

Evenly matched WNBA playoffs have every team eyeing title

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AP BASKETBALL WRITER

NEW YORK — The race for WNBA playoff seeding went down to the wire, illustrating just how evenly matched the eight teams heading into the postseason are. It’s why every coach, player and fan base in the playoffs all believe they have a legitimate shot to win the title.

“It really doesn’t matter what seed you are. We have homecourt advantage. We all fight for that. There’s a reason why we all fight for that. But no, I don’t think anybody should be surprised at any outcomes,” Minnesota coach Cheryl Reeve said. "I know the betting people will have favorites and that sort of thing. I wouldn’t pay attention to any of it. I wouldn’t be surprised by anything that happens because I think all the teams are that good.”

Reeve doesn't have to look far to find that reality.

The Lynx open the playoffs against the Liberty. The teams met for the WNBA title two years ago and now New York is an eight seed. No. 2 Golden State will play seven seed Dallas, third seed Las Vegas will play No. 6 Indiana and fourth seed Atlanta will host No. 5 Washington as the playoffs get underway Sunday.

The Liberty, Mystics and Fever all won the regular season series against their first round opponents. The Valkyries swept the Wings.

Every series has star power and intriguing storylines.

A’ja Wilson is looking to lead Las Vegas to its fourth title in five years and starts by taking on Caitlin Clark and the Indiana Fever. Clark is back in the playoffs after missing last season with an injury, while Angel Reese and Paige Bueckers will be making their



Ellen Schmidt/AP Photo

Indiana Fever guard Caitlin Clark reacts during the first half of a WNBA basketball game against the Minnesota Lynx on Thursday in Minneapolis.

debuts in the postseason. Here's a look at the four first round series.

LYNX VS LIBERTY
Minnesota still stings from losing in overtime in a decisive Game 5 to New York two years ago in the WNBA Finals. Many of the key players are back for both teams with Napheesa Collier, Courtney Williams and Kayla McBride leading the Lynx. They are led by expected WNBA Rookie of the Year Olivia Miles, who has had a dynamic first season in the league. Minnesota was the best team in the league for most of the season, rising to the top of the standings without Collier, who was sidelined after offseason surgery on both ankles. With her back, the Lynx look to win their first title since 2017.

New York changed coaches during the off-season and have been beset by injuries for most of the year. They still have the talented trio of Breanna Stewart, Sabrina

Ionescu and Jonquel Jones, who led them to the franchise's first championship in 2024. Jones rolled her ankle in the regular season finale and her health will be critical to the Liberty's success.

After winning the title in '24, New York was surprisingly eliminated in the first round by Phoenix last year.

VALKYRIES VS WINGS
Golden State became the first expansion team to reach the postseason in its inaugural season last year and the Valkyries followed that up by competing for the No. 1 spot this year. Golden State is statistically the best defensive team in the league, holding teams to 78.8 points a game, led by Gabby Williams and Veronica Burton. The Valkyries were swept in the first round last season, but gained valuable experience and have the deepest bench in the league.

Dallas had one of the

biggest turnarounds in WNBA history, winning 17 more games this season than last year. Led by Bueckers, the Wings are back in the postseason for the first time in three years. Bueckers has Arike Ogunbowale has a running mate, giving Dallas two great shot-makers. The team's health could be an issue though: No. 1 pick Azzi Fudd is sidelined for the season with a knee injury and Alanna Smith has been out with a left leg injury.

ACES VS FEVER
The Las Vegas-Indiana matchup offers the most star power of any opening series with Wilson, Clark and Kelsey Mitchell leading the way. Wilson had another MVP-level season, dominating on both ends of the court.

Clark has been impressive for the past month, scoring over 20 points in eight of the last 10 games. Her back-court mate, Mitchell, had a WNBA record 27

straight games scoring 20 or more points.

The teams met in the playoffs last season with Clark sidelined by injuries. The Aces came away with an exciting OT victory in the decisive Game 5 of their semifinal series.

DREAM VS MYSTICS
Both Atlanta and Washington lately haven't had any luck in the playoffs, but that will change for someone. The Dream added to their roster this year with the acquisition of Reese and DeWanna Bonner, giving Atlanta two major pieces to an already stacked lineup that features Rhyne Howard and Allisha Gray.

With Reese and Bonner, the Dream hope to win a playoff series for the first time since 2016. They've been knocked out of the postseason in the opening round the past three seasons. Reese gives them added toughness and is the best rebounder in the WNBA. Bonner provides playoff experience and veteran leadership.

Washington, which is the youngest team in the league, is back in the postseason for the first time since 2023. Like the Dream, the team hasn't had any success in the playoffs since winning the franchise's lone title in 2019. The young core led by Shakira Austin, Kiki Iriafen and Sonia Citron have anchored the second-best defense in the league and have shown

they can play with anyone in the league.

