



2026 WNBA Media Access Policy

The purpose of this document is to communicate the media access and media availability policies that will apply for the 2026 WNBA season.

As a reminder, Team Communications leads are required to share these rules with all members of the media who access team facilities, attend media availability, or conduct player or staff interviews facilitated by the team. The WNBA will also make this information available on Media Central.

Media Credentialing:

Beginning with the 2026 WNBA season, media will be credentialed for games via a “Tier 1” credential” and “Tier 2” credential access system.

To ensure media are approved for appropriate access in connection with games, and to regulate the number of working media with access to pregame and postgame player interviews, media will be required to meet certain criteria to receive “Tier 1” access.

All teams will use the same “Tier 1”/Orange-colored credential and “Tier 2”/Gray-colored credential system for consistency. Local-market broadcast and radio crews automatically qualify for “Tier 1”.

“Tier 1”/ Orange Credential

Criteria for Obtaining a “Tier 1” Credential:

- Local media outlets that regularly cover a team by attending the majority of a team’s games and practices in the home market (at least 50 percent).
- National outlets that cover the league on a consistent basis and travel to a minimum of five games.
- Select international outlets plus broadcast and media partners designated by the league office for select games.
- Outlets working on a specific project in which the team or league determine that qualifying for “Tier 1” is necessary for the success of the project.
- To qualify for a “Tier 1” credential, an outlet must create original content and have a standard editorial process in which the credentialed reporters are governed.
 - For clarity, if an entire outlet qualifies for a “Tier 1” credential, an individual member of that outlet must have prior experience covering WNBA practices or games. For example, if “Outlet X” qualifies for a “Tier 1” credential, that does not mean an MLB writer for said outlet qualifies for a “Tier 1” credential.

Issuance of a “Tier 1” Credential:

- These credentials may be issued as a full-season or single-game pass at the discretion of the home team.

“Tier 1” Credentials Provide Access To:

- All team shootarounds and practices.
- Day-of-game press conferences, including team announcements, head coaches' pregame pressers and standard postgame press conferences with head coaches and key players.
- Player interviews, including the 105-to-60-minute pregame media window and postgame "Additional Player Interviews."
- On-court (baselines ONLY) pregame for content capture/TV shots during the 105-60-minute window.
- On-court postgame for content capture/TV shots once the court is cleared of players.
- A media seat (if available) and a space in the media workroom (if available).

"Tier 2" / Gray Credential

Criteria for Obtaining a "Tier 2" Credential:

- Outlets/individuals who do not qualify for a "Tier 1" credential but cover the WNBA
- Media members issued a "Tier 2" credential may be elevated to a single game "Tier 1" credential given the following:
 - The outlet or individual produces consistent/quality reporting.
 - The outlet or individual consistently attends games/practices/shootarounds.
 - If the individual recently obtained an editor and is subsequently subject to a standard editorial process under which they are governed.

Issuance of a "Tier 2" Credential:

- These credentials will be on a game-by-game basis and are at the home team's discretion.

"Tier 2" Credentials Provide Access To:

- All team shootarounds and practices.
- All day-of-game press conferences. (See above reference to examples)
- A media seat (if available) and a space in the media workroom (if available).

"Tier 2" Credentials Do NOT Provide Access To:

- Pregame interviews with players
- Postgame "Additional Player Interviews" following the postgame press conferences
- The court pregame and postgame for content capture/TV shots.

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Access/Interview Requirements for Games, Practices, Shootarounds

Each Monday morning during the preseason, regular season and playoffs, teams must provide WNBA Communications and to their respective media lists a weekly calendar with the interview schedule for their head coach and players for shootarounds, practices, and pregame and postgame availabilities.

Pregame Access and Interviews:

- **Pregame** interviews must take place in a room or suitable space back of house.
- The overall interview window for players is from 105 minutes to 60 minutes prior to the game.
 - Players are required to be available for up to 15 minutes but have flexibility to do so across a wider window than in prior seasons (formerly 90 minutes to 60). Players and their teams will determine what timing best suits them personally.
 - All active players (any player not listed as "Out" for that particular game), must be available.

- Media are not required to request individual players for pregame interviews. However, it should be anticipated that all day-of-game media sessions – Shootarounds, Pregame and Postgame – are to take the form of “scrum” sessions; special one-on-ones should not be expected on game days. However, in the event that only one media person looks to speak with a given player, that player is to be available.
- Head coaches’ pregame pressers must take place outside the 105-60-minute window and must not overlap with one another. If both teams’ coaches wish to conduct their sessions at the same time, preference is given to the home team.

