



## GO *for* GOLD

Champion swimmer Penny Oleksiak has felt the sea change in womens' sports. No longer relegated to the sidelines, elite athletes are finally getting visibility, money, respect. Is it enough? No, but the start matters. In this special portfolio, we salute the guts and glory of our Canadian superstars

*Photography by Lawrence Cortez*



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## No sweat

Athlete or no, here's how to dress the part

By Renée Tse



Athletic wear has been a steady influence on designers' collections in recent seasons. This summer's Olympics in Paris are set to provide some of the year's biggest and sportiest fashion moments—especially with luxury behemoth LVMH on board as a partner. Whether you're getting into the Team Canada spirit or you're inspired by the athletes' outfits for your own summer fun and games, these looks are sure to score 10s across the board.

### Tennis

After a couple of years of tennis style reigning supreme in activewear, the pleated skirt and polo shirt got another big boost from Zendaya serving looks on the *Challengers* press tour (that Loewe silver dress complete with tennis ball heels is still seared into our minds). Court style is clearly here to stay.



A casual twist on the classic tennis polo, this ultra-soft terry Reebok sweater with vintage cut and contrasting trim is perfect to wear for warm-up or cool-down—and for post-game coffee or cocktails.

REEBOK TOP, \$80, REEBOK.CA

Is a tennis look complete without the perfect pleated skirt? Probably not. Featuring built-in shorts and pockets for your tennis balls (or your phone), this skirt makes sure you'll ace every serve.

ARITZIA SKIRT, \$70, ARITZIA.COM



Finding a pair of socks that transition well from game to après sport is key, and this Jacquemus ribbed pair fits the bill. Not only are they luxuriously stylish, they're also comfortable.

JACQUEMUS SOCKS, \$82, JACQUEMUS.COM

Inspired by the gruelling clay courts, these terracotta-coloured shoes are made for speed. You'll be at the top of your game thanks to the stable wide-base design and supportive cushy, airy heel.

NIKE SHOES, \$170, NIKE.COM



### Beach volleyball

For all your active beach needs, take style notes from Canada's beach volleyball team, who will be sporting Canadian brand Left on Friday's suits at the 2024 Olympics. A must have in the kit: a suit that's both comfortable and functional—and looks good—both on land and in water.



With a mother-of-pearl acetate top bar and exposed lens, these sleek sunglasses give your look a sporty edge. Bonus: They come with eyewear straps.

JENNY BIRD SUNGLASSES, \$250, JENNY-BIRD.CA

Although Team Canada's uniforms aren't shoppable, this editor-fave brand offers the same pool and gym-ready silhouettes. Mix and match the two-piece colours and styles to your heart's content.

LEFT ON FRIDAY TOP, \$110, BOTTOM, \$110, LEFTONFRIDAY.COM



With a lightweight sole, cushioned footbed and adjustable velcro ankle straps, these bandana-printed sandals are a chic footwear choice for all-day excursions under the sun.

LOUIS VUITTON SHOES, \$1,560, LOUISVUITTON.COM

Carry your beach essentials in style with this striped canvas tote, complete with back straps for your towel, internal pockets for zero-stress organizing and a magnetic closure for easy access.

MARC JACOBS BAG, \$465, SSENSE.COM



### Track

Whether you're hitting the track, the trails or the treadmill, running attire is more than throwing on a tank and leggings and calling it a day. Running in style has become more accessible, thanks to all the activewear brands creating head-to-toe gear that prioritizes performance and aesthetics equally.



After a successful sneaker collab, Loewe and On dropped their first collection of statement activewear that has the fashion world breaking a sweat. This stormy blue tie-dyed crop top is made of recycled technical jersey.

LOEWE X ON TOP, \$355, LOEWE.COM

In honour of the Olympics and its 50th anniversary, Roots is launching the Northern Athletics collection, which includes this retro, genderless track jacket, a perfect layering piece for warm-up or cooler days.

ROOTS JACKET, \$128, ROOTS.COM (AVAILABLE JUNE 11)



This ultra stretch and smooth-touch fabric is the perfect running companion. Featuring the Japanese brand's Airism technology, these shorts will keep you comfortable.

UNIQLO SHORTS, \$40, UNIQLO.CA

A good pair of shoes is half the battle when it comes to running. These BeyondFeel running shoes keep you light and bouncy on your feet, but still offer enough grit with a high-traction outer sole.

LULULEMON SHOES, \$198, LULULEMON.COM



### Golf

Women's golf fashion has evolved significantly over the past few years, with LPGA players like Minjee Lee and Charley Hull showing off their swings as well as their sleek on-course looks. It helps that brands are taking note and pushing the envelope with stylish, contemporary designs.



