

Addenda #19 – August 2026, Part 1

Re: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Identity Politics

The Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) is the premier women's professional basketball league in North America. Founded in 1997 as the counterpoint of the men's National Basketball Association (NBA), with eight teams and replacing the defunct Women's Professional Basketball League (WBL) which lasted just three seasons, the WNBA now has fifteen teams in the U.S. and Canada, with plans to add three more teams by 2030. Playing a 44 game season during the spring and summer, the WNBA employs 180 of the best female basketball players drafted from NCAA women's college basketball teams. Seven head coaches are women who played basketball in college, with four going on to play professionally in the WNBA or internationally after graduation.

In its inaugural year, the WNBA drew nearly 9,700 fans per game and only increased in popularity, peaking at 9,344 fans per game in 2002 and total attendance of 2.39 million fans, as the league benefitted from recognizable stars and media coverage. After this point, attendance began to decline due to a variety of factors, falling to just 7,318 fans per game in 2015, a pre-COVID attendance low. During this period, the WNBA lost more than \$10 million per year and was heavily subsidized by the NBA to remain in operation. WNBA attendance began to reverse in 2023 as nearly 1.6 million fans attended WNBA games, an average of 6,615 per game. Then came 2024...

The 2024 NCAA Women's Basketball Championship game drew a record 18.9 million viewers, making it the most-watched basketball game at any level since 2019, according to the Nielson rating service. Television viewership of that game was up more than 90% compared with the 2023 NCAA women's championship game, and over 288% compared with the 2022 game. In comparison, the NCAA Men's National Championship game, played one day earlier, drew 4 million *fewer* viewers than the women's championship game.

The 2024 women's championship game between the SEC champion South Carolina and Big 10 champions Iowa State, featured several future WNBA players including South Carolinas Kamilla Cardoso (championship game MVP) and Iowa State star Caitlin Clark, who scored an NCAA record 18 points in the first quarter. In the end, South Carolina went on to win the 2023-2024 Championship Game 87-75. Clark, who was two time NCAA Women's player of the year, is regarded as one of the best female college basketball players of all time. Clark set Division I women's career and single-season records in points and three point baskets made, broke the conference record in assists, and led the nation in points and assists. She is a member of the USA National Basketball team, winning three gold medals in youth international competition and was named most valuable player in 2021 in the Under-19 Women's Cup tournament. Clark not only set the all-time women's record for points scored, she also broke the all-time men's scoring record of 3,667 points, held by LSU's "Pistol Pete" Maravich, a five time NBA All-Star, four time "All-NBA player" and an NBA Hall of Fame inductee. As I said before, then came 2024...

Eight days after the NCAA Women's Championship game, Caitlin Clark was selected as the number one draft pick by the Indiana Fever in the 2024 WNBA draft. Clark reported to the Fever training camp just days after being drafted and the 2024 regular season began two weeks later with Clark starting at the point guard spot and directing the team. Five months later, Clark was voted WNBA Rookie of the Year and All-WNBA First Team.

The 2023 Indiana Fever won a third of their games, finishing with a record of 13-27, placing 6th in the WNBA Eastern Conference. The team scored an average of 81.0 points per game (7th of 12 teams) while giving up 85.1 points per game (last in the league). An average of 4,067 fans attended Fever games during the season.

The 2024 Indiana Fever won half their games, finishing with a record of 20-20, placing 6th in the Eastern Conference again. The team averaged 85.0 points per game (3rd in the league) while giving up 87.7 points per game (11th of 12). The addition of Clark to the roster resulted in an average attendance of 17,036 fans per game and set a new single season record with 340,715 fans for total home attendance for a WNBA team.

In 2024, the WNBA had estimated net losses of \$50 million as operating and travel costs surged, and teams began to invest more money into their organizations and on players like Clark, Cardoso, Rickea Jackson, Jacy Sheldon, Aaliyah Edwards and Angel Reese. The WNBA had its highest attendance in over two decades in the 2024 season and set records for digital consumption and merchandise sales. An all-time record of more than 54 million viewers watched WNBA games on television stations in 2024, with 22 regular season games drawing at least 1 million viewers. The most watched WNBA games *ever* on ABC, CBS Sports and ESPN, featured Caitlin Clark's Indiana Fever team.

