COLETTE'S COMMENTARY:
UNRIVALED LOOKS TO BUILD ON ITS SUCCESS IN YEAR THREE

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When Unrivaled launched in 2025, it introduced a new model for professional women's basketball, giving WNBA players an opportunity to compete domestically during the offseason while creating a product of its own. What initially appeared to be an ambitious alternative to the traditional professional basketball calendar has quickly developed into a growing league with established stars, increasing investment and a national following. Now, entering its third season, Unrivaled faces a different challenge. Its success will no longer be measured solely by excitement surrounding its launch, but by its ability to establish long-term sustainability, attract new audiences and prove that women's basketball can thrive beyond the WNBA season.

WNBA stars Napheesa Collier and Breanna Stewart founded the 3-on-3 league to provide players with a high-paying domestic option during the WNBA offseason. The league also introduced the opportunity for players to earn equity stakes, allowing athletes to share in its long-term financial success. Unrivaled generated more than $27 million in revenue in its inaugural season, with the figure increasing to approximately $46 million in its second year. The league's rapid growth was also reflected in its expansion from six to eight teams, alongside the introduction of a development pool that allowed additional players to train using league resources and serve as replacements in the event of injuries.

During its inaugural season, Unrivaled exclusively played in Miami. In its second year, the league maintained Miami as its home base while expanding its schedule to include games at Philadelphia's Xfinity Mobile Arena and New York's Barclays Center. For its third season, Unrivaled is taking another major step forward, bringing games to eight cities: Boston, Los Angeles, Detroit, San Francisco, New York, Minneapolis, Houston and Philadelphia. This expansion will give the league an opportunity to reach new audiences while bringing women's basketball to some of the country's most established basketball venues, including TD Garden, Xfinity Mobile Arena and Chase Center. By expanding its geographic footprint, Unrivaled is not only increasing its visibility but also creating opportunities to grow its fan base and build a stronger national presence for women's basketball.



A graphic promotes Unrivaled, a professional women's 3-on-3 basketball league. The league enters its third season in 2027.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @UNRIVALEDBASKETBALL ON INSTAGRAM

Unrivaled's growth this season extends beyond the court's geographic boundaries, with new faces joining the league while familiar stars prepare to return. Most notably, 2026 WNBA Finals MVP Gabby Williams is joining the Unrivaled roster on a multi-year contract. Williams will suit up for Laces BC, alongside Marine Johannes, Jessica Shepard, Jackie Young, Maddy Siegrist and Satou Sabally. Shepard is also making her Unrivaled debut following a standout WNBA season in which she earned 2026 Most Improved Player honors.

UConn alumna Kaitlyn Chen is also set to make her league debut following a mutual contract termination involving Kate Martin. Chen will reunite with former UConn teammate Paige Bueckers. Additionally, WNBA rookies, Olivia Miles and Flau'jae Johnson, who both previously signed name, image and likeness (NIL) deals with Unrivaled, will make their debut with the Hive and Vinyl, respectively.

For Unrivaled to contribute to the continued growth of women's basketball, the league should be viewed as a complement to the WNBA rather than a competitor. By providing players with another opportunity to compete professionally and earn income during the WNBA offseason, Unrivaled helps create a more consistent presence for women's basketball throughout the year. This gives fans more opportunities to follow their favorite athletes while allowing players to continue developing their careers domestically. However, for the league to have a lasting impact, it must establish an identity of its own rather than relying solely on the popularity of WNBA stars. Its third season will be an important test of whether it can turn its initial excitement into long-term sustainability. Ultimately, growing women's basketball should not be about one league competing against another, but about creating more opportunities for athletes and expanding the sport's audience.

With its third season set to tip off on Friday, Jan. 8, 2027, and run through March, Unrivaled is entering another important chapter in its development. As the league continues to expand its reach and attract some of the sport's biggest names, the upcoming season will offer a clearer picture of what its future can look like. As women's basketball continues to gain momentum, Unrivaled has the opportunity to become an important part of that growth.



Former UConn guard and Golden State Valkyries player Kaitlyn Chen plays against South Dakota State on Mar. 24, 2025. Chen will join Unrivaled's Breeze for the 2027 season.

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