

WNBA All-Stars Gaining Popularity, Still Seek National Awareness Among Marketers

Tuesday, July 18, 2017 at 01:30PM

By Barry Janoff



July 17, 2017: The [WNBA](#) began play in 1997 and, over the past 20 years, has produced a plethora of great players, including Lisa Leslie, Tina Thompson, Tamika Catchings, Kappie Pondexter, Swin Cash, Becky Hammon and Sheryl Swoopes; plus a current roster of such players as Maya Moore, Diana Tursi, [Sue Bird](#), Candace Parker, [Skylar Diggins-Smith](#), Elena Delle Donne, Breanna Stewart and Tina Charles.

The challenge for the WNBA has been in nationally marketing its stars, whose resumes are stellar but whose faces are not nearly as well known as their counterparts in the [NBA](#).

With the [Verizon WNBA All-Star Game](#) scheduled for July 22 (3:30 PM ET ABC in Seattle), the league would like to see its players get more national acclaim. (See TV spot [here](#).)

"Although awareness among most WNBA players is low, they present a unique combination of strength and beauty scoring high for marketable attributes," according to a [new study](#) from research and consulting firm [E-Poll](#), Encino, Cal. Those attributes: "Dynamic, Confident, Physically Fit and Talented (Strength); as well as Attractive, Beautiful and Glamorous (Beauty)."

Rank	Name	Awareness	Good Energy	Talented	Appeal
1	Breanna Stewart	4	36	35	79
2	Maya Moore	3	35	51	73
3	Elena Delle Donne	4	25	32	71
4	Swin Cash	4	19	33	69
5	Nneka Ogumike	3	52	41	68
6	Diana Taurasi	7	33	45	67
7	Skylar Diggins-Smith	6	29	34	67
8	Sue Bird	5	25	35	65
9	Tamika Catchings	5	21	34	63
10	Candace Parker	6	34	47	61
11	Kelsey Plum	3	22	35	53
12	Brittney Griner	7	13	49	31

Source: E-Score Celebrity. Fielded after 1/1/2016 among respondents ages 18+.

According to E-Poll, the Top 5 WNBA players based on the aforementioned attributes are Breanna Stewart (Seattle Storm), Maya Moore (Minnesota Lynx), [Elena Delle Donne](#) (Washington Mystics), Swin

Cash (New York Liberty, retired) and Nneka Ogwumike (Los Angeles Sparks).

At No. 7, represented by Jay-Z and Roc Nation Sports, Dallas Wings star Skylar Diggins-Smith is, according to E-Poll, an "advertiser's dream in addition to her game." [E-Poll's survey](#) said she is at the top or near the top for many attributes.

Also, per E-Poll. "Expected to have a breakout rookie season for the San Antonio Stars, we are tracking where media darling [Kelsey Plum](#)'s 53% Appeal will be by the season's end."

E-Poll, which tracks the careers of thousands of celebrities, politicians and athletes, said that the current roster of WNBA players might be the most marketing ever. And not solely for reasons of profit.

"The league is empowering its primary target audience, as many women describe the league as 'inspirational,' 'powerful' and 'Incredible,'" according to E-Poll. "Men love the WNBA as well calling the league 'athletic, high action, [and] fast'."

A campaign to support the 2017 WNBA season supports that latter observation, with one spot, "Tribute," featuring such NBA stars as Stephen Curry, Kyrie Irving, Isaiah Thomas, Anthony Davis, Klay Thompson, Kevin Durant, Kyle Lowry, Jimmy Butler, DeAndre Jordan, DeMar DeRozan Karl-Anthony Towns and Paul George not only proclaiming their respect for the WNBA but also calling out WNBA stars by name.

In addition to marquee partner Verizon, WNBA marketing partners include adidas, American Express, BBVA, Anheuser-Busch (Bud Light), Cisco, ExxonMobil, Gatorade, Jack Daniel's, JBL, Kaiser Permanente, Kia, Nike, PepsiCo, SAP, Shock Doctor, Spalding, State Farm, Tissot and Under Armour.

E-Poll WNBA Appeal Rankings

1. Breanna Stewart Seattle Storm
2. Maya Moore Minnesota Lynx
3. Elena Delle Donne Washington Mystics
4. Swin Cash New York Liberty (retired)
5. Nneka Ogwumike Los Angeles Sparks
6. Diana Turasi Phoenix Mercury
7. Skylar Diggins-Smith Dallas Wings
8. Sue Bird Seattle Storm
9. Tamika Catchings Indian Fever (retired)
10. Candace Parker Los Angeles Sparks
11. Kelsey Plum San Antonio Stars

*For More information about the **E-Score** research used to produce this report, [click here](#)*