



Nike x A'ja Wilson

THE A'ONE CAMPAIGN

ENGINEERED FOR LEGACY. DESIGNED BY IDENTITY.

A 360° Strategic Case Study by Jaychele Nicole Schenck

CREATOR & BRAND PARTNERSHIPS | WASSERMAN FALL 2025 CANDIDATE

"She's a real one, through through through..."





NIKE: LEGACY IN MOTION

**NIKE IS MORE THAN A GLOBAL POWERHOUSE.
IT'S A BRAND THAT CEMENTS LEGENDS.**

From Serena's serve to LeBron's drive, Nike has always defined elite performance.

Now, it's redefining what legacy looks like.

Today's consumers aren't chasing icons.
They're investing in storylines. In community. In belonging.

Nike is responding with intention.
It is repositioning itself as more than a badge of greatness.
It is stepping into the role of cultural architect.

Individual Domination → Generational Impact

**WOMEN'S BASKETBALL IS AT THE CENTER
OF THIS EVOLUTION.**

- WNBA merch is up 176% YoY
- Viewership is breaking records
- the conversation is growing louder

Most signature drops?

Transactional. Predictable. Forgettable.

The A'One changed that.

Because A'ja Wilson isn't just a superstar..
She blends meaning with momentum.

THE OBJECTIVE

HONOR WOMEN'S BASKETBALL. SHIFT THE STANDARD.

More than a sneaker launch. A cultural shift to how signature athlete stories are told.

NIKE SET OUT TO:

- Cement A'ja Wilson as the face of modern women's basketball
- Close the gender gap in athlete-led product storytelling
- Build emotional ownership among Black Gen Z athletes & cultural leaders

"There's power in being first... but legacy lives in being undeniable."

NIKE'S CORE KPIS FOR THE A'ONE:

- Drive sellout momentum (converted: <5 minutes sellout verified)
- Emotional resonance with Black Gen Z buyers, especially women
- Reinforce Nike as the home of culture-led performance design

EXTENDED CULTURAL GOALS:

- Make women's signature footwear standard, not novelty
- Cement A'ja's personal brand as both elite athlete & Southern icon
- Elevate community-built greatness over solo heroism

It wasn't about pushing the boundary. It was about shifting the standard.



THE A'ONE

DESIGNED TO MEAN SOMETHING

**The A'One wasn't built for the shelves.
It was built for the spotlight. And for the story.**

NIKE AND A'JA CO-AUTHORED A SIGNATURE SNEAKER THAT SPEAKS TO HER ROOTS,
HER RISE, AND HER ROLE AS A SOUTHERN ICON.

EVERY ELEMENT HAS MEANING:

Cushion ST2 Midsole
made for dominant post play

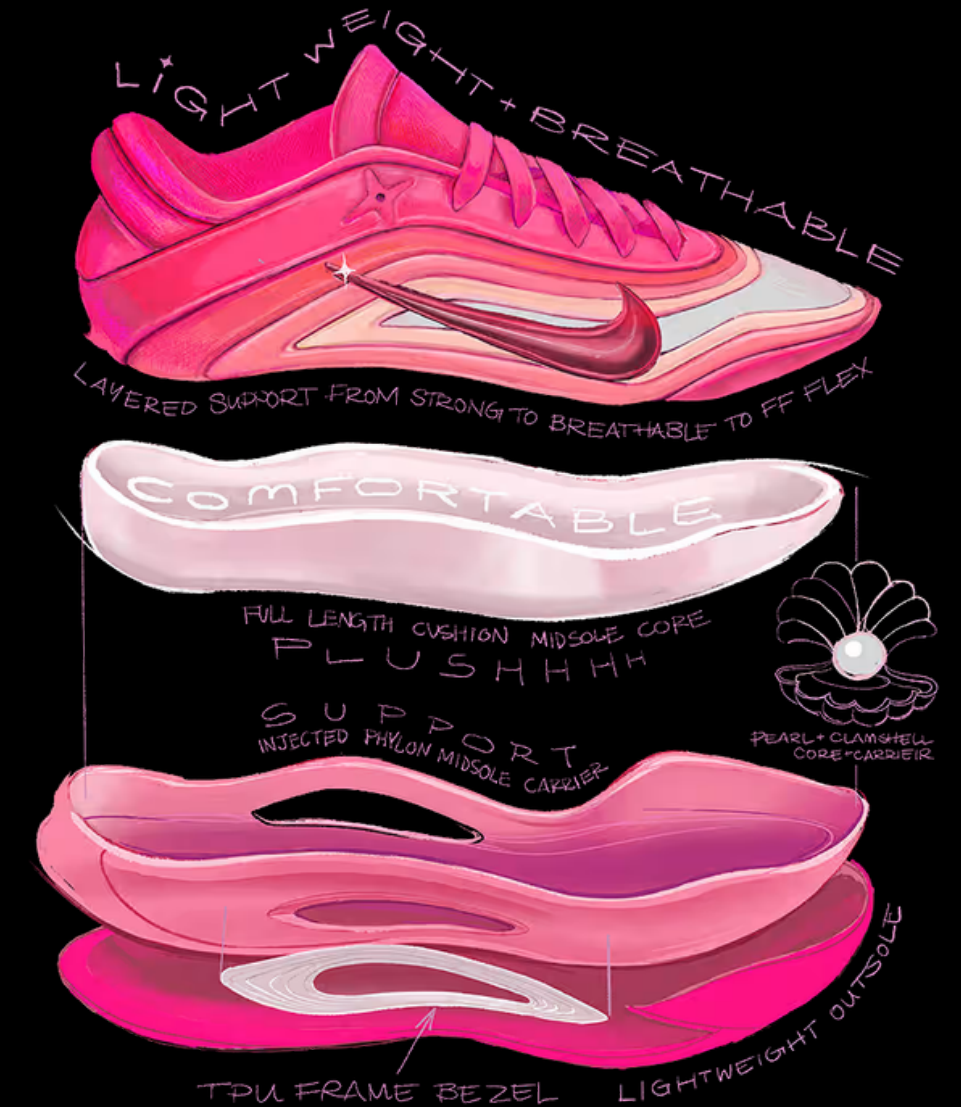
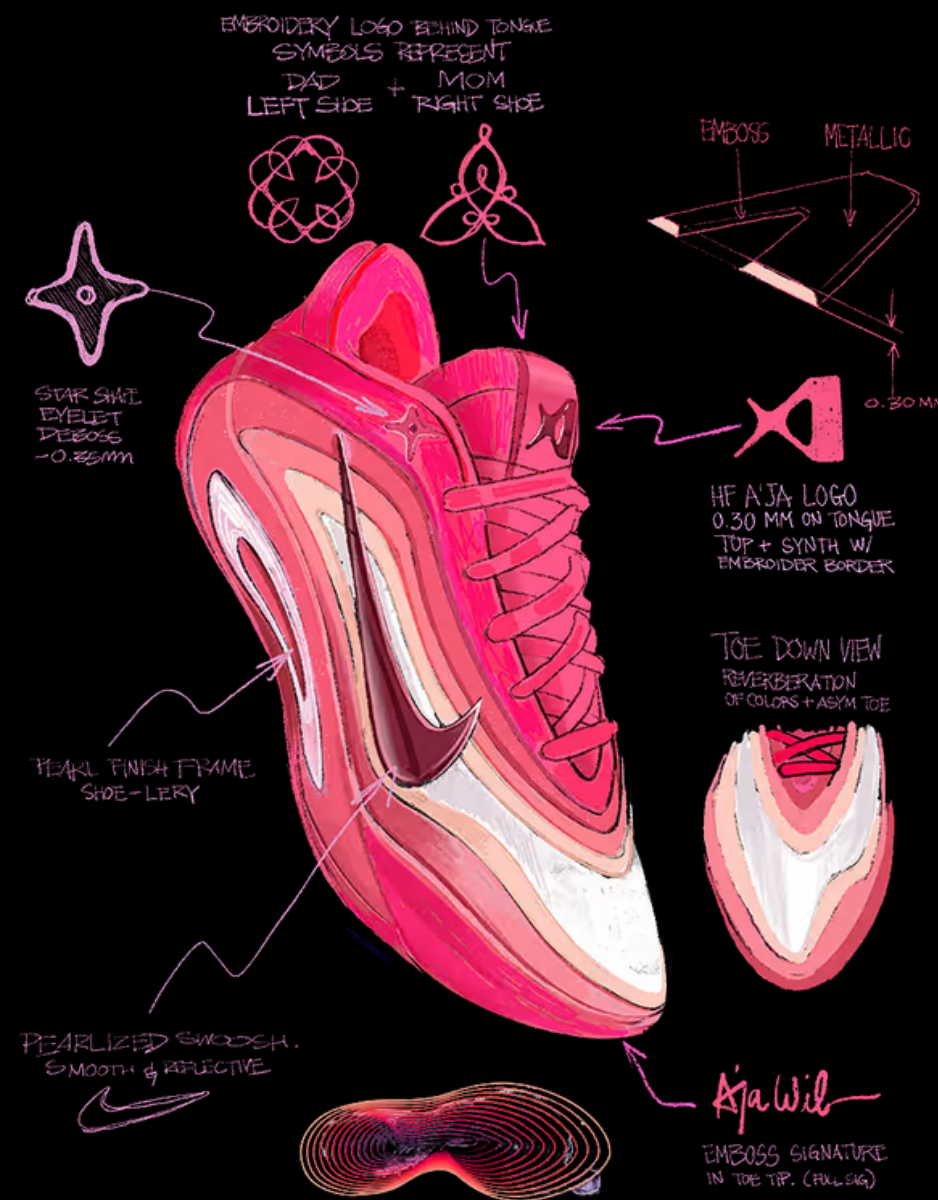
Clamshell Traction
pearl formation meets fast-footed control

