



NBA RED CARD

2023

CHINA DIGITAL
PERFORMANCE
INDEX



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FOREWORD

Basketball is more than just a sport in China, it's a cultural phenomenon. In recent years, it's experienced a remarkable resurgence, driven by grassroots and village basketball, the return of star players and legends, CSR initiatives, and the adaptation of AI and the next generation of content creators.

The opening-up of China in January 2023 provided a window of opportunity for grassroots and village basketball to thrive. Village basketball and streetball were born, and the sport's popularity soared. More than 30 star players and legends returned to China throughout the summer, uniting millions of fans both in-person and online. CSR initiatives touched all corners of China, jumping on the rural village basketball bandwagon. And teams, players, and NBA China embraced AI and the next generation of content creators, demonstrating that basketball in China is thriving more than ever.

Money invested into sports sponsorship increased by 62.2% in China for 2022, compared to 2021, showing the returning strength of the sports industry following COVID-19. Looking ahead to 2024, China's basketball scene is poised for further growth.

Virtual and augmented reality will enhance the player and fan experience, while AI and machine learning will add strategic depth. Just as esports attracts investment, basketball too is a beacon of growth and innovation. The court becomes a canvas for new competitions, collectibles, and interactive experiences, showcasing NBA China's innovation.

Expect success stories as Kuaishou goes even deeper with the NBA, nurturing content creators and engaging fans. And with the likelihood of the NBA China game's return, thrilling matchups and shared moments await. Within these pages, we explore a sport that transcends borders and a community united by basketball's universal language.

The sport is also being embraced by new generations of Chinese fans and players. Social media and streaming platforms are helping to connect fans with the game in new and innovative ways, and young players are drawn to the sport's excitement and athleticism.

The 2023 NBA Red Card Report celebrates the team success, individual stardom and progress the NBA continues to make in China. A special thanks to Phil Van Camerik and the team for delivering once again.



Andrew Collins
CEO



TABLE OF CONTENTS

03. KEY LEARNINGS
& OBSERVATIONS

04. NBA TEAM RANKINGS
ONLINE IN CHINA

06. ANALYSIS -
TOP NBA TEAMS

07. HONORABLE
MENTIONS

08. MOST POPULAR NBA
PLAYERS ON WEIBO

09. ANALYSIS - MOST POPULAR
NBA PLAYERS ON WEIBO

10. MOST POPULAR NBA
PLAYERS ON DOUYIN

11. ANALYSIS - MOST POPULAR
NBA PLAYERS ON DOUYIN

12. MOST POPULAR NBA
PLAYERS ON KUAISHOU

13. ANALYSIS - NBA PLAYERS
ON KUAISHOU

14. PLAYER
CHINA TOURS

16. PLAYER
CASE STUDIES

17. LEGENDARY
STATUS

18. WINS FOR
NBA CHINA

19. NBA CHINA
X ALIBABA

20. GROWTH
IN ASIA

21. 2023-24
OUTLOOK

22. ABOUT
MAILMAN

Creator Economy V2



Kuaishou and NBA China are expanding the creator economy, allowing for new initiatives that give monetary prizes to creators with the best content. For the NBA Finals, Kuaishou launched a prediction campaign that received 50k+ submissions and achieved 530m topic views on the platform. NBA China has now partnered with Weibo to begin a similar initiative, stimulating more content creators to utilise NBA IP to create new original videos and drive conversations about NBA topics.

Sponsorship Rebound



Money invested into sports sponsorship increased by 62.2% in China for 2022, compared to 2021, showing the returning strength of the sports industry following Covid-19. According to Asia Sponsorship News, basketball-related sponsorships in China was \$202.2m in 2019, rebounding to \$193m in 2022. The majority of revenue was dispersed among local basketball entities, like the CBA and NBA China. While NBA team deals are also rebounding post-Covid, now is the time for teams to gain a larger part of the pie for commercial revenue in China.

China Tours Return in Style



Throughout summer, NBA players finally had the chance to return to China to meet with Chinese fans and fulfill sponsor needs. Retired and current players such as Allen Iverson, Tracy McGrady to Giannis Antetokounmpo and Jimmy Butler made their way to the mainland. Standout activations included Spencer Dinwiddie eating at a famous BBQ in Shandong whilst Jimmy Butler visited a popular village basketball game in Guizhou.

KEY LEARNINGS & OBSERVATIONS

CSR Initiatives Prove Successful



Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs run by NBA China and the teams trended on social media. The NBA Cares department of NBA China was able to fund and develop new courts in rural parts of China. This allowed the NBA to give back to the communities which have supported the league for so long. The Brooklyn Nets did a similar activation in collaboration with Ben Simmons, with the campaign receiving 4.2m reads and 4.2m video views across Chinese social media.

Basketball Goes Amateur



A lack of international tours mixed with professional sports not allowing in-stadium attendees meant new categories of sports stardom emerged. Top basketball players joined semi-pro basketball teams and leagues with extensive exhibition schedules, with the teams and players amassing huge followings online, thanks in part to collaborations with NBA China. This culminated in the first-ever Streetball League (XBA) in China, held across five major cities in summer.



NBA TEAM RANKINGS ONLINE IN CHINA

The data was collected from October 18, 2022 - June 14, 2023
Points were awarded across the following metrics:
1. Weibo followers 2. Weibo posts 3. Weibo total engagement 4. Weibo avg. engagement 5. Weibo follower growth
6. Douyin followers 7. Douyin posts 8. Douyin total likes 9. Douyin avg likes 10. Douyin follower growth
11. Kuaishou followers 12. Kuaishou posts 13. Kuaishou total likes 14. Kuaishou avg likes 15. Kuaishou follower growth
For tied teams, the team with most Weibo points received the higher rank.
Full methodology available upon request.
























