

Sport Communications Final Project

San Francisco Sequoias



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Brand Overview

The San Francisco Sequoias will be the newest edition to the WNBA in the 2023-24 season. Based in San Francisco, a progressive city in its ideals and its environmental policies, the name “the Sequoias” honors its innovative approach to governance and sustainability. Using San Francisco, instead of Golden State, differentiates ourselves in the market, marking that we are independent from the Golden State Warriors. However, the importance that the Warriors have in the Bay Area can not be undervalued and should be noted. Therefore, to honor the significance that basketball has in the area, while also symbolizing a new beginning, the San Francisco Sequoias will play their games in a newly-renovated Oracle Arena, where the Warriors played before moving to the Chase Center. While the Warriors were playing at Oracle, it was the oldest arena in the NBA; therefore, for the Sequoias to have a successful first season, the arena will need updates to create a heightened fan experience. The development and construction of brand new facilities is extremely expensive and harmful for the environment. To align with the environmental initiatives of the team, using an existing stadium is the first step in displaying our commitment to be an environmentally-conscious organization.

The target audience of the Sequoias is even larger than the Warriors; the NBA has 4 teams in California, but the WNBA only has 1 team in California- the Los Angeles Sparks. Therefore, the Sequoias have the opportunity to attract all WNBA fans from Northern California and other surrounding states. Much of the WNBA is concentrated on the East Coast, so the expansion to San Francisco is the next logical destination, to continue to grow support of the league across the country and reach an entirely new audience.

Brand Message

The brand message of the Sequoias relies heavily around environmental initiatives, since the mascot is a tree. Therefore, much of the promotional events and community initiatives will have environmental causes. The emphasis on the environment will hopefully draw in an even larger fan base. The sponsor of our jerseys will be Patagonia. Patagonia is extremely environmentally conscious, which aligns perfectly with the Sequoia's brand message. Patagonia is an extremely progressive apparel company, only amplifying the progressive social stances we hope to embrace. Additionally, Patagonia is headquartered in Ventura, California. The connection to a home-team state makes this jersey sponsorship even more logical and meaningful.

Mission Statement

“To use basketball as a catalyst for inspiring the next generation to be socially, culturally, and environmentally responsible.”



*** MEDIA ADVISORY ***

Led by Excellence: The Sequoias Hire Steve Nash as Head Coach

- WHAT:** The San Francisco Sequoias are holding a press conference to announce the hiring of Steve Nash as the head coach for their inaugural WNBA season. Statements will be made by various members of the Sequoias' front office about how this hiring will impact the franchise.
- WHO:** **Steve Nash**, Head Coach
Owen Greene, Team Owner of the Sequoias
Dylan Smith, Sequoias General Manager
- WHEN:** Tuesday, January 3 beginning at 10 AM PT
- WHERE:** Oracle Arena
7000 S Coliseum Way, Oakland, CA 94621
- DETAILS:** This press conference is a historic announcement. The hiring of a head coach signifies the start of the season commencing. This is also historic for Nash, as this is his first introduction into women's basketball. Nash will provide insights from both his playing and coaching days that will bring a veteran viewpoint to this rookie franchise.
- RSVP:** To confirm your attendance, please email communications@sequoias.com. If you are not already credentialed at Oracle, you can obtain admission for the event by emailing mediapasses@sequoias.com. Please include in the request your name, date of birth, name organization, and a headshot.
- CONTACT:** Erin Mayk [484-639-2099](tel:484-639-2099)
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Oracle Arena
7000 S Coliseum Way
Oakland, CA 94621

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 13, 2023

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Wilson Heads West: San Francisco Sequoias Acquire A'ja Wilson

SAN FRANCISCO- The Sequoias have acquired A'ja Wilson for their inaugural season. Wilson comes to San Francisco from the Las Vegas Aces, where she led them to their first ever franchise win last season. A press conference will take place tomorrow, February 16, with Wilson and Owen Greene, team owner.

Coming off a momentous last season, where she won Defensive Player of the Year and a National Championship with the Aces, this is an exciting time for her to bring her talents to San Francisco. Over her 5 year career in the WNBA, Wilson has solidified herself as one of the most impressive and versatile forwards in the league. She was the first overall pick in the 2018 draft and has been with the Aces for her entire WNBA career thus far.

"A'ja Wilson will provide this team with invaluable expertise" says head coach Steve Nash. The addition of Wilson to the roster finalizes the starting lineup and will provide the team with a consistent, veteran star. The Columbia, South Carolina native is also a 4x WNBA All-Star and has previously been WNBA Rookie of the Year and a 2x Most Valuable Player award winner.