Postgame Access and Interviews:

- **Postgame** media availability will be a combination of in-person access and Zoom access.
- Home and road teams will utilize two separate, designated press conference rooms that can accommodate in-person media and the Zoom component.
- During preseason and regular season, teams’ press conferences may take place concurrently.
- No later than 10 minutes after the conclusion of the game, each head coach and two key players per team will be available in the press conference room.
 - Teams have the option of having their two key players available alongside the head coach or separate from the head coach. No more than three (3) people per team may be available on the podium at the same time.
 - Home Team PR will issue a note to in-person and virtual media no later than with three (3) minutes on the game clock indicating the names of the players for both teams to be made available in the interview room(s). These lists are subject to change in the event of late-game developments.
- Postgame press conferences will be conducted for in-person media and media joining via Zoom. Teams are not obligated to take questions from media participating via Zoom but will be required to upload postgame press conferences to the WNBA’s Content Network.
- Any player not participating in the press conference must be available for “Additional Player Interviews” if requested by in-person media. The “Additional Player Interviews” are for in-person media ONLY.
- “Additional Player Interviews” must start no later than five (5) minutes after the conclusion of the presser and will end no later than 25 minutes after the conclusion of the presser. Players requested must be available for a minimum of 5-10 minutes.
- Interview requests by international media designated by the league office for players from their native country should be facilitated by teams either in the interview room or in a designated area where all media regardless of Tier 1 or Tier 2 designation have access.
- ALL players are required to remain in the building (whether requested or not) until all media obligations are met.
- As with pregame interviews, players who were prior to the game designated as not available to play (i.e. listed as “Out” on the Game Status Report), will be exempt from postgame interviews.

Game Day Shootaround Access and Interviews:

- Any organized shootaround – required or optional – with at least five (5) players present must have a 15-minute media availability session for in-person media.
- Shootarounds will be open to media for viewing for 15 minutes at the beginning or end of the session but concurrent with the interview period.
- Teams may designate two (2) players as exempt from shootaround media sessions. Teams may use the exemptions for different players on a rotating basis but must designate the exempt players each Monday when issuing their weekly media schedule.
- All other players and coaches must be available for the 15-minute interview session with in-person media in a designated interview area in the vicinity of the court.
- If a team does NOT have a shootaround, a media session is not required.

Non-Game Day Practice Access and interviews:

- All non-game day practices must be open to the media for 30 minutes (defined as a period of on-going team drills) either at the beginning or end of practice.
- Immediately prior to practice or upon the conclusion of practice, the head coach and all players must be available for media interviews in the vicinity of the court for a minimum of 20 minutes and up to a maximum of 30 minutes. If media are still present and engaging in interviews with players and/or coaches, the session must extend to the full, uninterrupted 30 minutes.
- The media availability and open practice must be conducted in a contiguous manner (e.g., if the team conducts media availability prior to practice, then the first 30 minutes of practice must be open).
- During the preseason, WNBA Communications will host a Zoom media availability for each of the 15 teams across a four-day period (*dates to be determined*). Each team will be represented by its head coach and two (2) key players determined in conjunction with WNBA Communications.

Long-term Injured Player Media Access:

If a player is injured and expected to miss a significant amount of time, the following rules apply regarding their obligation to speak to the media:

- If a player is expected to miss the remainder of the regular season the player must be available to the media within two weeks of incurring the injury.
- If a player is injured but expected to return during the regular season, the player must be available to the media once they have missed one week of game action.
- From that point on, the player is not required to hold a media availability session until they return to team practice (defined as a session in which the majority of the team is in attendance and five-on-five activities are conducted).
- Once the player returns to practice, they are required to be available to the media within two days of their return and then a minimum of once per week until they return to game action. Once they return to game action, normal media access rules apply.

Compliance with the WNBA Media Policy

- All teams, coaches, and players must comply with the league's media availability and access policies detailed above. It is the team's responsibility to ensure players and coaches are fully aware of the league rules and the importance of complying with those rules.
- The league office will make media access compliance a point of emphasis this season. A warning will be issued for a first violation, and subsequent violations may result in fines for the offending player and their team.
- If an individual's first violation of the policy during a season occurs in connection with the team's final game of the season (i.e., end of regular season or playoffs), no warning will be given and instead the individual and team will each be fined immediately.
- If a team refuses to hold a mandated media availability session, the team will be subject to such discipline as the league office determines is reasonable under the circumstances.

If you have any questions about media availability and access policies, please contact Ron Howard (rhoward@nba.com, 201-293-1068), Sam Tager (stager@nba.com, 201-293-1438), or me (dskokos@nba.com, 201-682-9443).

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