LEGAL NOTICE

SPECIAL CALLED MEETING NOTICE
Community and Development Services

In accordance with KRS 424, notice is hereby given that Community and Development Services will hold a special called meeting on September 28, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. Central Time / 7:00 p.m. Eastern Time, at the Hopkinsville Community College Auditorium Building in the Lecture Hall located at 720 North Drive, Hopkinsville, Kentucky. The agenda for the special called meeting is as follows:

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING

ZTA26-6-1
The Hopkinsville-Christian County Planning Commission (Community and Development Services), by Resolution 2026-03, has initiated an amendment to the Hopkinsville Zoning Ordinance (zoning code). The amendment, upon adoption, will 1) define data centers and related terms; 2) establish standards for the siting, construction, installation, and operation of data centers; and 3) amend Appendix A "Schedule of Uses" to specify the district(s) in which data centers, by type, are permitted.

CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING

AGENDA

I. Call to Order

II. Roll Call

III. Approval of Minutes for September 3, 2026

IV. Approval of Financials

a. July 2026

b. August 2026

V. New Business

a. ZTA26-6-1 Data Centers

b. Contracts

VI. Administrative Reports

VII. Commissioner Comments/Questions

VIII. Next Meeting – October 26, 2026

IX. Adjournment

COMMUNITY AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

311 WEST 9th STREET

HOPKINSVILLE, KY 42240

STEIN

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21-20 upset over Mississippi State in 2016.

“To me, they’re the best team in the Sun Belt,” Stein said. “We’re really excited about the opportunity to get our fans back here in Kroger Field; an opportunity to play a really good opponent in South Alabama.”

The Jaguars are led by former Texas quarterback Major Applewhite, who has used two different signal callers this season. Applewhite was noncommittal on whether Utah State transfer Bishop Davenport or backup Jared Hollins would start against the Wildcats.

“Nothing as of now,” Applewhite said of Davenport’s situation. “He was able to go Saturday in some capacity, but we

wanted just to be smart about what capacity he plays in and be fair to him so he can perform at a high level. ... throughout the week I’ll have a better idea of where he is.”

Regardless of who lines up under center, Stein said the Wildcats will have to “handle our business” before facing seven straight conference opponents, starting a road game at South Carolina on Oct. 3.

“That’s really what it comes down to,” he said. “We’re going to approach this game just like we approach Texas A&M. It’s no different just because it’s South Alabama.”

Gametracker: South Alabama at Kentucky, 12:45 p.m. Saturday. TV: SEC Network (Dave Neal, Cole Cubelic, Tori Petri). Radio: UK Radio Network (Tom Leach, Jeff Piccoro, Dick Grabriel). 3

ROUNDUP

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Calloway County 0
Christian County capped off its boys Senior Night ceremonies in style Thursday, picking up a second consecutive victory with a 2-0 shutout over visiting Calloway County.

Girls Volleyball
Christian County 3, Henderson County 2 (25-16, 21-25, 21-25, 27-25, 17-15)
In what proved to be the most dramatic showdown of the week, the Lady Tigers rallied from the brink of defeat to stun visiting Henderson County in a five-set thriller.

Christian County dominated the opening set 25-16 before Henderson County responded by claiming consecutive 25-21 frames to put the home team against the wall. The Lady Tigers dug deep in the fourth, surviving

late set points to eke out a 27-25 win and force the tie-breaker. In the decisive fifth set, Christian County traded blows before grinding out a 17-15 victory.

Madysen Taggart anchored the front line with 11 kills and six blocks, while Taylor Cantrell supplied 10 kills, three blocks, and two aces. Kiley Lambert chipped in seven kills and a block. Defensively, Peyton Owens patrolled the back row with 32 digs, while Bailey Brown directed the offense with 35 assists and 12 digs to push Christian County to 13-7.

HCA Girls Volleyball
Heritage Christian 3, Caldwell County 0
HCA turned its Homecoming celebration into a decisive sweep, halting a three-match skid with a straight-set victory over Caldwell County.

Before first serve, seniors Bralee Fowler and Ethan Miles were crowned Home-

coming Queen and King. Fowler carried that energy straight onto the court, controlling the net and tallying her 99th career block as the Lady Warriors dictated pace from the service line and transition attack to improve to 10-7 overall.

UHA Girls Volleyball
University Heights Academy 3, Todd County Central 1 (23-25, 25-15, 25-11, 31-29)
UHA shook off a sluggish start and a marathon final set to defeat visiting Todd County Central in a four-set battle at Blazer Gym.

The Lady Rebels struck first by claiming a tight opening set 25-23. UHA responded with sharp passing and service runs, routing the next two frames 25-15 and 25-11. The fourth set turned into a slugfest with multiple lead changes before the Lady Blazers finally outlasted the Lady Rebels 31-29 to close out

the match.

Niyona Brown spearheaded the Lady Blazers with 15 kills, six digs, and three blocks. Ava Crawford delivered six kills and 25 digs, Lilly Kem added six kills, and Bailee Chesnut orchestrated the floor with 32 assists. Cassidy Keller set the defensive tone with a massive 49-dig effort as UHA moved to 10-16.

TODD COUNTY Girls Volleyball
Todd County Central 1, University Heights Academy 3 (25-23, 15-25, 11-25, 29-31)
The Lady Rebels came out firing to take set one on the road behind aggressive serving and scramble defense but could not hold off UHA's middle counterattack in sets two and three. Todd Central battled back with grit in the fourth set, pushing the Lady Blazers to extended extra points before falling just short in the 31-29 finish.

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