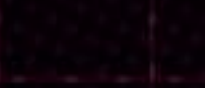


NBA RED CARD 2023

CHINA DIGITAL PERFORMANCE INDEX



NBA TEAM RANKINGS ONLINE IN CHINA

NO. 1

NBA Teams	Score	Change
 Golden State Warriors	374	0
 Los Angeles Lakers	351	0
 Brooklyn Nets	275	0
 Dallas Mavericks	170	0
 Philadelphia 76ers	148	0
 Miami Heat	135	+3
 Phoenix Suns	129	+9
 Los Angeles Clippers	122	0
 Houston Rockets	97	-2
 Denver Nuggets	96	0
 Memphis Grizzlies	93	0
 Cleveland Cavaliers	83	+2
 Boston Celtics	83	+2
 Milwaukee Bucks	80	-2
 Chicago Bulls	79	+2
 New York Knicks	78	-10
 Sacramento Kings	72	+13
 Minnesota Timberwolves	72	+5
 Portland Trail Blazers	69	-6
 San Antonio Spurs	65	-2
 Toronto Raptors	65	-2
 New Orleans Pelicans	64	0
 Charlotte Hornets	64	-3
 Atlanta Hawks	63	+2
 Oklahoma City Thunder	60	-1
 Detroit Pistons	60	+3
 Washington Wizards	54	-6
 Orlando Magic	53	-3
 Indiana Pacers	51	-2
Utah Jazz	49	-2



ANALYSIS - TOP NBA TEAMS

■ Follower Growth ■ Total Engagement (Likes) ■ Posts
■ Avg Engagement (Likes) ■ Followers

NBA RED CARD 2023

CHINA DIGITAL PERFORMANCE INDEX

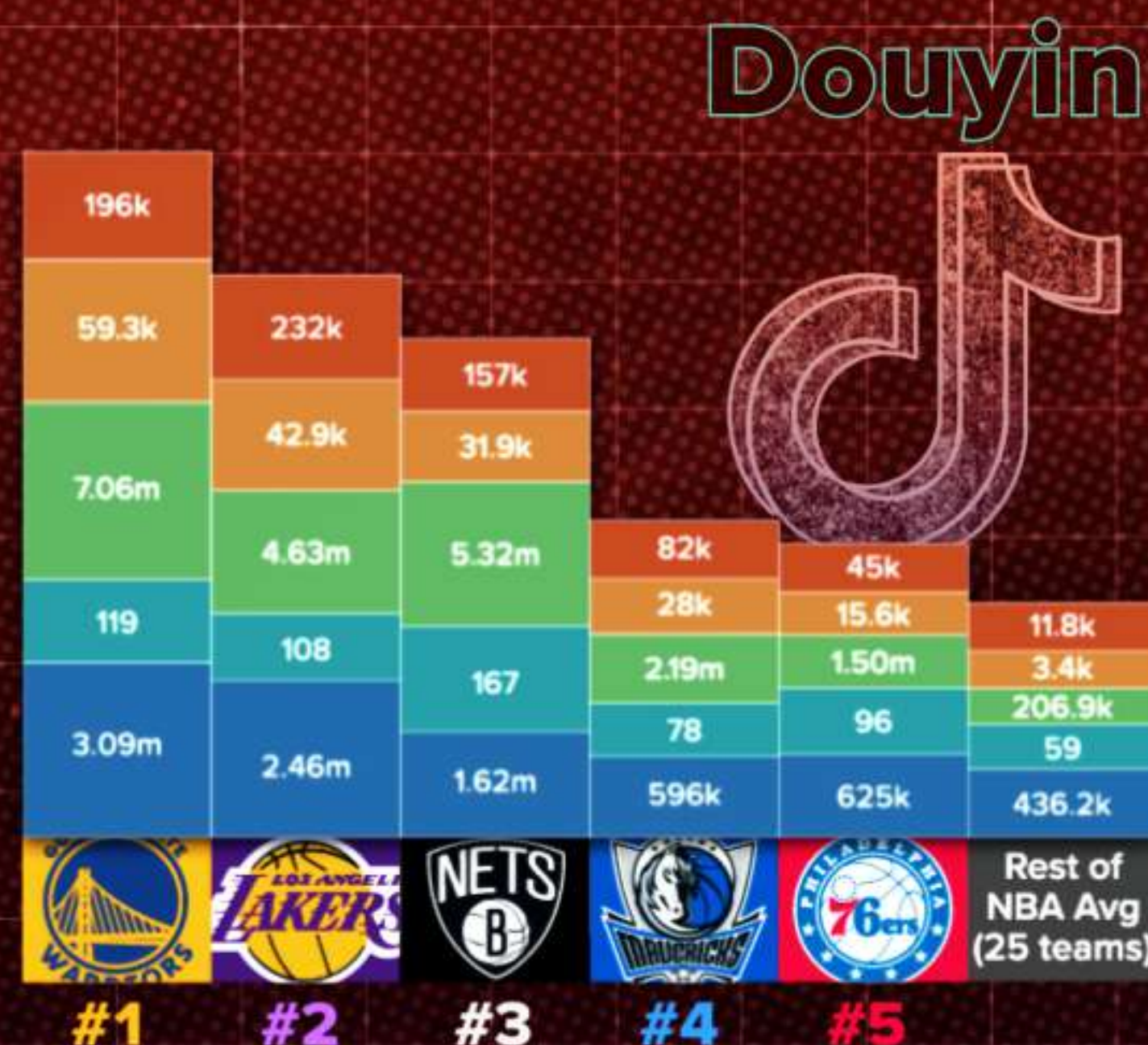


Warriors' Dominance Continues

Maintained their position by once again dominating in engagement, finishing top three in every Red Card metric, continuing to provide their fans with premium content. They also hosted Chinese star Eileen Gu, who visited their practice facility and attended a game, with the Warriors shooting content with her specifically for the team's social media channels. The two videos they posted on Douyin performed best, reaching nearly 200k likes compared to only 126k likes on Kuaishou.