Drive like Tiger Woods (or at least dress the part) in the golfer's activewear pieces, designed with performance in mind. This perforated hat allows for continuous airflow.

SUN DAY RED HAT, \$70, SUNDAYRED.CA

Featuring pleated details and integrated undershorts, this lightweight skirt will help you look good and perform well from your first drive. Bonus: The side pockets allow you to easily access your markers and tees.

LACOSTE SKIRT, \$135, LACOSTE.COM



Hit a hole in one in Veronica Beard's capsule collection with activewear brand L'Etoile Sport. Each piece, including this chic polo top, boasts innovative performance fabric and modern, feminine design.

VERONICA BEARD X L'ETOILE TOP, \$223, VERONICA BEARD BOUTIQUES

Modelled after the timeless sneaker silhouette, the outer sole of these Stan Smith shoes provides traction and grounding to help anchor your every stroke.

ADIDAS SHOES, \$150, ADIDAS.CA



THE KIT X TOM'S OF MAINE

## PERSONAL CARE CREATED FOR THE GREATER GOOD

How Tom's of Maine is pioneering natural personal care with its new deodorant and antiperspirant line



For more than 50 years, Tom's of Maine has been a pioneer in the natural personal care space. Now, the brand is setting an even higher standard with an all-new lineup of dermatologist-tested deodorants and antiperspirants.

As always, the ingredients in Tom's of Maine underarm care products are both naturally sourced and derived. There are no artificial fragrances, dyes, preservatives or parabens, and they're also free of baking soda. What's more, the vegan formulas are not tested on animals, and the line's packaging is made from 100 per cent recycled plastic.

If smelling like literal roses is your goal, you can do just that with the new Tom's of Maine deodorant, which comes in Rose Vanilla, alongside other natural scents, like Clean Coast and Mountain Spring, as well as an unscented option. The deodorants are aluminum-free and formulated with soothing aloe vera and moisture-wicking ingredients. Looking to keep sweat in check for up to 48 hours? Try the Tom's of Maine's antiperspirant in Cucumber Aloe or North Woods, which offers extra effective protection.

The feel-good vibes go beyond the formulas, too: Tom's of Maine is a certified B Corp, proof of the company's commitment to making a positive social impact. You can see this in its pledge to donate 10 per cent of its annual profits in Canada to Water First, an organization that helps ensure Indigenous communities in Canada have access to clean water. Personal care products created for the greater good? That's a super fresh idea indeed.



TOM'S OF MAINE DEODORANT AND ANTIPERSPIRANT, \$11.99 EACH, TOMSOFMAINE.CA

This content was created by The Kit; Tom's of Maine funded and approved it.

# AN EVENING OF IMPACT

## A look into the Portraits with Impact Alumni Dinner

Since its inception in 2021, Portraits with Impact has helped hundreds of women feel confident and empowered in the workplace. The holistic styling and headshot experience founded by Julianne Costigan and photographed by Erin Leydon, provides women with a professional portrait that authentically captures their personal and professional brand.

The Kit has been an enthusiastic sponsor of the many iterations of Portraits with Impact and, this spring, we had the pleasure of attending the alumni dinner in Toronto. The dinner brought together past PWI participants for an evening of celebrating, connecting, and networking. Filled with trailblazers and thought leaders, the inspiring and uplifting event is not one we'll soon forget.

Here are our top highlights from the night's festivities.

Images by Vai Yu Law.

### THE KIT'S PICKS FROM PWI'S SIP & SHOP



**HERSKIND** LILITH BLAZER, \$498, [HERSKINDOFFICIAL.CA](https://HERSKINDOFFICIAL.CA)



**MICHAEL KORS** LIMITED-EDITION TRIBECA SMALL SHOULDER BAG, \$798, [MICHAELKORS.COM](https://MICHAELKORS.COM)



**SMYTHE** FRONTIER BLOUSE, \$425, [SHOPSMYTHE.CA](https://SHOPSMYTHE.CA)



**FRAME** LE JANE CROP JEAN, \$358, [RAINBOWJEANS.COM](https://RAINBOWJEANS.COM)



**BA&SH** WINDY SKIRT, \$385, [BA-SH.COM](https://BA-SH.COM)



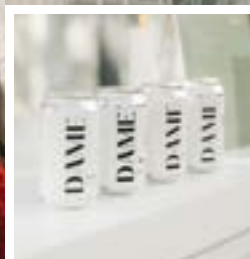
**LOHN** ESEN CANDLE, \$46, [SHOPLOHN.COM](https://SHOPLOHN.COM)



**MELANIE LYNE** ROSETTE HALTER NECK TOP, \$98, [MELANIELYNE.COM](https://MELANIELYNE.COM)



**MAVE & CHEZ** MAYA SLIPPERS, \$195, [MAVEANDCHEZ.COM](https://MAVEANDCHEZ.COM)



Guests mixed and mingled over drinks provided by Dame.



