

The LA Sparks Continue to Work Just as Hard Off the Court for Societal Change

Members of the Los Angeles Sparks, one of the most lauded teams in the WNBA, dedicate themselves to the game to the tune of more than 2,000 hours of training a year.

And the elite athletes, with a history of activism, plan to push “just as hard for change in society,” according to a short film to announce their new voter education and registration program.

The video, “Change Has No Off-Season,” launches the Sparks’ social justice campaign aiming to get out the vote for the November presidential election and beyond, with efforts also focused on immigration reform.

The work, created in-house with voiceover from star forward Candace Parker, uses footage from this spring’s Black Lives Matter demonstrations mixed with player interviews to urge people to “take this energy to the polls—let your voice be heard. We must keep this momentum going.”

Among the images in the piece are the now-viral clip of a Black child hiding from a police car and media coverage of the 2017 Playoffs, during which the Sparks players stayed in the locker room during the national anthem.

“This fight is not new to us,” says Parker in the video, highlighting the team’s push for pay equity for women in professional sports. “We’ve been taking a stand for years.”

The Sparks, with three national championships and 19 playoff appearances in 23 years—more than any other team in the league—are making “a long-term commitment to combatting

systemic racism and sexism,” according to their statement.

Collectively, members have advocated on behalf of women and girls, mental health and wellness, youth sports and first responders. Last year, the team helped launch an initiative for female veterans called “Spark the True You.”

Those ongoing projects are part of the Sparks’ mission to “provide not just resources but also a voice to underrepresented groups,” said president and COO Danita Johnson.

Their video comes on the heels of a similarly themed 60-second spot from the NBA called “The Truth Is #BlackLivesMatter.” That work, which debuted on ESPN, used the season restart in Orlando, Fla., as the launch of the NBA’s social justice platform.

The Sparks’ campaign also dovetails into a broader movement within the WNBA, where the league and its players association have dedicated the 2020 season to #BlackLivesMatter and #SayHerName.

Throughout the season, players will wear Nike-branded warm-ups printed with #BlackLivesMatter and #SayHerName in honor of Sandra Bland, Breonna Taylor, Vanessa Guillen and other women victims of police and military violence.

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