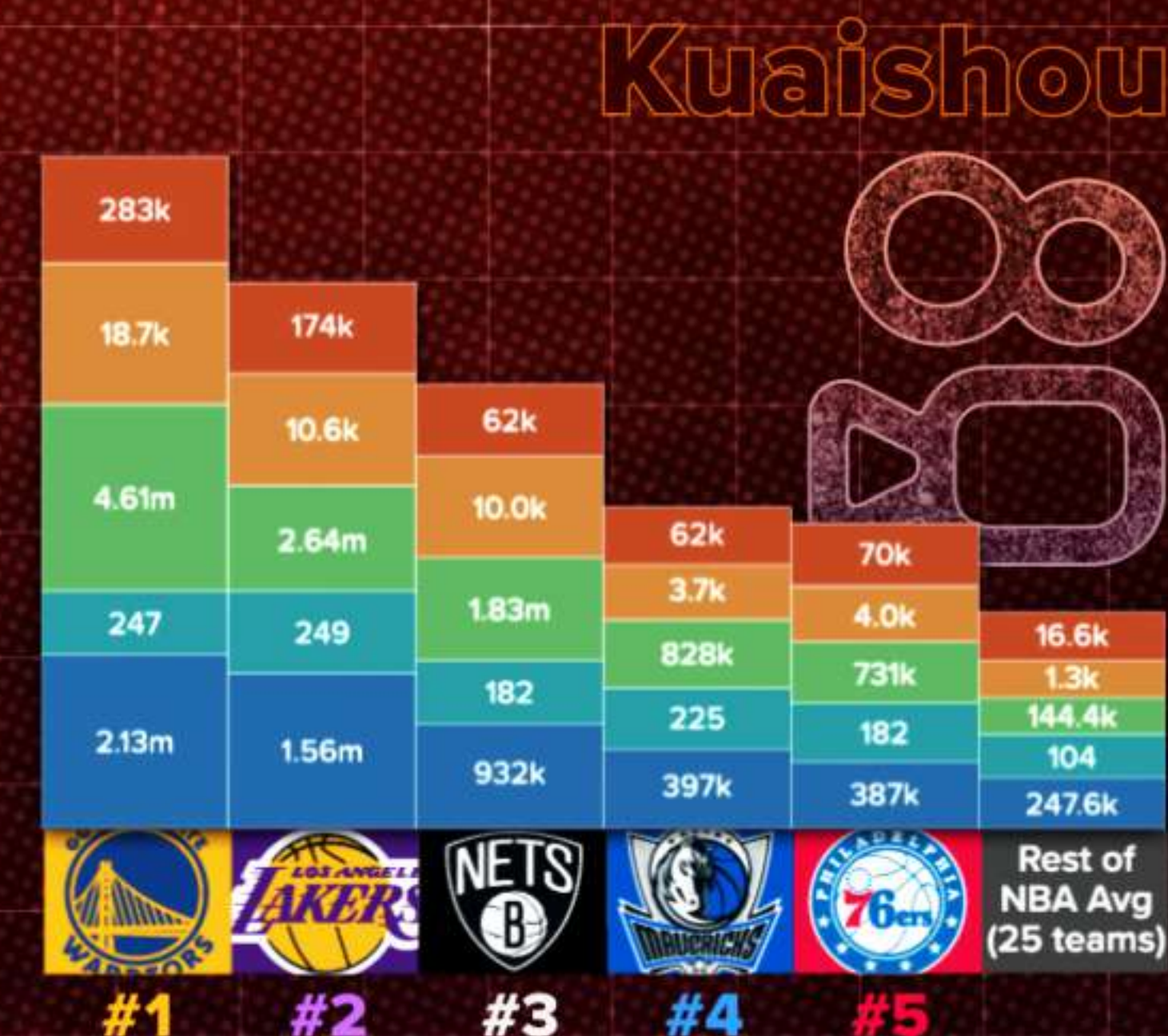
Lakers Cement Second Place

Pulled away from the #3 team, distancing themselves from the Brooklyn Nets following a rejuvenated focus on Douyin. After finishing #20 in the league in post frequency last year, the Lakers jumped to #4 this year, increasing their output by 218%. The increase in posts denotes the emphasis placed on realigning the Douyin account with the post frequency of other NBA teams as well as their own Weibo and Kuaishou, making their content strategy more balanced than last year.



Nets Keep Pace

Had an outstanding year on social, without question - finishing #3 on all three major platforms behind the Warriors and Lakers. What continues to set the Nets apart is the level of activity that they manage in other areas that contribute to success, such as Chinese partnership integration, Chinese community and tourist events, and celebrity crossovers. They successfully activated two separate partners for their CNY celebration night in Barclays Center, organised a range of 20+ innovative events that catered to Chinese audiences, and also hosted 20+ top-tier Chinese celebrities/artists.



Mavericks and 76ers Round Out Top Five

Both teams maintained their same positions from last year at #4 and #5. Despite decreasing post frequency on Douyin by 44%, the Mavericks were still able to eclipse 2m total likes. The Lakers were ranked #3 in likes on Douyin with over 4.6m likes, so the Mavericks still have considerable ground to make up. The 76ers edged out better performance on Kuaishou than the Mavericks in some metrics, such as follower growth and average likes, beating them by 11% and 8%, respectively. The 76ers were effective in using clips that resonate with fans in China, with careful attention to localisation techniques and editing.

