



Future sustainability and pay chasm

Media Questions & Answers

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Background

The Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) was founded in 1996 as an extension of the NBA to provide a professional platform for female athletes. The league quickly gained attention with the "We Got Next" campaign, attracting support from NBA fans. As of 2024, the WNBA has made significant strides, with the draft viewership reaching 3.09 million globally, its highest in 28 years. The league comprises 12 teams, each with a maximum of 12 players, playing from May to September. In 2023, the WNBA generated \$60 million in revenue, while its highest-paid player earned over \$252,000.

Despite this progress, the WNBA faces challenges in maintaining social capital and economic stability amid growing viewership and interest. Research suggests that leveraging social, economic, and cultural capital in a three-part approach and partnering with the NBA can help sustain the league's success. Additionally, the league's summer schedule presents unique opportunities for community engagement and generational support through family-oriented activations and lower ticket prices.

Q&A

Q: The WNBA has seen a rise in popularity, but revenue figures still lag significantly behind the NBA. What steps is the league taking to close this gap?

A: The WNBA is focusing on expanding its market reach through strategic partnerships, increased media coverage, and enhanced fan engagement. By collaborating with major brands and leveraging digital platforms, the league aims to boost its revenue streams. Additionally, initiatives like the Commissioner's Cup and international exposure through events like the Olympics help in drawing a larger audience.

Q: Despite the increasing viewership, the average salary for WNBA players remains significantly lower than their NBA counterparts. How does the league plan to address this disparity?

A: Addressing salary disparities involves generating higher revenue and better sponsorship deals. The league is actively working on securing more lucrative sponsorships and



broadcasting deals. Efforts to increase game attendance and merchandise sales are also critical. Improving financial health will allow for higher player salaries over time.

Q: The WNBA's financial success is often tied to its relationship with the NBA. Can the WNBA sustain itself independently, or will it always rely on the NBA's support?

A: While the NBA's support has been crucial, the WNBA is working towards financial independence by building its own brand and fan base. Initiatives such as partnering with global brands and creating unique events help in establishing the WNBA as a self-sustaining entity. However, collaboration with the NBA will likely remain beneficial for both leagues.

Q: Economic stability is a major concern for the WNBA. What measures are in place to ensure the league can weather financial downturns or unexpected challenges?

A: The WNBA has implemented strategic financial planning, including diversifying revenue streams and building a robust sponsorship portfolio. The league also maintains contingency plans and works closely with financial experts to navigate economic uncertainties. Building a strong reserve fund and continuously seeking new investment opportunities are part of these measures.

Q: The WNBA's viewership is growing, but attendance at games can still be inconsistent. How is the league addressing this challenge?

A: The WNBA is enhancing the in-arena experience to attract more fans to games. This includes improving entertainment during breaks, offering promotions, and creating family-friendly environments. The league is also exploring dynamic ticket pricing and better marketing strategies to boost attendance. Engaging local communities and fostering a sense of loyalty among fans are key components of this strategy.