Each attendee received a fragrance from Jo Malone London and had the opportunity to get it personally engraved.



TV personality Meredith Shaw hosted a panel discussion with PWI founder Julianne Costigan, Unilever Senior Brand and PR Strategy Lead Kristen Oliver, and National Director & Program Lead of The Scotiabank Women Initiative, Chris Stager.



TRESEMMÉ products were on site for touch ups and for guests to take home.



During the inspiring evening, guests were treated to a fashion show featuring spring looks from Canadian retailers, including Melanie Lyne, SMYTHE, and Over The Rainbow.



Superstar athletes, past and present, clockwise from left: Megan Rapinoe, Serena Williams, Bianca Andreescu, Michelle Wie, Tessa Virtue, Simone Biles.

## Let's gooo!

In sports, there's an entire universe around the court, the field, the rink: the constellation of storytelling, narratives and public perception. Ellen Hyslop, Jacie deHoop and Roslyn McLarty recognized that early: The Toronto trio started sports media brand The Gist back in 2017 as a community space for women athletes and fans to get into the game together. Since then, the company has disrupted the traditional sports media playbook while growing into a 25-person, multi-million-dollar business with 1.5 million followers and subscribers. We asked Hyslop to pen an open letter about why all this energy matters—and what's next.

Dear Canada,

What an incredible time to be a fan of women's sports in our country. From the Professional Women's Hockey League (PWHL) shattering expectations in its inaugural season to the announcement of a WNBA Toronto team launching in 2026 to the creation of the Northern Super League (NSL)—Canada's first domestic soccer league—the future of women's sports in the north is certainly bright.

But it hasn't always been this way. So, how did we get here? Why is it that we are now finally seeing Canada investing and believing in women's sports as a viable business opportunity and not a charity?

As Taylor Swift would say, it's been a long-time coming.

When we founded The Gist in 2017, the industry looked a lot different than it does today. Women's sports and female athletes received less than 4 per cent of sports media coverage, less than 14 per cent of sports journalists were women, and female fans were seen as an afterthought.

Despite the on-field product being so good for decades, the overwhelmingly male suits who held decision-making power constantly underestimated women's sports, leaving a gaping white space—a.k.a, an opportunity—to fill the void.

Thankfully, the democratization of digital media helped to change the game. The success of The Gist has proven that centring diverse voices, providing equal coverage of men's and women's sports, and servicing all types of sports fans is a sustainable (and smart) business model.

In that same vein, social media in particular has allowed female athletes as well as women's teams and leagues to take matters into their own hands...literally.

A league no longer has to rely on linear television to share game highlights: It can showcase its players' talent on TikTok. An athlete no longer has to rely on a journalist to share their story: They can connect with fans directly through Instagram.

A tale as old as time, it took under-represented communities betting on themselves to take women's sports to an echelon where those same men in suits could no longer ignore their power.

Because of these changes, women's sports now receive approximately 15 per

cent of sports media coverage, around 18 per cent of sports journalists identify as female, and sponsorship dollars of women's sports are increasing by 22 per cent annually.

At The Gist, we've known for a long time what others are just beginning to understand—female fans are a sought-after and crucial audience for the development and continued success of men's and women's sports alike.

There's still a very long way to go until we see a truly level playing field, but the progress has been remarkable.

And these changes aren't just good for women, they're good for society at large, too.

Pre-teen girls drop out of sports at double the rate of boys. One of the main reasons? A lack of female role models. More opportunities to see women in sports—whether that's on the court, on the sidelines or in the bylines—will change this.

Girls and women who play sports not only report higher self-esteem, but they also become women who lead. In fact, 90 per cent of female Fortune 500 CEOs played sports growing up.

It's been a wildly energizing privilege to help drive this change. As a young girl who was obsessed with sports but never thought she could have a place in them, I pinch myself every day. I am so happy for the next generation.

The fight for women's space in sports has been long. In the 1970s, the legendary Billie Jean King fought for equal treatment and pay in tennis. In 1999, the U.S. women's national soccer team won the FIFA Women's World Cup in front of a then-record 90K+ crowd. In 2002, Lisa Leslie sent shock waves through the sports world when she became the first WNBA player to dunk in a game.

Fast forward to today, and Caitlin Clark is driving millions to tune into women's hoops, the PWHL's Sarah Nurse is playing in sold-out NHL arenas, and Canada women's soccer national team captain Christine Sinclair has her own Barbie.

The best part? It's just the beginning. Now it's (still) up to us, the fans, and advocates in the space to keep the momentum going.

It's not a moment, it's a movement.

