

Players Era Announces 2026 Players Era Women's Basketball Showcase in Las Vegas

Six Powerhouse Programs Headlined by South Carolina, Notre Dame, USC, Texas, UCLA and Duke to Compete December 19-20 at Michelob ULTRA Arena inside Mandalay Bay

All Six Games to Air Live Across ESPN and ESPN2

Groundbreaking Event Featuring Seven-Figure NIL Pool, the Largest in Women's College Sports History

All-Event Passes Go On Sale Thursday, Sept. 3 at 10 a.m. PT at [AXS.com](https://www.axs.com)

NEW YORK / LAS VEGAS (August 31, 2026) –Players Era, the premier college sports event operator, today announced the tournament matchups and ticket information for the 2026 Players Era Women's Basketball Showcase. The two-day marquee event will take place Saturday, Dec. 19 and Sunday, Dec. 20, 2026, at Michelob ULTRA Arena at Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino in Las Vegas. All six tournament games will air live on ESPN and ESPN2.

Tickets for the 2026 Players Era Women's Basketball Showcase, starting at \$109, will be available as All-Tournament Passes, granting fans access to all six games across both sessions at Michelob ULTRA Arena. School, AXS and MGM Rewards pre-sales will run throughout the week ahead of the general on sale starting **Thursday, Sept. 3 at 10 a.m. PT** at [AXS.com](https://www.axs.com).

The showcase features six of the top programs in women's college basketball, all ranked within the top 16 of ESPN.com's Women's Way-Too-Early Top 25: No. 1 South Carolina, No. 3 Duke, No. 5 USC, No. 8 Texas, No. 13 UCLA, and No. 16 Notre Dame. Bringing six likely Sweet 16+ contenders together under one roof in a single weekend, the showcase creates an early season competitive atmosphere rivaling post-season play. Anchoring the marquee schedule are instant-classic rivalries and high-stakes rematches, including a National Title rematch between South Carolina and UCLA, a Final Four rematch between Texas and UCLA, and a blockbuster clash between Notre Dame and USC featuring the two best players in the country, Hannah Hidalgo and JuJu Watkins.

"We're happy to be back in the Players Era Women's Championship for another year," said **UCLA Women's Head Basketball Coach Cori Close**. "We're excited for rematches with South Carolina and Texas, and the opportunity to play some elite competition at this exceptional event. It will be the premier non-conference tournament and have a lot of eyeballs with some great programs going head-to-head. We're honored to be back!"

University of South Carolina Women's Head Basketball Coach Dawn Staley said, "We are excited to be back for the second year of the Players Era Women's Championship with an expanded field. From elite matchups on the court, to great accommodations and opportunities for our team and our fans off it, it will be great to get back to Las Vegas and a full weekend highlighting women's basketball."

In addition to elite on-court action, the event marks a landmark investment in the future of women's sports by offering a seven-figure NIL financial pool for the single event, one of the largest in women's college sports history.

The weekend will spotlight some of the game's brightest stars, including Hannah Hidalgo (Notre Dame), JuJu Watkins (University of Southern California), Madison Booker (Texas), Joyce Edwards (South Carolina) and Toby Fournier (Duke). Highlighting the star-studded rosters, USC enters the event boasting three former No. 1 overall recruits – led by consensus National Player of the Year JuJu Watkins alongside decorated superstars Jazzy Davidson and Saniyah Hall.

Seth Berger, CEO of Players Era, said, "In 2026, Players Era is guaranteeing women's college volleyball and basketball players mid-seven figures for available NIL activities – what we believe to be the greatest purse offered by any operator in the space. We also are bringing the best of the best – in volleyball and basketball – to Las Vegas and MGM Resorts venues."

ESPN's Senior Director of Programming and Acquisitions Dan Marguliss said, "Women's college basketball is thriving, and ESPN is committed to helping grow the sport by showcasing its biggest stars and best matchups. With six elite programs competing on a national stage, this event reflects the depth of talent and competition that continues to drive the game forward."

Dan Bernbach, MGM Resorts' Senior Vice President of Entertainment & Sports Events said, "The Players Era Women's Basketball Showcase will, once again, further strengthen our position as the leader in live event programming. This is another opportunity for MGM Resorts to host a prestigious college basketball weekend with our partners at Players Era while highlighting Las Vegas as the Sports Capital of the World."

2026 Players Era Women's Basketball Showcase Schedule

Times subject to change

Session 1 – Saturday, December 19, 2026

- **6 p.m. ET (ESPN2):** No. 3 Duke vs. No. 8 Texas
- **8:30 p.m. ET (ESPN):** No. 13 UCLA vs. No. 1 South Carolina
- **11 p.m. ET (ESPN):** No. 16 Notre Dame vs. No. 5 USC

Session 2 – Sunday, December 20, 2026

- **5 p.m. ET (ESPN):** No. 8 Texas vs. No. 13 UCLA
- **7:30 p.m. ET (ESPN):** No. 16 Notre Dame vs. No. 1 South Carolina
- **10 p.m. ET (ESPN):** No. 5 USC vs. No. 3 Duke

About Players Era

Players Era, the premier college sports event operator and an EverWonder Studio company, is built to reimagine collegiate athletics through innovative NIL opportunities, elite competition, and world-class fan experiences.. Today, Players Era operates several marquee destination events, anchored by the Players Era Men's and Women's Basketball Championships in Las Vegas –featuring 24 of the nation's top men's programs (including four of the five last men's NCAA champions) alongside a star-studded women's showcase featuring multiple Sweet 16 contenders and two of the last three national champions. The company also operates the inaugural Players Era Volleyball Showcase in Las Vegas and the Eternal City Tip-Off, a season-opening international men's and women's basketball doubleheader in Rome. Through partnerships with leading universities, broadcasters, and global brands, Players Era continues to elevate the student-athlete experience while bringing the best of college sports to fans around the world.

For more information, visit www.playersera.com.

About Michelob ULTRA Arena

Michelob ULTRA Arena is a multi-purpose arena home to World Championship Boxing, premier concerts and special events. With seating for as many as 12,000, the venue, which was recently renovated in 2018, offers excellent sightlines and state-of-the-art lighting and sound. The entertainment venue is home to WNBA team, the Las Vegas Aces, the city's first professional basketball team. Prominent events have included concerts such as Justin Timberlake, KISS, Taylor Swift, Kenny Chesney, Alicia Keys, Rihanna, Christina Aguilera, Katy Perry, John Mayer, Metallica, Ozzy Osbourne, Alejandro Fernandez and David Foster & Friends. World championship boxing events have featured fighters including Oscar De La Hoya, Manny Pacquiao, Floyd Mayweather, Shane Mosley and Bernard Hopkins. The Michelob ULTRA Arena also has been home to multiple Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) events, the annual Barrett-Jackson Las Vegas Auction and the Latin Billboard Music Awards.

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