Pearlized Frame + Swoosh
nod to her femininity & Divine 9 roots

Embroidered Tongue Symbols
mom on one shoe, dad on the other

Grandmother's Quote on Heel Tab
generational power in every step

Star-shaped Eyelets + A-logo
pulled directly from her signature



WHERE ATHLETE MEETS HEIRLOOM, NOT JUST ANOTHER PRODUCT DROP



A'ONE



WHO IT SPEAKS TO

SPEAKING DIRECTLY TO THE NEXT GENERATION OF ICONS.



PRIMARY AUDIENCE



GEN Z BLACK GIRL ATHLETES

They see themselves in A'ja (powerful, playful, poised)



SNEAKERHEADS

Who care about stories, limited drops, and statement design



WOMEN IN SPORTS

Athletes, fans, and leaders waiting for this kind of campaign



SECONDARY AUDIENCE



CULTURALLY CONSCIOUS WNBA FANS



STYLE-CONSCIOUS GEN Z WOMEN



NIKE LOYALISTS SEEKING PURPOSE-DRIVEN DESIGN



EMOTIONAL ANCHORS

Gen Z doesn't just want to wear the product. They want to feel seen by the campaign.

- Values-based purchase
- Sneaker = identity, not utility
- Shared moment > product flex



MOMENTUM MATTERS

Phase 1: Seeding the Soil (Feb/Mar)

- Jersey retirement at South Carolina
- Private Sheryl Swoopes hand-off event (emotional legacy moment)
- Whisper press build with Issa Rae interview

Phase 2: Culture Bomb (April)

- "One of A'Kind" + "Teaching the Pro" ads drop
- Directed by Malia Obama + Jenn Nkiru
- Ad structure based on Black nursery rhymes and church cadence

Phase 3: Hometown First Tour

- Columbia → Vegas → Tampa (legacy-first, not hype-first)
- A'ja personally hands out sneakers to girls

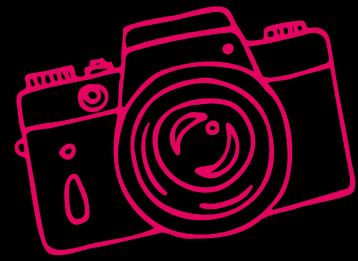
Phase 4: Product Drop + Echo (May)

- <5 minute sneaker sellout
- Apparel line release
- LEGO x Nike collab tease for youth
- Aces Arena Night: WNBA game night rebranded around her story

Every move foreshadowed the next.
No moment stood alone.



WHO TELLS THE STORY?