HONORABLE MENTIONS

Phoenix Suns



Jumping nine spots to reach #7, the Suns can attribute their success to a new marketing strategy in China on both Douyin and Kuaishou. Post frequency increased on each platform, up +220% on Douyin and +104% on Kuaishou, whilst their content predominantly focused on localised team updates, funny moments on the court during stoppages of play, and post-game interviews.

LA Clippers



A fantastic effort this season on Weibo, finishing #4 on the platform overall with the 4th highest total engagement and the 3rd highest average engagement. Unfortunately, they only reached the #8 overall rank this year due to a less active presence on Douyin and Kuaishou. With the strong performance of Weibo, the Clippers are primed to crack the top five if able to elevate their short video strategies.

Miami Heat



Propelled by their run to the NBA Finals, Miami Heat finished just outside the top five this season in the Red Card rankings. The basis of their success was from localising content from their Instagram account, and they did not have to focus much on China-specific productions to drive their performance. If they had invested more into China-original content, they would likely have finished higher up the rankings.

Sacramento Kings



On Weibo last year, the Kings ranked last, with the least amount of posts and the lowest engagement of any franchise. With a renewed commitment to publishing, the Kings jumped to #15 in the Weibo rankings, improving post frequency by 7x and total engagements by 15x. On Douyin, they reached #15 in the rankings compared to only #27 last season. The Douyin account received 5x the amount of engagements than it did the season before.

MOST POPULAR NBA PLAYERS ON WEIBO

NBA RED CARD 2023

CHINA DIGITAL PERFORMANCE INDEX



Stephen Curry
86 points



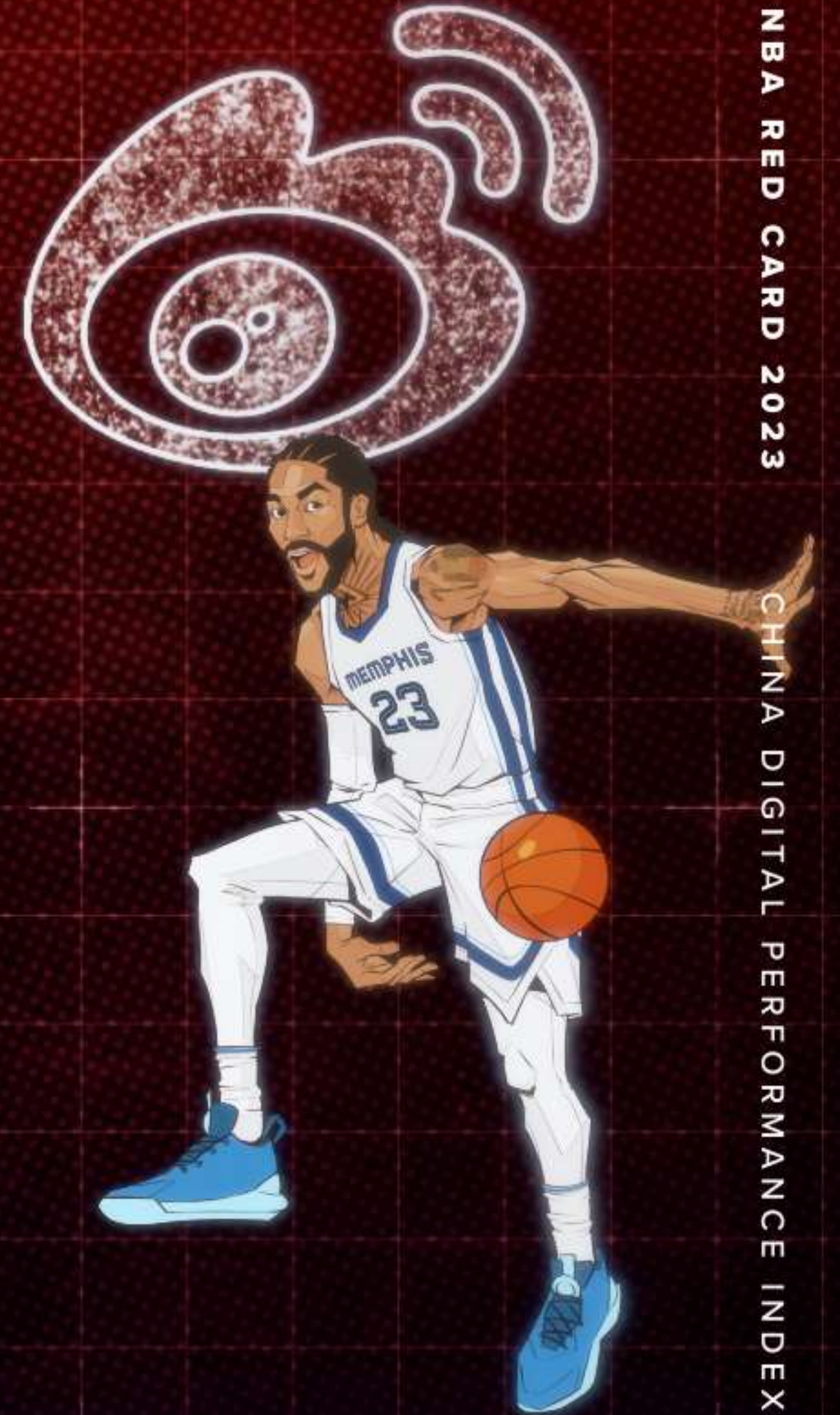
Klay Thompson
79 points



James Harden
78 points



Donovan Mitchell
57 points



Derrick Rose
54 points

The data was collected from October 18, 2022 - June 14, 2023

Points were awarded across the following metrics: 1. Weibo followers 2. Weibo posts 3. Weibo total engagement 4. Weibo avg. engagement 5. Weibo follower growth

ANALYSIS - MOST POPULAR NBA PLAYERS ON WEIBO



Curry Stays On Top

Despite reigning #1 and still being the most popular player on Weibo, Curry's post frequency dropped by 16% compared to last season, whilst his total engagement decreased by 78%. Last season, Curry's account was buoyed by auto-generated content related to his accomplishments and accolades throughout the season, but also by two posts that received 154k engagements when he interacted with a young basketball star in China who emulates Curry's skills and wears the #30. These two posts last year surpassed his total engagements online for this season, showing the importance of China-specific content, outside of just on-court success and peak moments.