In 2025, the WNBA reached profitability for the first time, due to record attendance, merchandising sales and licensing agreements. For the first time in the history of the league, players received revenue-sharing payout of \$8 million. Record television and media contracts look to place WNBA finances in great shape for 2026 and beyond. While the WNBA already had a number of high profile players and stars like Breanna Stewart, Alyssa Thomas and A'ja Wilson, new high-profile players like Caitlin Clark, Kamilla Cardoso and Angel Reese, helped propel the league to new levels of interest and attendance. All WNBA teams and players benefitted as a result. You would think that the league and its players would be grateful for the attention and the salary increases that came from the addition of Caitlin Clark to the league, but this was not the case.

High profile rookies in any sport are subject to a certain amount of hazing and harassment from veteran players. The higher the profile player, the more abuse they undergo, as veteran players exhibit jealousy over the attention the rookies get and fear for their own futures. On the playing field or court, high profile rookie players are often subject to higher levels of bullying and physical play, in an attempt to intimidate the new players in a baptism by fire into the league. "Every time you play rookies, you just want to [expletive] kill them," said Phoenix Mercury guard Diana Taurasi in 2020, and several WNBA players always looked like they were ready to do the same to Caitlin Clark each time she stepped onto the court.

One thing I noticed while watching the 2024 NCAA Women's Basketball tournament, is that Caitlin Clark often complained to referees about the play of her opponents and fouls she believed should have been called. It got so bad during the tournament opening-round game between Iowa and Holy Cross, that her father Brent Clark, was caught by ESPN cameras yelling at his daughter to shut up and play ball! My point is that Clark came into the WNBA with a reputation for complaining to and about referees, which typically earns that type of player more grief from their opponents and non-calls from the refs. Regardless of her reputation, Clark has earned more than her share of fouls from opposing players, including several high profile flagrant fouls.

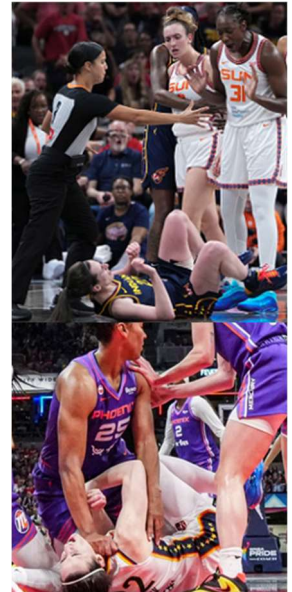
During her first game in May 2024, Clark was “welcomed” to the WNBA by 6’4”, 170 pound New York Liberty star Breanna Stewart, who sent Clark crashing to the floor, as she ran full speed into a ‘screen’ Stewart set on a play.

In June 2024, Chicago Sky guard Chennedy Carter hit Clark with a hard shoulder/hip check *away* from the play, knocking Clark to the floor. Carter was initially charged with a common foul, which was upgraded to a Flagrant-1 violation after a league review the following day.



In June 2024, Chicago Sky forward and NCAA tournament nemesis Angel Reese wacked Clark in the head with her forearm as she drove to the basket, sending Clark to the floor. Initially called a common foul, Reese was assessed a Flagrant-1 foul on review by officials.

In June 2025, Connecticut Sun guard Jacy Sheldon hit Clark in the face while attempting to steal the ball from her, poking her in the eye. Clark took exception to the foul and shoved Sheldon before walking away from her. Sun guard Marina Mabrey then rushed up to Clark and body checked her to the ground. Clark and Mabrey each received technical fouls and Sheldon was hit with a “Flagrant-1” technical foul.



In June 2026, during a game between the Fever and Phoenix Mercury, Clark and Mercury forward Alyssa Thomas were fighting for control of a loose ball after an attempted layup by Clark. As Clark lay on the court attempting to grab the basketball, Thomas pushed herself up off of Clark, pushing her fist into Clark's neck, then got up and stepped over Clark. Referees did not see the foul due to the angle of the play, but Thomas was assessed a Flagrant-2 foul and a one game suspension for “recklessly making contact with her fist to the throat area” when the league reviewed the play *after* the game was over.

In July 2026, Clark was hit in the face by New York Liberty center Breanna Stewart as she attempted a layup. Stewart, who is 4 inches and 13 pounds bigger than Clark, was never called for a foul even though a referee was standing six feet away from the play.



