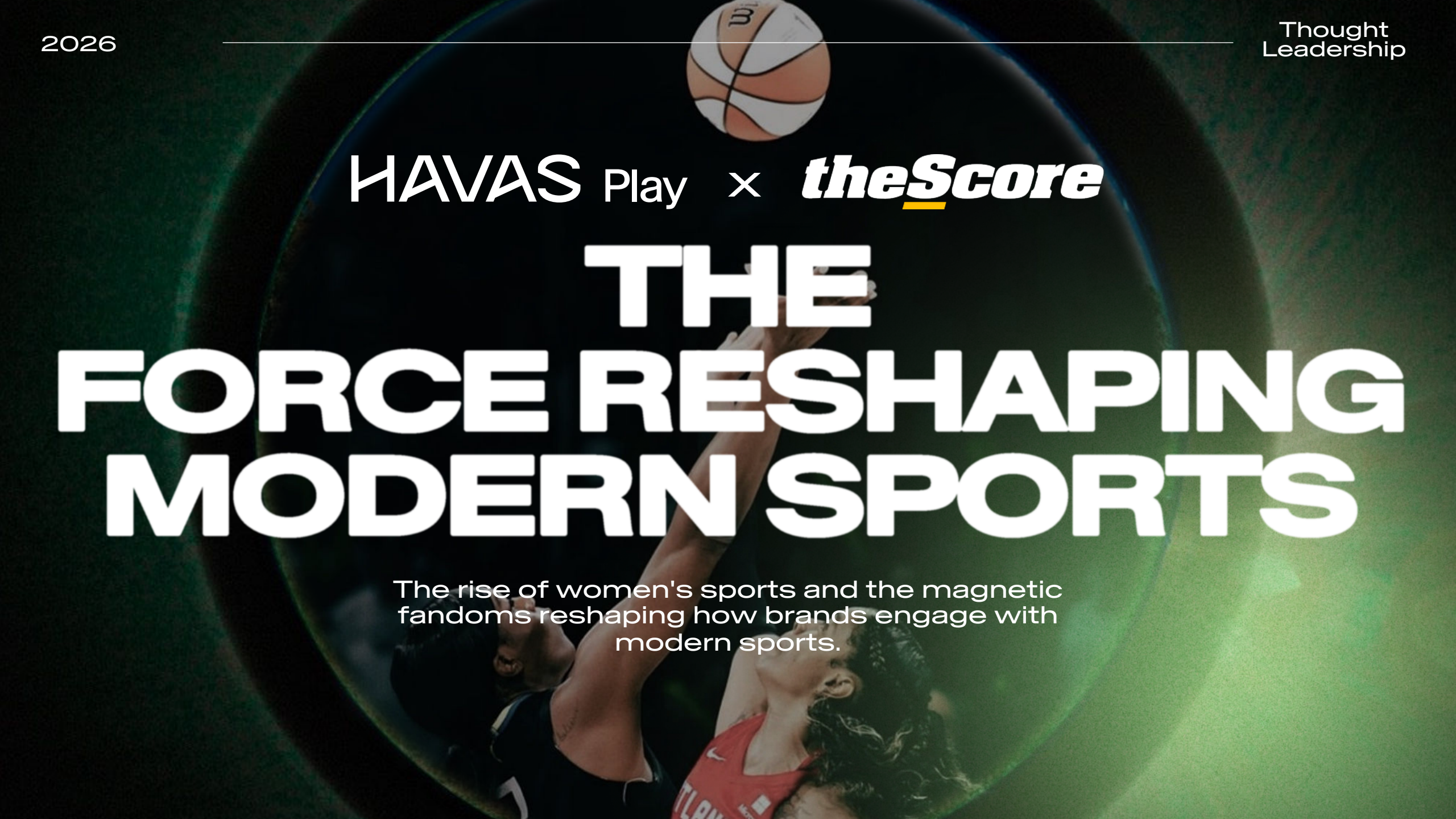




HAVAS Play × ***theScore***

THE FORCE RESHAPING MODERN SPORTS

The rise of women's sports and the magnetic
fandoms reshaping how brands engage with
modern sports.

IT'S JUST SPORTS NOW

Over the last five years, women's sports have become one of the most important forces shaping modern sports culture – and culture more broadly. Record attendance and rising viewership prove as valuable proof points of its impact and staying power. But what's most impressive is the orchestration of athletes and teams that have built communities extending far beyond the field of play and creating a level of fan connection that has forever altered expectations from the sports they follow and the brands who choose to tap in.

For decades, sports partnerships were built around eyeballs. Women's sports have opened the aperture. These are fans whose first point of reference isn't a major sports network but the athlete covering practice from their live stream. There's now an entire ecosystem to which brands can contribute rather than simply appearing alongside it as wallpaper. But genuine understanding and respect for the culture now matters more than ever. You can't just buy your way in anymore. And even when you can, it might not be worth the cost..

WHAT YOU'LL FIND INSIDE

- ✦ **HOW IT WAS BUILT**
- ✦ **WHAT MAKES IT DIFFERENT**
- ✦ **WHY IT MATTERS FOR BRANDS**
- ✦ **HOW WE CAN HELP YOU BREAK IN**

BRICK BY BRICK, FAN BY FAN

The rise of women's sports is a long-overdue market correction. It's also proof that sports properties become more valuable when they operate as thoughtfully and intentionally accessible to fans rather than media inventory.