Number Two to Thompson

Klay Thompson accompanies his fellow Warriors teammate Curry on top of the Weibo rankings. His account was very active, finished #2 on the platform in terms of posts, total engagements, and #3 in average engagements. His posts are predominantly localised from his everyday life, but he did create a few pieces specifically for China. His most prominent was a Chinese New Year GIF for his fans and giveaway of a Klay Thompson gift pack, including his Anta KT-8 shoes. The two posts generated a total of 5,584 engagements for his account.



Harden Cracks Top Three

After a lacklustre 2021-22 season on Weibo, James Harden's presence exploded on the platform to elevate his performance into the top three. Posts on his account increased by 127% and his total engagements grew by 56%. Harden's Weibo posts all perform very consistently, mostly due to categorically balanced content across lifestyle, fashion, business, and basketball.

MOST POPULAR NBA PLAYERS ON DOUYIN

NBA RED CARD 2023

CHINA DIGITAL PERFORMANCE INDEX



James Harden
104 points



Keldon Johnson
88 points



Luka Doncic
72 points



Klay Thompson
64 points



Ben Simmons
62 points

The data was collected from October 18, 2022 - June 14, 2023

Points were awarded across the following metrics: 1. Douyin followers 2. Douyin posts 3. Douyin total likes 4. Douyin avg likes 5. Douyin follower growth

ANALYSIS - MOST POPULAR NBA PLAYERS ON DOUYIN



Harden Holds Strong

Retained top spot on Douyin through active posting and impressive engagement metrics with total engagement more than double the closest player. His best content was the inspiring story of John Hao, a 20-year-old Chinese student at Michigan State University, who was injured in a tragic mass shooting on campus in February. Harden, learning about Hao's situation, offered heartfelt support, donated funds, personally Facetimed John to provide encouragement, and provided signature shoes to John. The video received 305k likes on Harden's Douyin account.



Keldon's Ascension

Keldon Johnson saw a significant increase in performance for his Douyin account this season, mostly due to his signing to Chinese sneaker brand Qiao Dan, and the corresponding China tour that took place in May. The majority of his videos on Douyin covered his China tour and interacting with Chinese fans at the events. The best video, participating in a dunk contest with a Chinese dunker in Guangzhou, received nearly 600k likes.



Luka Not Looking Back

Luka's Douyin account was excluded from last year's rankings as he launched his account after the 2022 season ended, but he has been extremely active throughout this past season with 55 videos since July 2022. His best China-specific content was a follow-up video to the "Luka Step-back Challenge" that he created with Jordan brand for the release of his Luka 1 shoes. The video specifically called out a Chinese basketball influencer to participate in the challenge, and received 93k likes.

MOST POPULAR NBA PLAYERS ON KUAISHOU

NBA RED CARD 2023

CHINA DIGITAL PERFORMANCE INDEX



Bradley Beal
109 points



Austin Reaves
97 points



Mo Bamba
83 points



Zach LaVine
82 points



Shaedon Sharpe
9 points

The data was collected from October 18, 2022 - June 14 2023

Points were awarded across the following metrics: 1. Kuaishou followers 2. Kuaishou posts 3. Kuaishou total likes 4. Kuaishou avg likes 5. Kuaishou follower growth

ANALYSIS - MOST POPULAR NBA PLAYERS ON KUAISHOU



Beal's Takeover

Bradley Beal burst onto the scene for Kuaishou during the NBA Playoffs. He quickly became the best performing NBA athlete through an effective launch video directly addressing Chinese basketball fans, a livestream in collaboration with famous basketball influencers, entertaining on-court highlights, and a shoutout during Dragon Boat festival. Beal's Dragon Boat festival success was unparalleled, the 240k likes on that single video was higher than any single player's total likes for the entire 2022-23 season.



Austin on the Up

Austin Reaves proved to be one of the most active athletes on the platform, only behind last year's Kuaishou King, Mo Bamba. His best performing video was a Christmas unboxing of his player edition shoe from Chinese brand Rigorer, which was designed to acknowledge a Chinese university basketball team. This video received 30k likes, accounting for over 20% of his season-long engagements.



Bamba Stays Active

Mo Bamba's Kuaishou account mostly posted content that was mirrored from his international channel, but he was able to receive decent growth due to his being acquired by the Los Angeles Lakers. Most of his videos were game-related, including pregame warmups, in-game highlights, content alongside with LeBron James, and interviews. Besides the announcement of him joining the Lakers, the most engaged post was one that followed a China social trend, getting him 12k+ engagement.

PLAYER CHINA TOURS



7 Days
(8.9-15)

Shanghai,
Suzhou,
Beijing

In partnership
with



Most notable activation

Douyin livestream with The Young Bros



Best performing post: 6,276 engagement
11 Weibo posts with 22K total engagement
8,218 Followers growth on Weibo



Best performing post: 258K engagement
15 Douyin posts with 1.4M total engagement
123,655 Followers growth on Douyin



Best performing post: 4,532 engagement
11 Red Book posts with 23K total engagement.