Directed by *Malia Obama and Jenn Nkiru*

**A CAMPAIGN AD THAT DIDN'T JUST SELL A SHOE...
IT CELEBRATED A LEGACY.**

Designed to feel familiar, like flipping through
a family album or church program:

- *Pink chrome and pearlescent tones*
- *Braided beads spelling out "A'ja"*
- *Glitter grills and glossy lips*
- *Church pews, Southern porches, hoop dreams*

Two visionary storytellers known for blending
avant-garde aesthetics with cultural memory
+ centering Black girlhood, Southern culture,
and cinematic detail.

Every frame held a memory. Beauty,
culture, and sport layered into one.

THIS WASN'T A COMMERCIAL. IT WAS A TRIBUTE.

BLACK GIRL JOY: *not curated, but lived*

GENERATIONAL REVERENCE: *grandmothers, coaches, aunties, lineage*

COMMUNAL RHYTHM: *claps, chants, shared voice*

BASKETBALL NOT AS SPORT, BUT AS INHERITANCE

NOT YOUR TYPICAL ATHLETE MARKETING.

A cultural story that made people feel connected with, not sold to.

HOW NIKE EXECUTED THE SHIFT

PRODUCT LAUNCH → CULTURAL PLAYBOOK

✦ DESIGN

- Built for A'ja's game: dominant post play with fast-footed movement
- Clamshell adds nod to pearls + pressure
- Symbols for her mom, dad, and grandma embedded throughout
- Pearlized frame + star logo reflect femininity and signature identity

✦ ROLLOUT

- Teasers on SNKRS, Nike IG, Youtube, and WNBA channels
- Timed with major WNBA moments + community events
- Wore during key games, synced with jersey retirement + hometown drops

✦ STORYTELLING

- Grounded in legacy, identity, and Black Southern femininity
- Every detail is intentional and authored
- Brand voice matched visual tone: pink chrome, southern cues, poised power

✦ PARTNERSHIPS

- Creator seeding with women in sports, culture, and media
- Editorial coverage: Issa Rae sit-down, Hypebae, Boardroom, ESPN
- "Whisper press" activations with cultural tastemakers and stylists



RESULTS THAT CAN'T BE IGNORED



Sold out in under five minutes

2.1M ad views within 48 hours

Over 500K #AOne views on TikTok in Week 1

Nike's TikTok announcement amassed 416K+ likes and 3.6K comments
Ranked Top 3 most engaged signature drop of the year (Sole Retriever)

Resale price doubled within two weeks

A'ja Wilson trended on sneaker TikTok, Twitter, and ESPN

Spike in searches for "A'One," "A'ja Wilson sneaker," and "WNBA kicks"

LEGO x Nike activation boosted youth sport engagement

US W 6.5 \$117 ↗	US W 7 \$134 ↗	US W 7.5 \$155 ↗
US W 8 \$129 ↗	US W 8.5 \$156 ↗	US W 9 \$185 ↗
US W 9.5 \$142 ↗	US W 10 \$141 ↗	US W 10.5 \$123 ↗
US W 11 \$123 ↗	US W 11.5 \$119 ↗	US W 12 \$113 ↗
US W 12.5 \$133 ↗	US W 13 \$109 ↗	US W 13.5 \$130 ↗
US W 14 \$240	US W 14.5 \$129 ↗	US W 15 \$752