Indiana Fever teammate Sophie Cunningham put Sheldon on notice for her foul on Clark during that 2025 Phoenix game, when she wrapped her arms around Sheldon as she drove to the basket for a layup taking her to the ground. For that act, Cunningham was given a Flagrant 1 foul and ejected from the game, but her point was made. Cunningham recently ripped WNBA officials for both inconsistent play calling and allowing “cheap shots” on her teammate, claiming that not only is Clark taking hard fouls from other WNBA players, she’s being *singled out* for abuse.

“They are definitely targeting [Clark], and the league and the refs do nothing to protect her,” Cunningham said on the latest episode of her *Show Me Something* podcast. “Unfortunately, this type of shit happens every single game to [Clark], and the league and the refs do absolutely nothing about it,” Cunningham said. This statement came just one day after Fever coach Stephanie White ripped officials for cheap shots on Clark, following the Alyssa Thomas fist to the throat foul.

As I previously noted, rookies are always subject to harassment and intimidation by veteran players, but this behavior usually calms down after a couple seasons. In Clark’s case, it has continued into her third season in the league. Former NBA All-Star Shaquille O’Neal has compared the treatment Clark has received to treatment other professional athletes have received in the past, saying he went through the same kind of treatment during his own playing career as well as Michael Jordan, Kobe Bryant, LeBron James, and Magic Johnson. “Once Clark gets through this stage, she will fully own her place in the league,” O’Neal said. While O’Neal said Clark has to “toughen up” and deal with the abuse, he also called out WNBA referees saying the play calling need to get better and the “league’s just gotta do better protecting players.” O’Neal also called out other WNBA players that are targeting Clark out of “professional jealousy” because of the media coverage she receives. Observation: Standing 7’1” and weighing over 300 pounds, Shaquille O’Neal was the biggest, most dominant player in the NBA during his career. I find it unlikely that ‘Shaq’ was the victim of as much aggressive fouling then, like Clark is today.

But I believe there’s another reason Clark is targeted so much by WNBA players; she’s a white, heterosexual, female. In his article titled, “Here is the real reason why they hate Caitlin Clark so much,” *Outkick* journalist Bobby Burack wrote, “...why do so many WNBA players, particularly Black players, display such obvious — and at times physical — hostility toward Clark? Is it simply because she is a straight White woman in a league that is roughly 70% Black or LGBTQ+? In part, yes. But her identity alone isn’t the issue. There’s more to it.” Burack says it’s because Clark “refuses to play the role” expected of her. She is a straight White woman who has declined to turn herself into a vehicle for the racial and sexual activism that increasingly defines the league’s public image. In other words, Caitlin Clark refuses to be defined by the identity politics of the left. Clark does not continually apologize for her “white privilege” and she’s never called for more equity in coaching selection of the league.

Approximately 64% of WNBA players are black, so according to the rules of equity/identity politics, the WNBA should have at least 10 black coaches, preferably women. “The WNBA was built on a lot of *Black* women. It's definitely right for them to get the same equal opportunity as everybody else,” said Dallas Wings star Paige Bueckers to Yahoo sports. Bueckers, the number one pick in the 2025 WNBA draft, is a white female, dating her former University of Connecticut teammate, Azzi Fudd, who is bi-racial. Bueckers, who “plays the role” expected of her, checks all the boxes for diversity, equity and inclusion. Cameron Brink, the number two pick behind Clark in the 2024 WNBA, is a gorgeous white, blonde, heterosexual female, engaged to a man. Brink has “played the game” from the very beginning of her WNBA career. “... I will acknowledge there's a privilege for the younger White players of the league,” Brink said in a June 2024 interview with the popular culture website *Uproxx*. “That's not always true, but there is a privilege that we have inherently, and the privilege of appearing feminine. Some of my teammates are more masculine. Some of my teammates go by they/them pronouns. I want to bring more acceptance to that and not just have people support us because of the way that we look.” Brink also “plays the role” expected of her in the WNBA and checks all the boxes for DEI. Caitlin Clark doesn't play that role and neither Bueckers nor Brink receive the same level of resentment and bias given to Clark by media or other players.

Note: A 2022 study titled, *The WNBA and Athletic Performance Based on Sexual Orientation*, puts the percentage of lesbian athletes in the WNBA at around 38 percent of the leagues 180 players.