#HardenChinaTour#

310M Weibo reads, 900M Douyin plays

James Harden

During his trip, he engaged in fan fests, basketball shows, youth basketball camps and promotions for his products in China. He participated in product-related livestreams, such as an Adidas livestream on Douyin and Tmall, and The Young Bros, a huge ecommerce livestreamer on the Douyin platform. Harden sold 16k bottles of wine within 14 seconds during the The Young Bros' livestream, which attracted 20m clicks and 2m simultaneous viewers. His genuine surprise at the success became a trending topic on Douyin with 17m plays and 210m reads on Weibo in just 24 hours.



5 Days
(8.26-30)

Xiamen,
Chengdu,
Shanghai

In partnership
with



Most notable activation

Tasting tea in Chengdu



Best performing post: 2,364 engagement
17 Weibo posts with 15.8K total engagement
2,397 Followers growth on Weibo



Best performing post: 107K engagement
12 Douyin posts with 494K total engagement
18,082 Followers growth on Douyin



Best performing post: 6,680 engagement
13 Red Book posts with 7K total engagement

#ThompsonLooneyAsiaTour#

61M Weibo reads, 81M Douyin plays

#ThompsonChinaTour#

2.9M Red Book views

Klay Thompson & Kevon Looney

Both players had a three-city tour including Xiamen, Chengdu, and Shanghai where they experienced local cultures and cuisines. They competed with young players at the Anta "Yaofeng" event, met with fans at mall events, and interacted with Anta's "Young" program participants in Shanghai. An interesting difference in the Klay Thompson and Kevon Looney tour is that it was also covered by the Golden State Warriors social media accounts, which provided more promotional support and reach for the content.



5 Days
(7.5-9)

Beijing,
Guangzhou

In partnership
with



Most notable activation

Teaches U16 players basketball skills



Best performing post: 1,725 engagement
31 Weibo posts with 10.7K total engagement
26,996 Followers growth on Weibo



Best performing post: 292K engagement
6 Douyin posts with 422K total engagement
69,790 Followers growth on Douyin

#GiannisChinaTour#

63M Weibo reads, 120M Douyin plays

Giannis Antetokounmpo

Giannis Antetokounmpo came to China for a tour with Nike, taking place in Guangzhou and Beijing over the course of five days. During his trip, Giannis's team focused on interacting with the basketball community and kids at basketball clinics, as well as coaching at an amateur basketball event. Giannis engaged with the Chinese U16 National Basketball Team and representatives from the Nike High School Basketball League (CHBL) selection in Beijing. During this special training, Giannis not only shared valuable insights into physical conditioning but also told the story of his own journey to professional basketball to inspire the young players.

PLAYER CHINA TOURS



8 Days
(6.12-19)

Shanghai,
Nanjing,
Zibo, Jinan,
Shenyang,
Taiyuan

In partnership
with

361°

Most notable activation
Douyin livestream of a "100-point game"
with Chinese Basketball KOL Hanshuguang



N/A
All contents are published on 361 accounts



N/A
All contents are published on 361 accounts

#DinwiddieChinaTour#
26M Weibo reads, 170M Douyin plays

Spencer Dinwiddie

During his eight-day China Tour, organised by Chinese apparel and footwear brand 361°, Dinwiddie visited five cities where he played basketball with Chinese basketball influencers and tutored young Chinese ballers. On top of that, he personally delivered his signature shoes to a fan's home and went to try a popular barbecue cuisine in China. Across Weibo, Douyin and Kuaishou, over 3k posts about the trip have been published, with the campaign topic reaching 200m views in total.



11 Days
(7.14-24)
Beijing,
Taiyuan,
Xi'an, Guizhou,
Chongqing,
Guangzhou,
HongKong

In partnership
with



Most notable activation
Visit Guizhou "CunBA"



Best performing post: 801 engagement
3 Weibo posts with 1,071 total engagement
1,386 Followers growth on Weibo



Best performing post: 91K engagement
4 Douyin posts with 149K total engagement
33,081 Followers growth on Douyin

#ButlerChinaTour#
320M Weibo reads, 390M Douyin plays

Jimmy Butler

Jimmy Butler's tour covered seven cities including Beijing, Hong Kong, and Guizhou. Engaging in cultural activities was a focal point, with Butler learning local dialects and performing Peking Opera. He also trained with young players at the Li-Ning Sports Science Institute, unveiled his own court, and interacted with Li-Ning's "Young" program participants. Notably, he visited Guizhou's Taipan Village, inspiring rural school basketball enthusiasts and fostering cross-cultural connections.



10 Days
(8.18-27)
Guangzhou,
Changsha,
Chengdu,
Xi'an,
Zhengzhou,
Shijiazhuang

In partnership
with

361°

Most notable activation
361 Slam Dunk Contest



Best performing post: 44 engagement
3 Weibo posts with 96 total engagement
1,455 Followers growth on Weibo



Best performing post: 176K engagement
10 Douyin posts with 379K total engagement
41,289 Followers growth on Douyin



Best performing post: 2,990 engagement
15 Red Book posts with 14K total engagement

#GordonChinaTour#
34M Weibo reads, 360M Douyin plays

#GordonChinaTour#
3.2M Red Book views

Aaron Gordon

In August, Aaron Gordon visited seven major cities in China as the brand ambassador for 361°. The tour kicked off in Guangzhou, where he met fans and explored martial arts at Bruce Lee's ancestral home. In Changsha, he participated in the "Touch and Ignite" basketball event along with fans, with similar activations in Chengdu, Xi'an, and Zhengzhou. Notably, in Zhengzhou, Gordon also visited the Shaolin Temple to experience traditional Chinese martial arts. The tour concluded in Beijing with the launch of his signature shoe, the AG4.