## A MORE CONFIDENT YOU

TRESEMMÉ gets to the root of personal style and confidence in the workplace



**TRESEMMÉ** KERATIN SMOOTH WEIGHTLESS SHAMPOO, \$9.99; **TRESEMMÉ** KERATIN SMOOTH WEIGHTLESS CONDITIONER, \$9.99; **TRESEMMÉ** KERATIN SMOOTH WEIGHTLESS LEAVE IN LOTION, \$9.99; **TRESEMMÉ** KERATIN SMOOTH WEIGHTLESS WHIPPED SHAPING MOUSSE, \$9.99; **TRESEMMÉ** KERATIN SMOOTH WEIGHTLESS SHINE SERUM, \$9.99; **TRESEMMÉ** KERATIN SMOOTH WEIGHTLESS FINISHING HAIRSPRAY, \$9.99, [TRESEMME.COM](https://TRESEMME.COM)

One of the most positive paths to professional success is boosting personal confidence, which can be as simple as being comfortable with how we present ourselves—because when we look good, we feel good.

Haircare brand TRESEMMÉ Canada has a long track record of advocating for women's empowerment. They recently teamed up with Monday Girl, a female-led networking and career platform, to get to the root (pun intended!) of what fuels workplace confidence. Together, they surveyed more than 2,000 career-focused young professionals and learned that personal style and presentation is one of the biggest factors in developing confidence at work, right behind professional knowledge and expertise.

Putting effort into your style means expressing your personal identity while feeling strong and confident. That's why TRESEMMÉ has curated its offerings to empower women to look and feel their best every day of the week, not just on those salon days we all love so much.

Take the TRESEMMÉ Keratin Smooth Weightless Collection, the brand's best styling range for effortless, smooth styles that gives salon-level results at affordable prices. The eight products in the collection each bring their own benefits to transforming frizzy, unruly hair into a smooth, sleek look while leaving hair healthy-looking and full of natural movement. How's that for polished, professional style?



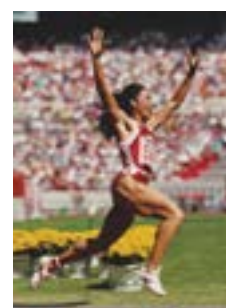
**TRESEMMÉ** KERATIN SMOOTH FORTIFYING HEAT PROTECTION SPRAY, \$9.99; **TRESEMMÉ** KERATIN SMOOTH WEIGHTLESS WHIPPED SHAPING MOUSSE, \$9.99; **TRESEMMÉ** KERATIN SMOOTH WEIGHTLESS BLOWOUT HEAT PROTECT SPRAY, \$9.99, [TRESEMME.COM](https://TRESEMME.COM)

The Kit created this content, TRESEMMÉ funded and approved it.

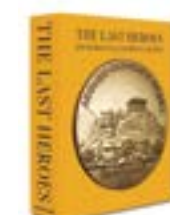
## Born to shine

A coffee table book worth its weight in gold

Brush up on your Olympic history before the Paris Games kick off on July 26. This beautiful, weighty tome spotlights major milestones, from the first Opening Ceremony in 1908 to present day, including Florence Griffith Joyner's extraordinary 1988 performance in South Korea (left). Griffith Joyner was also a trailblazer off the track: Her bright makeup and 4.5-inch nails challenged perceptions of how women athletes should present themselves. Flo-Jo's world records in the 100- and 200-metre dash remained unbroken for 33 years.



Florence Griffith Joyner breaking records in Seoul in 1988.



**THE LAST HEROES: 100 MOMENTS OF OLYMPIC LEGEND** (\$155, \$5,100 FOR SPECIAL EDITION, ASSOLUINE)



# Deeper waters

Penny Oleksiak, Canada's most decorated Olympian, tells Sarah Laing how she's pushing forward—both in and out of the pool—with her eyes on Paris 2024

Like many athletes, Penny Oleksiak is deeply superstitious. “With racing, I’m really strict on what I need to eat, when I need to eat, what kind of warm up I do before I get in the water,” says the Toronto-born swimmer. In fact, the compulsion to adhere to the ritual is so strong that she’ll often override the pre-race nerves that kill her appetite (“I usually get so anxious!”). “A while ago, my thing was I always had to have Cheerios, almond milk, one banana, some peanut butter and a coffee,” says Oleksiak. “I had to have that before every race in Tokyo and Rio, and I’m probably going to have to do that again in Paris.”

Clearly, it’s worked for her: Oleksiak is Canada’s most decorated Olympian, becoming Canada’s youngest Olympic gold medal winner when she was just 16, winning four medals in Rio followed by three more in Tokyo. And that’s before we get to her trophy cabinet from the World Aquatics Championships, basically the Super Bowl of swim.