Greater visibility, stronger player platforms, deeper fan investment, and crossovers with fashion, music, and entertainment have turned women's sports into one of the most powerful growth engines in modern fandom.

The WNBA is one of the clearest examples. The league's momentum has been accelerated not only by elite talent, but by a fandom built around player identity, community, and cultural relevance beyond the game itself.

HAVAS Play

theScore

Sources: Nielsen, Forbes/Sportico, L.E.K, theScore

WNBA SUCCESS SNAPSHOT

LONG OVERDUE VISIBILITY

+170%

Increase in WNBA viewership since 2023

CONTENT BUILT FOR MODERN CONSUMPTION

WNBA led all global women's league accounts in 2025 with pregame tunnel videos up 28% on IG/TikTok

1Billion

Video Views on Instagram

PLAYER PLATFORMS

Angel Reese: 5.2M followers
Caitlin Clark: 3.6M followers
Paige Bueckers: 3.0M followers

+413%

increase in WNBA social media engagement

DEEPER FAN COMMUNITY

- Highest YoY growth of any league, ahead of F1 (41%) and EPL (35%)
- 60% of current fans only started following in the last 5 years

+65%

YoY growth in avid WNBA fandom

CROSSOVERS WITH FASHION, MUSIC & ENTERTAINMENT

- Coach, Skims, P&G, Prada, & Dior all entered WNBA partnerships
- WNBA sponsorship revenue surpassed ~\$100M in 2025 (up from \$40M in 2018)

+150%

WOMEN'S SPORTS HAS CREATED ONE OF THE MOST PARTICIPATORY FAN CULTURES IN SPORTS

ACTIVE DISCOVERY OVER PASSIVE CONSUMPTION

Finding games has historically taken deliberate effort, making knowledge feel earned and insider

FAN-BUILT INFRASTRUCTURE

When institutions offered nothing, fans created their own merch, watch parties, and coverage—and leagues & players supported it

THE STARS FELT HUMAN

Many athletes have dealt with human realities (motherhood, pay inequity, etc.) they spoke about it honestly and openly

UNDENIABLE ATHLETIC EXCELLENCE

Elite talent, entertaining games, and compelling rivalries are finally getting well-deserved airtime

OWNING GROWTH

Every jersey or ticket purchased represents tangible impact in growth

IT'S ALWAYS BEEN PERSONAL

Fans see their own hopes for women's recognition reflected in the sport's success

AND THESE
FANS REWARD
BRANDS THAT
RESPECT THE
CULTURE THEY
HELPED BUILD

WOMEN'S SPORTS
FANS ARE:

32%

More likely to purchase
from brands that support
women's sports

3x

More likely to act on
athlete recommendations
vs. other influencers

THE PLAYGROUND

Havas Play's
Approach to
Turning Deep Fan
Knowledge into
Smarter Sports
Experiences
for Brands



WE HAVE TO TALK ABOUT 2026 WNBA ALL-STAR WEEKEND



19,783
FANS

- Broke the WNBA All-Star attendance record
- For the first time ever, surpassed the NBA's own All-Star Game attendance in the same year



73M+
**UNIQUE VIEWERS FOR
ALL WNBA**

- The WNBA surpassed all of last season's viewership by this season's halfway point
- Commissioner Cathy Engelbert declared it "the most-watched WNBA season of all time" at the halfway mark



500%
**INCREASE IN ALL-STAR
WEEKEND BRAND
ACTIVATIONS**

- Skechers, Coach, adidas, Google Pixel, DICK'S, Ally, Panini were all among the brands featured
- 6 new brands and 13 new categories made WNBA debuts in 2026



+164%

Increase in match-up page views on theScore from 2025 to 2026 WNBA All-Star Game

+64%

increase in article views during that same period

OUR TAKEAWAY

WNBA All-Star Weekend was irrefutable proof of what women's sports has become. And what's still ahead for brands willing to show up.

THE PLAYGROUND ALLOWED OUR BRANDS TO EMBED INTO THE CULTURE OF 2026 WNBA ALL-STAR WEEKEND

SECURING OFFICIAL LEAGUE SPONSORSHIP



At WNBA Live, we helped one of our clients transform its official WNBA sponsorship presence into a fan destination. By using interactive experiences, exclusive giveaways, and league-focused programming we deepened affinity and strengthened brand connection with the WNBA community.



EXCLUSIVE ACCESS THROUGH PARTNERS



When exclusive league rights limited official activation, we helped our client reach fans another way. By partnering with theScore on on-the-ground coverage, the brand delivered real-time storytelling and subsequently added real fan value.



BUILDING "UN-OFFICIAL" LIVE FAN EXPERIENCES



Without official rights, our client still made a meaningful impact during 2026 WNBA All-Star Weekend. By partnering on a free fan event outside the league's official programming, the brand created a new way for fans to engage and boosted the brand's connection to and relevance within WNBA culture.



At Havas Play, we operate at the intersection of gaming, culture, and sports, seeing moments like the WNBA All-Star Weekend not just as a moment, but as a broader cultural ecosystem where fans watch, play, purchase, and participate.

Rather than forcing engagement with interruptions, we build on existing fan behaviors in the spaces they already inhabit to create authentic, desirable brand participation that enhance fan experiences.

WANT TO PLAY WITH US? REACH OUT

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