PLAYER CASE STUDIES

Kyle Anderson

Li Kaier (Kyle Anderson) witnessed huge growth on Chinese social media due to his decision to join the China National basketball team. During the NBA season, Anderson's account only averaged less than 100 engagements per post, but rose to over 500 engagements per post as rumours swirled online. Since the announcement, he has surpassed thousands of engagement per post, generating 3.9m views and 29k engagements from just the announcement video alone.



Shaq on WeChat

After hosting a WeChat livestream as the first NBA player on WeChat Channels last season, Shaq kept building his presence on the platform this year. The best-performing video was his exclusive wishes to Chinese fans on CNY, receiving 74.5k likes, the all-time high for a single video on his channel. He also leveraged this platform to develop activation content with his brand sponsors, such as his own Chinese clothing brand SHAQ and his sponsor NBA2K Online.

LeBron Breaks the Scoring Title

Although LeBron James doesn't have any official social media channels in China, content about LeBron still circulates timelines at impressive rates. When LeBron officially became the #1 scorer in NBA history, it was the #1 topic on Weibo's trending list and generated 800m hashtag reads, while top hashtags generated 230m views on Douyin and 200m views on Kuaishou. This moment in LeBron's career is an example of the massive impact that his celebrity could have on social media if he were to open his own official channels.



Ben Simmons' Guizhou court

The Nets player donated a basketball court to Guizhou province, asking fans to submit their creative designs for how it should look. This donation was made possible by the Chinese Consul General in New York, Huang Ping, as well as the Guizhou government. The activation received 4.2m hashtag reads on Weibo, along with nearly 900k video views, 4m topic views and 450k engagements on Douyin, and 230k plays on Kuaishou.

LEGENDARY STATUS

Aside from current NBA players, many former NBA players have been brand building in China for years. The top-tier of legends have excelled across all three major platforms, setting them and their China social media footprint into a higher echelon than most the current NBA stars.



Stephon Marbury

Marbury didn't lead the legends group in any engagement metrics for this season, but his commitment to creating content in China and consistency compared to last season led him to the top spot on Weibo and Kuaishou. On Weibo, he improved his engagement by 44%. His best content was a simple video of him making a trick shot lay-up in the gym and making a funny face. The video attracted almost 340k likes across his Douyin and Kuaishou channels.

Weibo - 105
Douyin - 71
Kuaishou - 108



Jeremy Lin

Lin was again the most engaged legend on Weibo this year, but was leap-frogged by Shaq for the most engaged on Douyin. His post frequency was down on both Weibo and Douyin as well, although he was still among the top two legends that we tracked. Lin has still not opened a Kuaishou account like many of his other legendary counterparts, but still remains dedicated to the two-channel approach.

Weibo - 100
Douyin - 93
Kuaishou - NA



Allen Iverson

The biggest leap this year for Iverson took place on Douyin and Kuaishou, with Douyin being a particularly impressive improvement. He doubled last year's video output, up to 21 videos from just 11 videos last year. Eight of his Douyin videos were related to his China tour, which contributed to nearly half the likes on his Douyin account.

Weibo - 52
Douyin - 92
Kuaishou - 98



Shaquille O'Neal

Shaq's best platform was undoubtedly Douyin, which launched in August of 2022 and has experienced rapid growth and top performances ever since. While his follower base is still much smaller than the likes of Marbury, Lin, and others, Shaq's Douyin received the highest marks in terms of total likes and average likes per video. The Douyin platform is perfect for his content, which mostly contains humorous and entertaining content from his everyday life.

Weibo - 51
Douyin - 113
Kuaishou - NA

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WINS FOR NBA CHINA

Streetball League (XBA)

Content consumption about semi-pro basketball players has boomed, labelling them as streetball players among their fans. These players and teams have amassed huge followings, transcending ordinary basketball players and becoming legitimate influencers. The teams play at tournaments around the country, and NBA China has worked with them extensively for content production. NBA China even launched the Streetball League (XBA), which showcased the eight top teams. Douyin is the official broadcasting and short video content partner, and the event projects to rack in tens of billions of views throughout the summer.



NBA SPACE Summer Party in Shenzhen

During the NBA Finals, NBA launched a NBA SPACE event in Shenzhen. The three-day party invited NBA legend LaMarcus Aldridge, group singers from the AKB48 Team SH, and other Chinese KOLs on site. Now that events are continuing, we see these NBA-driven activations as an opportunity for the league to connect with fans, but also as an opportunity for NBA teams to do fan interactions.



NBA x EastStart Star

NBA China works with the leading brand of sports education for young children, EastStart Star, to create the EastStart Star NBA special training class, and jointly help cultivate young basketball talents. So far, the NBA Special Training Program has been successfully held in Beijing, Guangzhou, and Shanghai with Qingdao in the future.



New Competition Series

NBA China invited Chinese basketball KOLs to produce a reality show called "Yong Chuang Lan Guan" where the participants are divided into groups and have basketball-related activities and competitions. The series has released two episodes so far, and performed well with 5.7m views on Weibo and 8.5m views on Kuaishou. NBA China's willingness to branch out from content related strictly to the NBA is effective in attracting new followers who have more interest in pure entertainment.



NBA CHINA X ALIBABA

NBA Fantasy in China

Before the 2022-23 season, the NBA launched a daily fantasy game called "NBA Dream Roster". Fans could select their five players everyday and the total points was calculated based on those players' actual on-court performance. Daily top 100 and weekly top 100 participants could win gifts from the NBA. While the total viewership and usage data is not publicly available, the topic has reached over 6.5m views on Weibo.