When we speak, Oleksiak is in her car in Los Angeles, just about to head into a weights session after spending the morning at the pool, where she did 40 minutes of land training followed by 90 minutes of swimming. In the world of pre-Olympic prep, this Monday has been a “pretty chill day,” with just the one “nice, hard” swim rather than the two she does on Tuesdays and Fridays.

“I say it like it’s so little, but it is super tiring,” she says. “But I just feel so blessed, honestly. I get to work out for a living.”

Oleksiak didn’t always feel this way about the sport that catapulted her to household name status. “There was a really long time when I hated what I was doing,” she says. “I felt like I was going to the pool because I had to be there and someone else was telling me to be there. I wasn’t really enjoying the process.”

In fact, this is part of the reason she’s in California right now, having moved to the States last fall in order to train in a different environment. “I wanted to find a new purpose in swimming, and a new love for it,” Oleksiak says. “Out here, I find I really do enjoy going to the pool. I’ve found a lot of fun in just getting better.”

This era of sunshine and palm trees is a grace note after a harrowing few years. Shortly after winning four medals at the 2022 World Aquatic Championships, Oleksiak tore the meniscus in her left knee. After that surgery, she had a run of injuries, including another knee surgery, that kept her sidelined for the better part of two years.

“There were definitely moments when I was freaking out and spiraling,” she says. “It was not necessarily about wondering if I could I be good at swimming again, but more like, at what cost? At what point can my body just not handle this anymore?”

Oleksiak, who turned 24 on June 13, credits the people around her with steering her through those doom spirals. “I have the best trainer in the world out here, who is so honest and straightforward with me,” she says. “In the sense of, ‘We’re here to help you, you’re going to get better, do not let those thoughts get into your head.’”

Her approach these days is “control what you can control, and at the end of the day, there are some things you can’t control, and you just need to roll with the punches.”

Oleksiak says one thing many people don’t realize about swimming is how much it requires of the mind. “You dive in the water, and you have to look at the people next to you and know that you’re going to beat them in order to actually be able to beat them,” she says. “Otherwise, your body just doesn’t let you do it. I’ve watched it before, and I’ve had it happen to me, too.”

To that end, she’s been prioritizing her mental health. Recently, she began working with a new therapist. “It’s definitely daunting to get into that side of things, especially as an athlete,” she says. “We’re taught to be so tough. ‘Keep your head down and keep pushing through it; nothing good comes from being comfortable.’”

It feels counterintuitive to allow herself the space to be vulnerable and examine hard feelings. “I’m learning a lot about myself and where I can catch myself in my train of thought,” says Oleksiak, who adds that her inner world and her outer presentation are often at odds.

“I’m very big on manifesting and trying to be positive,” she says. “But in my head, I’m really, really hard on myself. I tend to let myself get stressed about things and spiral. If you can catch yourself, you can twist it to make what you’re saying work for you and not against you.”

This applies to her current attitude toward goals and achievements. “I try not to think too hard about the future. I try to stay in the moment and enjoy the session I’m in,” she says. “If you’re constantly chasing one specific thing, there’s so much room for failure.”

She’d still love to set a world record, of course, but she’s more sanguine about it these days. “I have these goals, but I’m like, ‘They’re on my path, and they’ll come when they come,’” Oleksiak says. “For me, true success is just enjoying what I’m doing and being able to get out and race and not hate myself for what I’m doing.”

Part of this is “finding balance” with having a personal life while training as hard as she needs to. “It’s about knowing myself and my limits, what is taking away from my joy and what is adding to it—and trying to do a lot more of that.”

It’s advice she might give to her fellow athletes who have become stars in the current blossoming of women’s sport, many of whom she counts as friends, such as PWHL star Sarah Nurse and paralympic track and field athlete Marissa “Paps” Papaconstantinou. “I’ve definitely had a lot of my girlfriends come to me and ask me questions, or just have someone to connect with who understands what they’re going through,” says Oleksiak. “It’s really awesome, because I’ve seen such a major shift in what people are consuming. It’s cool to get even more friends in my community of athletes and connect on the things that are always happening to all of us.”

For example, Oleksiak points to the double standard female and male athletes are held to. “People love to see male athletes being people, being crazy and not being ‘traditional’ athletes,” she says. “For female athletes, you’re put on this separate pedestal where people expect you to be perfect and talk in a certain way or act in a certain way.”

There is a “microscope on us,” she adds, that extends to life outside of the arena. “I get a lot of people talking about the fact that I’m ‘not focused on swimming’ because when I post on Instagram, it tends not to be swimming-related stuff,” says Oleksiak. “It’s frustrating for female athletes to feel like they don’t have space to be normal people.”

She insists that her life outside swimming is “far more boring” than people might imagine. “This morning, I woke up, chilled with my dogs for a bit, talked to some friends on the phone and ate food,” she says.