Clark has problems with referees as well as WNBA players. Angel Reese, known for her aggressive play, leads the WNBA in fouls committed for the season with 148 as of August 31, 2026. Clark is tied for #6 with 115 fouls. Yet Reese and Clark are tied for the league lead in technical fouls committed with seven each. Clark has received some ridiculous technicals this season, including clapping her hands over a play called by a referee, and “poking” a ball out of bounds with her foot, then attempting to kick the ball up into her hands and handing it back to a referee after she retrieved it. (Ironically, Bueckers also drew a technical foul for clapping in approval of a referees call last season, then the WNBA overturned it!) Clark received her eighth technical foul of the season during a game with the Chicago Sky on August 8, after being forced out of bounds on a play and making incidental and unintended contact with a referee. The referee said Clark “ran into her” after calling the technical foul, which triggered not only a fine but an automatic one game suspension. The technical was overruled by the league a couple hours after the game ended.

On July 22, 2026, *USA Today* ran an article titled, “Caitlin Clark's flopping isn't just annoying — it's becoming dangerous.” Columnist Nancy Armour wrote, “It seems there is a *white nationalist* faction to Clark's fandom that is deeply, deeply problematic, made even more so because the WNBA is made up predominantly of Black women, many of them queer. When Clark claims fouls that don't exist, when she goes on profanity-laced tirades at referees, those racists see her as a white woman in need of saving and take matters into their own hands... It shouldn't need reminding this country has an awful history of Black people being harmed, even killed, in the name of “defending” white women.”

Caitlin Clark is the third most fouled player in the WNBA this season, drawing 222 personal fouls in 36 games to date. Clark has also had the most flagrant fouls committed against her in the WNBA since entering the league in 2024. Just two Black players that committed fouls on Clark this season, Alyssa Thomas and Chelsea Gray, received death threats and racial slurs after those foul calls. Yet Armour insinuates that some (?) of Caitlin Clarks fans are white nationalists looking to harm or kill any black WNBA player who fouls her??

Despite being limited to just 13 games in her second season, Caitlin Clark is the fastest player in WNBA history to reach 1,500 points and 500 assists. She already has more 20-point, 10-assist games (22 to date) than any other WNBA player. On July 17, 2026, Clark scored a career high as well as Indiana Fever franchise high 45 points and added 10 assists, leading the Fever to a 110-107 win over the Seattle Storm. With this performance, Caitlin Clark became first player in WNBA history to record a 40 point, 10 assist game. As of August 31, 2026, Clark is the number 3 scorer in the WNBA, averaging 22.5 points per game, is tied for 3rd with 106 3-pointers, and is tied for the lead with 8.4 assists per game.

Regardless of her credentials, Clark continues to be on the receiving end of continual aggressive defending, hard fouls and poor calls by referees. Yes, Clark needs to cut down on her complaining to referees about plays she perceives as being fouls, Yes, Clark needs to stop “flopping,” falling to the court and clutching body parts after hard contact with opposing players and constantly complaining over calls to referees. But neither Clark or her true fans are racists, homophobes or white nationalists. This is just another attempt by left-wing liberal columnists to create widespread racism in order to perpetuate the left’s claim about “systemic racism” and “systemic homophobia” still existing in society today. If anything, I believe the abuse Clark has taken from WNBA players and referees, instead shows there may be systemic racism against white, heterosexual females who refuse to bow down and play the role that the WNBA and left-wing media wants them to play.

The WNBA Social Justice Council was created in 2020 to educate communities, business leaders and WNBA fans about “this country’s long history of inequality, implicit bias and systemic racism that has targeted black and brown communities.” Council members include, Kimberlé Crenshaw, a scholar of critical race theory and oppression of women of color, Raquel Willis, a Black transgender activist and Alicia Garza, co-founder of the Black Lives Matter Global Network and self-proclaimed “trained Marxist organizer.” It’s no wonder white players are being coerced into “playing the role” expected of them in the WNBA. According to the WNBA Official Rule Book, “teams are required to stand on the court in a dignified posture while the National Anthem is being played.” But several teams choose to continue social justice protests made popular by former San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick. Conservative fans and sportswriters are beginning to take notice of this unpatriotic practice, as well as the treatment of Caitlin Clark. Meanwhile, WNBA leadership and many players seem to be more influenced by critical race theory and Marxist organizers than they are about the rising popularity of the league and increasing white fan base. Calling this demographic a “white nationalist” faction does nothing to endear them to the league and ensure future attendance, revenue and profitability.