NBA x Alipay CNY

The NBA worked with Alipay for its CNY campaigns. These included a number of interactive activities such as collection games to win red packets and merchandise, scan the NBA logo to unlock CNY wishes videos from NBA players, receive NBA CNY red packets and payment code covers, and a CNY livestream on Alipay with Chinese basketball KOLs. The most notable one was the limited CNY edition NBA digital collections. They produced 12 NFTs in total - one for each zodiac, of which themes were about looking back to what celebration events NBA did for each zodiac year. The 12 collections were launched two per day for six days in a row, with 4,100 units available for each collection. Fans can win the collections by answering three questions right in 30 seconds in NBA's Alipay.

浏览小程序得五福福卡



NBA Digital Blind Box Collectible

NBA launched its first upgradable digital collection before the 2023 NBA Playoffs on Jing Tan App and Alipay. The 16 playoff teams were divided into four separate blind boxes that the consumer chooses from, and there are 5k collectibles for each team. The blind box contains a digital court for each team that will automatically upgrade with visual additions if the team advances to the next playoff round.

常规赛大幕落下!

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打开腾讯APP - 发售日历
下滑至4/14与4/16 找到NBA季后赛球场盲盒
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NBA X Alipay Membership Program

NBA and Alipay launched a joint membership during NBA Playoffs. The membership is free for users to join, but once a member the Alipay users can get exclusive access to digital collectibles, NBA Store ecommerce coupons, and NBA Hoop Park tickets. In addition to the on-platform benefits for users, they also are able to access an option of benefits outside of the Alipay platform, such as VIP monthly pass on Tencent Sports or Migu Video NBA League Pass monthly pass to stream games, or an NBA2K Online Gift pack for gamers.



GROWTH IN ASIA

NBA Japan Games 2022

Last season, the preseason kicked off with match-ups between the Washington Wizards and Golden State Warriors was a huge hit, largely due to the presence of Japanese NBA player Rui Hachimura and the global star power of the Golden State Warriors. It represented the 15th and 16th NBA games that have ever been played in Japan, as the NBA looks to grow their footprint in Asian countries that have traditionally not been known as basketball crazed markets. The Japan Games also gave the NBA and Golden State Warriors a great opportunity to activate with Rakuten, who were the presenting partner of the games.



Trail Blazers in Philippines

The Portland Trail Blazers are the first team to run a Philippines specific content strategy, having launched their Philippines Twitter and making local language content for their Facebook account as well. Over the course of the last two seasons, they have produced a vast range of content that reaches the Filipino fan base in a direct way. The best performing content was about teaching players Tagalog tongue twisters, with the best performing video reaching 1.5m views and 130k engagements.

12th Edition of Basketball Without Borders Asia

A cross collaboration between the NBA, FIBA and Basketball Australia, the 12th Edition of the Basketball Without Borders Asia program was held from August 7th – 10th. 60 youths across the APAC region were invited to train alongside current and former NBA, WNBA, and FIBA players. Participants had the opportunity to learn valuable leadership skills, providing a holistic development for them.



ACG-NBA Jump 2022

ACG, a pharmaceutical company partnered with NBA to conduct its seventh edition of the ACG-NBA Jump, an event which identifies top talent in the country to join NBA Academy India. The program is meant to reward players with a scholarship to train with top NBA coaches and a possible NBA contract. Princepal Singh, the first graduate from this program went on to win the 2021 NBA Summer League Title with the Sacramento Kings. This year, 11 participants were invited to join NBA Academy India.

OUTLOOK FOR 2023-24

Tours Pave Way for Return of China Games

Over 30 current and former NBA athletes visited China this summer for the first time since 2019, which is an indicator that China is returning as a top priority for players, brands, and the league. This active summer will lay the groundwork for an even more ambitious schedule in the summer of 2024, as well as the reinstitution of the NBA China Games. While the international schedule for the upcoming season has not yet been announced, an international game is scheduled for Abu Dhabi for the second year in a row, but we expect China to be back in that annual rotation in 2024.



NBA Teams Branch Out in Asia

We have seen the Trail Blazers begin to target the Philippines with local content, but not many other teams have followed suit to grow their brand growth in APAC markets. Basketball is a growing presence in the sports landscapes for many of the countries and teams are attracted by the prospect of closing more international partner deals, like the Lakers have with Korean brand Bibigo and Golden State Warriors with Japanese brand Rakuten.



Incorporation of NBA Teams into Events

Thus far, we have seen the NBA China and consumer brands leading the way in events and player tours. However, for 2024 look for NBA teams to collaborate with NBA China and brands into the planning of these events to build their own brand presence and touch points with basketball fans. Take this year as an example, the Golden State Warriors took an active role in promoting the tour of Klay Thompson and Kevon Looney in China, so other teams can expand upon that to have a more definitive presence in China tours or NBA China events in-market.



Further Development of Non-Pro Events

The Village Basketball Association (村BA) and the NBA Streetball League are two examples of events that the NBA China helped develop over the past year. NBA China has seen the value that these amateur and semi-pro basketball organisations have in making the sport of basketball more accessible and consumable by a broader audience, so we expect those partnerships to expand heading into 2024 through more frequent events, more digital content created, and in turn, more sponsor activations.



ABOUT MAILMAN

Founded in China in 1999, Mailman has evolved to become one of the world's leading sports digital agencies. We are digital marketers who help sports rights holders enhance their local brand equity and create sustainable presences. We exist at the intersection of digital & technology, helping the world's biggest sports, entertainment & lifestyle brands build successful businesses in international growth markets. Mailman is part of 160over90, Endeavor's full-service cultural marketing agency.



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NBA RED CARD 2023

CHINA DIGITAL PERFORMANCE INDEX