But she does concede that swimming for gold to an audience of millions is a little bit different than your average workday. “I’m excited to be there to perform for people,” Oleksiak says. Still, “it’s weird. Sometimes I feel like a fish in a little bowl.”

But there’s nowhere she’d rather be this July than in a pool. “Since my knee injury, all I’ve thought about is getting to the Olympics, being healthy and well-trained for it,” she says. “I’ve just been so excited about it, and I’m finally at a place where I’m enjoying it. For real.”



For me, true success is enjoying what I’m doing—being able to get out and race and not hate myself for what I’m doing. It’s about knowing myself and my limits.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: ALAÏA SUNGLASSES, \$1,056, DRESS, \$4,950, FWRD.COM. BOTTEGA VENETA SHOES, \$1,260, HOLTRENFREW.COM. OSCAR DE LA RENTA EARRINGS, \$416. ALEXIS BITTAR BRACELET, \$640, HOLTRENFREW.COM

HERMÈS TOP, \$1,050, HERMÈS.COM. ZIMMERMAN PANTS, \$360, HOLTRENFREW.COM. BIKO RING, \$135, EARRINGS, \$125, ILOVEBIKO.COM

ISSEY MIYAKE JACKET, \$955, HOLTRENFREW.COM. THE ATTICO SWIMSUIT, \$875, THEATTICO.COM. DRIES VAN NOTEN SHORTS, \$1,455, LOEWE SUNGLASSES, \$680, HOLTRENFREW.COM. BIKO EARRINGS, \$155, ILOVEBIKO.COM

CHRISTOPHER JOHN ROGERS BODYSUIT, \$1,275, ABSOLUTELYFABRICS.COM. LOEWE SHOES, \$1,700, HOLTRENFREW.COM. JENNY BIRD EARRINGS, \$169, CUFF, \$138, JENNY-BIRD.CA. BIKO RING, \$135, ILOVEBIKO.COM

FACING PAGE: DAVID KOMA DRESS, \$4,450, FWRD.COM. OSCAR DE LA RENTA EARRINGS, \$530, HOLTRENFREW.COM. BIKO RING, \$135, ILOVEBIKO.COM

COVER: FIDAN NOVROZOVA JACKET, \$2,395, ABSOLUTELYFABRICS.COM. THE ATTICO SWIMSUIT, \$745, THEATTICO.COM. EARRINGS, STYLIST'S OWN

# GAME ON



Natalie Achonwa on the court.

News has broken that the WNBA is coming to Canada. Sports reporter Kayla Grey breaks down what this means for us, in conversation with Canadian basketball pro Natalie Achonwa

They tell you that you're not supposed to show bias or emotion as a journalist, because #factsoverfeelings.

Well, they weren't one of the 18,000 bodies that sold out Scotiabank Arena on May 13, 2023, to watch a WNBA game take place in Canada for the first time: the Lynx against the Sky. They didn't see the young girls and boys rocking jerseys from well before their time, or the looks on the faces of the seasoned vets, in disbelief that they were witnessing this in their lifetime.

They weren't there a year later when a giddy Kia Nurse yelled, "Hey, hey, Canada, how you feeling?!" to another sold-out crowd at the Rogers Centre in Edmonton, ahead of her preseason WNBA debut with the Sparks versus the Storm. They didn't have my post-game view as a sideline reporter when Nurse, after taking the time to greet a never-ending group of fans, stopped halfway through the tunnel to her locker room, bent over and cried, overcome by seeing her legacy play out in real time.

If they had, they would know that with news like this, it's impossible to report facts without feeling.

To answer Nurse's question: Everyone in that arena was feeling a lot of the feelings, mostly the realization that this—this could really work. About three weeks passed before news broke that Toronto would be getting its very own W team, which will tip off its inaugural season in 2026. Then, those feelings quickly rolled down the spectrum to, "Oh s—t, this is going to have to work." The generational impact can't be summed up in a number of sold-out seats: Soon, a young Canadian girl will be able to see herself in a WNBA player who can call Canada home.

It's a level of impact that Natalie Achonwa, one of four Canadians who currently play in the WNBA, has fought for relentlessly. Whether she's on the court or on maternity leave after the birth of her son last spring, the Guelph native and Minnesota Lynx forward has led the charge to ensure that the industry's fruits can be enjoyed by the labourers who planted them, through her leadership with the WNBA players' association and her dedication to the Canadian women's national program. I reached her at home, fresh from the gym and right after putting 1-year-old Maverick down for a nap.

## I will always answer the call, as long as I can still lace up my shoes.

**First things first: After the announcement that Toronto is getting a WNBA franchise team, I go on social and you are hot step dancing. I was like, "Yup, we have certainly arrived!" What was your reaction when you first heard?**

"I felt an array of emotions, but the one that I kept coming back to was joy. That's joy for my inner child and the next generation of girls and boys that will have the W in their backyard and will have these amazing women role models that they get to see firsthand."