The Sequoia's first game will be on May 6 at 7 PM EST against the Connecticut Sun. The game will be streamed on ESPN2 and Amazon Prime.

Online Promotion Story

FOURTH OF JULY GAME at Oracle Arena! Join the San Francisco Sequoias on July 4, 2023 as we take on the Los Angeles Sparks. To celebrate the holiday, we will have Journey, the classic American rock band founded in San Francisco, performing the National Anthem, as well as serving patriotic-themed concessions at all vendors. American flag cookies, slices of apple pie, hot dogs, and corn-on-the-cob will be the classic American staples found at every concession stand. The players will be

wearing American-themed warmup shirts, and shirts with the same design will be placed on each seat in the arena for the fans. This will further connect the Sequoias to their fans, as their matching shirts will create a sense of cohesion and an affinity to the players. Don't miss out on the chance to see the Sequoias take on the Sparks on such a fun night! Tickets can be purchased on www.sequoias.com and for this game, use the access code "sequoiasfourth" for 10% off all ticket sales. Go Sequoias and Go America!

Social Media Plan

The Sequoias are hoping to find their target audience with a younger demographic, to better align with its progressive social and environmental initiatives. Therefore, social media will be a vital medium to grow awareness of the franchise and create an invested fanbase. The key to growing an affinity to the team is to create and distribute content aimed directly at their target audience, the younger generation. The social media plan will revolve around platforms like Instagram and TikTok, which are catered to the younger generation, instead of Facebook, which is most widely used by an older demographic. The platforms I will target the Sequoia Social Media Plan around will be Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and podcasts.

For Instagram, the main ways in which the Sequoias will create interactive content will be through stories and reels. Instagram stories provide live, unedited videos and photos of the team in real-time. We want the fans to feel like they know the players personally through seeing their personalities shining through the Instagram stories. On travel days and game days, a player on the team will do a “takeover,” in which they document their days with photos and videos. Each day’s takeover will be its own Instagram highlight on the Sequoias page, so fans can go back and watch the takeovers whenever they want. Additionally, video content is becoming the main type of content being consumed by the younger generation. However, due to increasingly short attention spans, short-form video content performs much better than long-form video content. So, the use of Instagram reels will fill the feed with short, engaging content. Another feature on Instagram that the Sequoias will utilize is the ability to co-brand posts from 2 different Instagram accounts into one post. By creating a post from both a player on the Sequoias’ account and the team account, there will hopefully be more overlap with the followers of the two

accounts. An example of this co-sponsored post is below in the mock-ups section of the social media plan.

In terms of the Sequoias and Twitter, the way in which they will differentiate their page from other sports teams and create a more engaging fan connection is to create a persona for the account. By creating a distinct tone that the posts are written and posted in, the Sequoias' values and personalities will be communicated through their Twitter account. Not only will the Sequoias post sponsored highlight reels and clips from each game, but they will also be interactive with the other San Francisco sports team's accounts, to further solidify the connection between professional San Francisco teams. If the Sequoias are looking to target a younger demographic, Twitter is a great place to joke around with other teams and respond with their opinions to other accounts' posts. Twitter is the best platform to create a strong brand voice, which the Sequoias will use to their advantage to entertain their fans.

TikTok is an emerging-lead platform for the younger generation. The LA Sparks currently have over 300,000 followers on their TikTok account, so an account for the San Francisco Sequoias would also likely develop a large following. The Sequoia's TikTok account will post highlights from games, but also "off-the-court" content, such as press conference clips from after the game, footage of the team traveling to games, interviews with players, videos of the mascot interacting with the crowd, and more. The TikTok page should serve as a "one-stop-shop" for social media, giving its followers a glimpse into the professional and personal lives of the players and members of the organization.

Lastly, podcasting is a way to reach an entirely new audience for a sports organization. As a new WNBA team just starting out, starting their own podcast is not feasible or desirable. The team needs to grow a more steady and loyal fanbase before creating a team-sponsored

podcast. Therefore, members of the Sequoias should make guest appearances on already-established podcasts. The Sequoias should make appearances on the *WNBA Nation* podcast and *The Old Man and the Three*. *WNBA Nation* is a leading women's basketball podcast; a fitting guest appearance for this podcast would be if A'ja Wilson came onto the show after her trade to the Sequoias. People will be interested to get a more in-depth story of her decision-making process in joining the Sequoias, guaranteeing high viewership ratings for this podcast episode. *The Old Man and the Three* is an extremely popular podcast hosted by JJ Redick and Tommy Alter. JJ Redick has been an outspoken advocate for women's sports and the WNBA, and has a wide reach between his podcast and his commentating on ESPN. Recently, *The Old Man and the Three* has been featuring NBA coaches for a "coaches series." Therefore, Steve Nash doing a guest interview on this podcast makes sense with the current guests that this podcast has. These various social media platforms will create comprehensive messaging to best tailor their content to the younger demographic.

