season as a full-time starter. Not only did the third-year pro finish among the top three Sparks players in points per game (14.8), rebounds per game (3.3) and assists per game (4.4), but she raised her game to an even higher level in the postseason. Gray registered averages of 15.1 points per game and 6.8 assists per game in eight playoff games. She also finished tops in the league with a regular-season 3-point percentage of 48.2% and was selected to her first WNBA All-Star Game.

Head Coach Brian Agler

On Jan. 5, 2015, Brian Agler became the 12th head coach in Los Angeles Sparks history, bringing with him over 30 years of head-coaching experience, including 11 in the WNBA. In his first season with Los Angeles, Agler led the Sparks to a league-best 15th postseason appearance. Just one year later he led them to a 26-8 regular season mark and the 2016 WNBA championship, the third league title in the franchise's history. The 2016 championship, when coupled with the one captured by his Seattle Storm in 2010, made Agler the first head coach in WNBA history to guide two different franchises to a title. The all-time winningest coach in women's professional basketball history in the United States with 322 regular-season victories, Agler enters the 2018 campaign with 250 wins as a WNBA head coach and 72 from his tenure in the ABL.

2018 LOS ANGELES SPARKS ROSTER

| NUM | PLAYER | POS | HEIGHT | EXP | DOB | FROM |
|-----|------------------|-----|--------|-----|-----------------|--------------|
| 0 | Alana Beard | G/F | 5-11 | 12 | May 14, 1982 | Duke |
| 17 | Essence Carson | G/F | 6-0 | 10 | July 28, 1986 | Rutgers |
| 12 | Chelsea Gray | G | 5-11 | 3 | October 8, 1992 | Duke |
| 42 | Jantel Lavender | C | 6-4 | 7 | Nov. 12, 1988 | Ohio State |
| 30 | Nneka Ogumike | F | 6-2 | 6 | July 2, 1990 | Stanford |
| 3 | Candace Parker | F/C | 6-4 | 10 | April 19, 1986 | Tennessee |
| 25 | Cappie Pondexter | G | 5-9 | 12 | January 7, 1983 | Rutgers |
| 1 | Odyssey Sims | G | 5-8 | 4 | July 13, 1992 | Baylor |
| 99 | Maria Vadeeva | C | 6-4 | R | June 16, 1998 | Russia |
| 24 | Sydney Wiese | G | 6-0 | 1 | June 16, 1995 | Oregon State |
| 2 | Riquna Williams | G | 5-7 | 5 | May 28, 1990 | Miami (Fla.) |

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Head Coach | Brian Agler (College: Wittenberg) |
| Assistant Coach | Bobbie Kelsey (Stanford) |
| Assistant Coach | Bryce Agler (Wittenberg) |



**ALANA
BEARD**



**ESSENCE
CARSON**



**CHELSEA
GRAY**



**JANTEL
LAVENDER**



**NNEKA
OGWUMIKE**



**CANDACE
PARKER**



**CAPPIE
PONDEXTER**



**ODYSSEY
SIMS**



**SYDNEY
WIESE**



**RIQUANA
WILLIAMS**



**MARIA
VADEEVA**