



NEWS RELEASE

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Scripps Sports readies to tip off 2026 WNBA season on ION

ION's 50-game regular season slate – the most for any single network – tips off May 8

Zena Keita named new studio host; analysts Autumn Johnson and Meghan McKeown return

ATLANTA – Scripps Sports and ION, the premier home of women's sports, today unveiled their broadcast plans for the 2026 Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) season, marking their fourth year as the league's exclusive Friday night national network partner and the inaugural season under their newly expanded multi-year agreement. The partnership continues ION's first-of-its-kind **State Farm® WNBA Friday Night Spotlight** series, featuring regular-season doubleheaders that have become appointment television for basketball fans nationwide.

Scripps Sports established the industry precedent of dedicating a franchise night exclusively to the WNBA, creating consistent programming that enhances accessibility for devoted fans while elevating the visibility of the league's exceptional athletes on the national stage. ION's extensive reach – available across pay television, connected TV platforms, free ad-supported streaming services and over-the-air broadcasts – delivers WNBA content to 128 million households, making it one of television's most widely distributed networks.

"The WNBA has evolved into a cornerstone of ION's programming, and this partnership will continue to flourish for years to come," said Brian Lawlor, president of Scripps Sports. "As the league experiences unprecedented growth, we take pride in our role as a foundational broadcast partner and our contribution to that trajectory. We anticipate another exceptional season ahead."

Enhanced WNBA on ION studio programming

Scripps Sports continues to set the industry standard with its dedicated WNBA on ION studio programming. The acclaimed WNBA on ION Studio Show returns in 2026 featuring:

- New host **Zena Keita**, an accomplished broadcast professional whose extensive career spans sports business and media, including previous on-air roles with NBC Sports Bay Area and The Athletic. Keita will team up with returning analysts **Autumn Johnson**, the NCAA's premier women's basketball personality, and **Meghan McKeown**, whose expertise spans multiple networks including the Sun, NBC/Peacock, Big Ten Network, ESPN and FOX. **Nicole Denne** continues as executive producer of the WNBA on ION Studio Show, with **Jay Hoover** serving as producer.
- Comprehensive pre-game coverage: 30-minute pre-game shows delivering weekly game highlights, in-depth analysis of upcoming ION matchups and original feature content spotlighting players, coaches and teams across the league.
- Expert halftime analysis: Dynamic halftime programming providing real-time game breakdowns and insights.
- Seamless doubleheader transitions: Professional wrap-up and preview segments bridging the network's signature doubleheader presentations.

WNBA on ION Game Coverage

For the second consecutive year, ION's 50 regular season games slate represents the most extensive single-network commitment to WNBA coverage. The schedule features a weekly national doubleheader, along with additional regional broadcasts, across 17 Friday evenings throughout the regular season. Notable highlights include:

- Season opening tripleheader: The WNBA on ION launches its 2026 coverage on opening night, Friday, May 8, with three marquee matchups including the historic inaugural game for expansion franchise Toronto Tempo as they host the Washington Mystics, the Connecticut Sun facing the New York Liberty and the Golden State Valkyries visiting Seattle to challenge the Storm.
- Team spotlight: Washington leads ION appearances with 10 featured games, followed closely by the Golden State Valkyries with nine. The Chicago Sky, Connecticut Sun, Portland Fire and Toronto Tempo will each make eight appearances throughout the season.
- Homecoming showcase: ION will provide exclusive coverage when rookie first-round selections Lauren Betts and Angela Dugalić – who led UCLA to the 2026 NCAA National Championship – return to Los Angeles for the first time as Washington Mystics players to face the Sparks on Aug. 28.
- Rivals Week culmination: The network will broadcast the highly anticipated conclusion of Rivals Week, featuring a generational showcase as the last four number-one draft picks compete head-to-head: Dallas Wings stars Azzi Fudd ('26) and Paige Bueckers ('25) facing Indiana Fever standouts Caitlin Clark ('24) and Aliyah Boston ('23), followed by the Northwest rivalry between Portland and Seattle (Aug. 14).
- Finals foes: The Minnesota Lynx and New York Liberty – who battled for the 2024 WNBA Championship, won by the Liberty – go head-to-head twice on ION, July 3 and Sept. 18.
- Return engagement: Former Sparks standout Rickea Jackson makes her first appearance back in L.A. since her trade to Chicago when the Sky visit the Sparks on July 10, and Azurá Stevens returns as a member of the Sky after three seasons in L.A. as well.

Complete scheduling information is available [here](#).

To access complete details about the WNBA on ION, and find ION channel information, visit <https://www.ionwnba.com/>.

Follow @IONWNBA on Facebook, Instagram and X for future updates.

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About ION

A leading general entertainment and sports network, ION's lineup features major cable and broadcast shows, original series, live sports and special event programming. ION is part of The E.W. Scripps Company (NASDAQ: SSP), a diversified media company focused on creating connection. As one of the nation's largest local TV broadcasters, Scripps serves communities with quality, objective local journalism and operates a portfolio of about 60 stations in 40 markets.

About Scripps Sports

[Scripps Sports](#) serves professional and college sports leagues, conferences and teams with local market depth and national broadcast reach. Scripps Sports currently has partnerships with the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA), the National Women's Soccer League (NWSL), the Professional Women's Hockey League (PWHL), Major League Volleyball (MLV), Pro Cheer League (PCL), ATHLOS track-and-field, the National Hockey League's (NHL) 2020 and 2021 Stanley Cup champion Tampa Bay Lightning, 2024 and 2025 Stanley Cup champion Florida Panthers, 2023 Stanley Cup champion Vegas Golden Knights, the Utah Mammoth, the Nashville Predators, the Las Vegas Aces of the WNBA, Denver Summit FC of the NWSL and the NCAA's Big Sky Conference. Scripps Sports is owned by The E.W. Scripps Company (NASDAQ: SSP).