Social Media Mock-Ups

Co-Posted Instagram



Tweet



TikTok



Community Relations Initiative

The San Francisco Sequoias will plant a community garden near Oracle Arena, in partnership with the San Francisco Recreation & Parks. The planting of a garden symbolizes a new beginning, as the success and reach of the franchise will continue to grow each year with the garden. We will call these community gardening events “Garden for Good,” and they will be open to all members of the local Oakland community looking to make a difference. The players and staff of the Sequoias organization will host 3 community gardening days throughout the spring part of their inaugural season, as a way to actively involve the local community in its CSR initiatives. Two local Oakland middle schools, Claremont Middle School and Edna Brewer Middle School, will be invited to the inaugural community gardening event. Both of these schools are within a 20 minute radius of Oracle Arena, involving the direct community. We recognize that there are large problems all around the world that need addressing. However, we want to show the community that we are committed to creating a lasting impact in the immediate area and community.

This garden will grow vegetables that will be donated to the San Francisco-Marin food bank. San Francisco is one of the most expensive cities to live in; with the high cost of living comes an extremely high homeless population. Fresh fruits and vegetables are expensive and are therefore very difficult for homeless people to afford. The Sequoias pledge to donate all fruits and vegetables grown from their garden, as well as a \$10,000 donation to the San Francisco-Marin food bank for the first 5 seasons that the team is in operation.

Audio Promotion Script

My audio promotion script is for the first game of the new season for the Sequoias. Each game, the Sequoias will bring out a new celebrity with an affiliation or connection to the San Francisco area. This individual will take an inaugural first game free throw called “Sequoia Swish.” This will be a way to draw in celebrities and professional athletes to the game, which will in turn, increase media attention and news coverage of the Sequoias and their home games. For the first game of the season, we will have Vice President Kamala Harris, an Oakland native and avid basketball fan, shoot the Sequoia Swish. This audio promotion will be played on KGMZ-FM, a San Francisco sports radio station.

Play the intro music to KGMZ-FM.	New team, big buzz! The San Francisco Sequoias, the newest WNBA team, are playing their first game this Saturday, May 6, with a special guest kicking things off.
Beginning of the National Anthem.	Vice President Kamala Harris will be throwing out the inaugural first free throw of the game.
Sound of a basketball swish.	The “Sequoia Swish” will is a new tradition that the Sequoias are enacting, where a new San Francisco native will throw out a free throw to start off the game.
Sound of a crowd yelling.	There is a lot of excitement coming from the start of this franchise. Don’t miss the chance to be at the inaugural game for this highly-anticipated team!
Outro music for KGMZ-FM radio.	Tickets are on sale at “sequoias.com,” and if you use the promo code “KGMZ-FM,” you will receive 10% off your tickets. We’ll see you at the game, and until then, GO SEQUOIAS!

Promotional Events Plan

To promote the first game of the kickoff season, the Sequoias will utilize a variety of different means to reach the widest audience possible. To promote the Kamala Harris “Sequoias Swish,” the Sequoias will release media advisories to the local San Francisco sports news outlets, as well as a general press release on their native website. There will be social media posts on all Sequoia platforms for their first game. The audio promotion on KGMZ-FM will include a 10% discount code for tickets for the first game, to try to increase attendance. There will be segments on the local San Francisco news channels and on other radio stations.

Word of mouth on social media will be an immense help in spreading awareness of the organization. We will work with other WNBA teams and basketball personalities to share announcements and updates on their social media platforms. Though they will be competition, another WNBA team is a positive growth and expansion of women’s sports, so the other WNBA teams will be glad to share the announcements.

To further draw in attendance to the first game, the Sequoias will work with the Golden State Warriors; the Warriors would also be eager to help the expansion of the Sequoias, since growth of basketball in San Francisco is good for both the Sequoias and the Warriors. The Sequoias will provide courtside tickets to their inaugural game to Stephen Curry, Klay Thompson, Draymond Green, and Steve Kerr. Arguably the most renowned figures in the Warriors organization currently, their presence would add an extra layer of excitement in the building. For these tickets, we would ask each of these four guests to post an Instagram story promoting the Sequoias and their experience at the game. To further this connection between the Sequoias and the Warriors, we will be giving a discounted code for Warriors tickets to the attendees of the first Sequoias game, which can be accessed on their printed ticket. By providing

an incentive to attend the first Sequoias game, we will draw more fans in; once they are in and at the Sequoias game, they will keep coming back for the heightened experience and atmosphere in Oracle Arena.