And as someone who grew up watching the Raptors—I've got my [Vince] Carter jersey—to know that kids are going to be wearing whoever the next Toronto star is going to be, it gives me chills. I didn't think we would have our own team so soon. It's amazing that it's coming and says so much about the growth of the game in Canada."

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Both practical and joyful, this exuberantly striped umbrella with jaunty fringing will add flair to any patio space—and provide your guests with respite from the sun, which will be particularly appreciated if they've been slogging it out on a tennis court at high noon.

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Keep the competitive spirit alive by setting up another round of games, this time in the form of bean bag toss. Designed for play one-handed—leaving the other free to hold a drink and/or a snack—this particular version enables you to customize it with the monogram of your choice. The name of your rec soccer team, perhaps?

**MARK & GRAHAM BEAN BAG TOSS,** \$374, MARKANDGRAHAM.CA



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Whether you're offering post-workout protein balls or a hard-earned indulgence like chips and guac, there's a size in this set of serving platters (one small, one large) for you. We love the sleek shape, glazed finish—and the fact that they're chip-resistant, too.

**OUR PLACE SERVING PLATTERS (SET OF 2),** \$85, FROMOURPLACE.CA



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Forget bulky terry towels and have a stack of lightweight, versatile Turkish towels on hand for guests to use as they please: to dry off after the pool (sprinkler?), wipe sweat, cover over-sunned shoulders or ward off the evening chill as a wrap.

**SLOWTIDE TOWELS,** \$55, SLOWTIDE.CA



### A PERFECT PITCHER

Lemonade, mimosas, margaritas: Whatever beverage you're serving up to quench your guests' thirst, this elegantly fluted pitcher with a subtle grey-green tint is your perfect partner in refreshment en masse. Plus, it's acrylic, making it ideal for outdoor use.

**HUDSON'S BAY PITCHER,** \$20, THEBAY.COM



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# FUN IN THE SUN

A roundup of the latest sunscreens that are actually a joy to wear



### THE BEACH (AND HAND!) ESSENTIAL

From the new-to-Canada Australia-based sun care experts, this coconut-scented body formula is packed with nourishing ingredients like aloe leaf juice and penta-vitin—a plant-based extract that promises 72 hours of hydration. And unlike many sunscreens that leave hands feeling sticky, this one feels silky like a hand cream. It's also water-resistant for up to 80 minutes.

**ULTRA VIOLETTE EXTREME HYDRATING BODY HAND SPF 50+ SCREEN,** \$41, SEPHORA.COM



### THE TOUCH-UP HERO

Dubbed a "sunscreens serum," this SPF stick is packed with a ton of skin-boosting ingredients like niacinamide, hyaluronic acid and the brand's signature watermelon. It glides easily onto the face, leaving behind a dewy, glass skin-like finish. Plus, the stick format makes for easy reapplication, even over makeup.

**GLOW RECIPE WATERMELON GLOW DEW BALM SPF 45,** \$41, SEPHORA.COM



### THE SPORTY STAPLE

This Hawaiian-based brand knows its way around sun care. Its mineral body SPF is a no-brainer for outdoor activities, whether you're hitting the courts or taking a cooling dip at your local lake. It provides 80 minutes of water- and sweat-resistant protection and is formulated with vitamin B3 to improve skin tone, and shea butter, which gives the cream its rich, enveloping texture.

**KOA BODY MINERAL SUNSCREEN SPF 30,** \$68, TSMRKT.COM



### THE INVISIBLE SHIELD

Starring collagen peptide to help address signs of aging, this weightless sunscreen is undetectable on the skin, aside from the lovely hydrated finish it leaves behind. Due to its lightweight texture and invisible chemical filters, this SPF is a sure-bet for all skin types and tones, even those with oily, acne-prone skin.

**KIEHL'S BEYOND THE SHIELD SERUM SPF 50,** \$56, KIEHL'S.CA



### THE MULTITASKER

This three-in-one combines skin-care, bronzer and a hefty SPF 50 into one chic little dropper. It delivers a believable sun-kissed glow and can be worn alone or layered under makeup. Our favourite part? It's ingredient list reads like a who's who of the skincare world, including ferulic acid, ceramides, collagen peptide and vitamin E.

**VACATION STUDIO TONE SPF 50,** \$40, VACATION.INC

TEXT: SARAH LANG (APRÈS-SPORT); EMILY MACCOLLOCH (SUNSCREEN); PHOTOGRAPHY: GETTY IMAGES

PHOTOGRAPHY: TRISTAN FORBES (GREY); ANKI ACHONWA

# GAME ON



Natalie Achonwa on the court.

News has broken that the WNBA is coming to Canada. Sports reporter Kayla Grey breaks down what this means for us, in conversation with Canadian basketball pro Natalie Achonwa

They tell you that you're not supposed to show bias or emotion as a journalist, because #factsoverfeelings.

Well, they weren't one of the 18,000 bodies that sold out Scotiabank Arena on May 13, 2023, to watch a WNBA game take place in Canada for the first time: the Lynx against the Sky. They didn't see the young girls and boys rocking jerseys from well before their time, or the looks on the faces of the seasoned vets, in disbelief that they were witnessing this in their lifetime.

They weren't there a year later when a giddy Kia Nurse yelled, "Hey, hey, Canada, how you feeling?!" to another sold-out crowd at the Rogers Centre in Edmonton, ahead of her preseason WNBA debut with the Sparks versus the Storm. They didn't have my post-game view as a sideline reporter when Nurse, after taking the time to greet a never-ending group of fans, stopped halfway through the tunnel to her locker room, bent over and cried, overcome by seeing her legacy play out in real time.

If they had, they would know that with news like this, it's impossible to report facts without feeling.

To answer Nurse's question: Everyone in that arena was feeling a lot of the feelings, mostly the realization that this—this could really work. About three weeks passed before news broke that Toronto would be getting its very own W team, which will tip off its inaugural season in 2026. Then, those feelings quickly rolled down the spectrum to, "Oh s—t, this is going to have to work." The generational impact can't be summed up in a number of sold-out seats: Soon, a young Canadian girl will be able to see herself in a WNBA player who can call Canada home.

It's a level of impact that Natalie Achonwa, one of four Canadians who currently play in the WNBA, has fought for relentlessly. Whether she's on the court or on maternity leave after the birth of her son last spring, the Guelph native and Minnesota Lynx forward has led the charge to ensure that the industry's fruits can be enjoyed by the labourers who planted them, through her leadership with the WNBA players' association and her dedication to the Canadian women's national program. I reached her at home, fresh from the gym and right after putting 1-year-old Maverick down for a nap.

## I will always answer the call, as long as I can still lace up my shoes.

**First things first: After the announcement that Toronto is getting a WNBA franchise team, I go on social and you are hot step dancing. I was like, "Yup, we have certainly arrived!" What was your reaction when you first heard?**

"I felt an array of emotions, but the one that I kept coming back to was joy. That's joy for my inner child and the next generation of girls and boys that will have the W in their backyard and will have these amazing women role models that they get to see firsthand."

And as someone who grew up watching the Raptors—I've got my [Vince] Carter jersey—to know that kids are going to be wearing whoever the next Toronto star is going to be, it gives me chills. I didn't think we would have our own team so soon. It's amazing that it's coming and says so much about the growth of the game in Canada."

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**BASIL BANGS UMBRELLA,** \$699, BASILBANGS.CA

## Après sport

It's the season of baseball in the park and bocce in the backyard. Get your post-match entertaining game on with these chic outdoor accessories



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THE KIT X AU LIT FINE LINENS

## CHIC BEDDING FOR THE SWEETEST DREAMS

This summer, give your bedroom the lived-in luxury look with Au Lit Fine Linens

We'll each spend about a third of our lives in bed, which means making this part of our home ultra-comfortable and beautiful is the most essential of everyday luxuries. As the summer heats up, we love upgrading to bedding made with cooling and breathable natural fibres, and designed to add effortless elegance.

Canada's own Au Lit Fine Linens makes styling your summer bed a breeze, offering stylish yet easy-care linen and cotton bedding, alongside plush cotton towels, super-soft loungewear and more. Made in Canada and Europe, its elevated bedding comes in timeless, neutral palettes and is made of only the highest-quality natural fibres. Here are just a few dreamy picks for this season.



**AU LIT FINE LINENS JULIANA LINEN NATURAL DUVET COVER,** \$340 (QUEEN), [AULITFINELINENS.COM](http://AULITFINELINENS.COM)



**AU LIT FINE LINENS MONTAUK SILK & COTTON CLAY DUVET COVER,** \$555 (QUEEN), [AULITFINELINENS.COM](http://AULITFINELINENS.COM)



**AU LIT FINE LINENS DUET WASHED LINEN DUVET COVER,** \$748 (QUEEN), [AULITFINELINENS.COM](http://AULITFINELINENS.COM)



**AU LIT FINE LINENS WASHED COTTON WAFFLE ECRU COVERLET,** \$273 (QUEEN), [AULITFINELINENS.COM](http://AULITFINELINENS.COM)



**AU LIT FINE LINENS CRINKLE COTTON DUVET COVER SET,** \$345 (QUEEN), [AULITFINELINENS.COM](http://AULITFINELINENS.COM)

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## L'EAU



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