AMPLIFYING REACH & CULTURAL IMPACT

BEYOND THE CORE CROWD

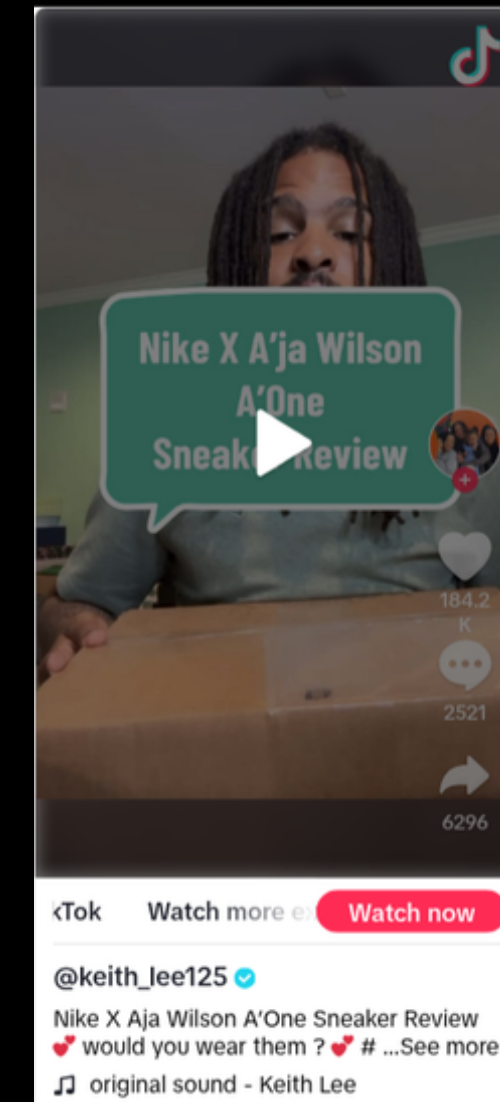
- ✧ Keith Lee's TikTok review hit 1.6M+ views, 190K+ likes, rating the A'One a 9/10 and sparking buzz with male sneakerheads
- ✧ Bam Adebayo wore the A'One in-game, bringing NBA visibility + co-signing the launch with purpose
- ✧ Platforms like Overtime Kicks and Sole Retriever amplified the drop, pushing it beyond WNBA fans into mainstream sneaker culture

MARKET DEMAND

\$360B U.S. Gen Z disposable income
\$450B global Gen Z spending power
Black households command 13% of U.S. discretionary spend
Gen Z spends 23% more on footwear than Millennials
\$1.6 trillion Black consumer spending power (U.S.)

GEN Z DRIVERS HIT

Performance + identity
Social validation + peer hype
Emotion-led storytelling
A platform for culture, not just commerce



"HE WANTED TO BE AT THE FOREFRONT OF PUSHING MY SHOES."
- A'ja Wilson on Bam Adebayo's support

MORE THAN METRICS

BUILT TO CLAIM CULTURAL CAPITAL

- ✦ Named "Best Sports Commercial of the Year" by the Athletic
- ✦ Framing shifted: "Why'd it take so long?" → "Here's the blueprint."
- ✦ Social posts called it "Black girlhood turned campaign reality"
- ✦ Quoted, remixed, and styled across creator pages + platforms

BUILT FOR CULTURAL CAPITAL, NOT JUST CLICKS.

Nike didn't need controversy to break the internet.
They needed a story that felt true and told well (FINALLY).

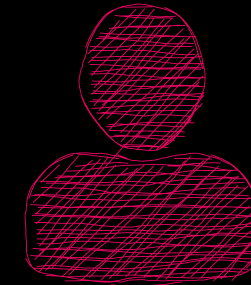


WHAT WASSERMAN CAN LEARN FROM THIS

TRANSLATING A'ONE INTO FUTURE-FORWARD CREATOR PARTNERSHIPS

PERSONALIZATION OVER PLACEMENT

The A'One wasn't just a product. It felt like A'ja in shoe form.



→ BRANDS WIN WHEN THE OFFERING REFLECTS THE CREATOR, NOT JUST THEIR AUDIENCE.

NARRATIVE SEQUENCED LIKE A MIXTAPE

Strategically timed, but deeply textured, emotional, and multilayered at every step..

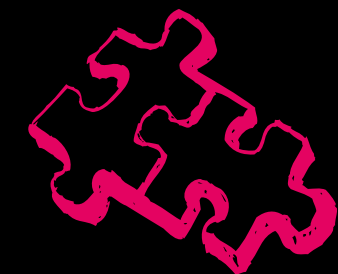


→ AUDIENCES DON'T REMEMBER ADS. THEY REMEMBER STORY ARCS.

COMMUNITY OVER CELEBRITY

The campaign started in her hometown. It honored her people before press.

→ IMPACT SCALES WHEN THE FIRST AUDIENCE IS THE MOST PERSONAL ONE.





WHAT WASSERMAN CAN APPLY

BUILDING BRAND PARTNERSHIPS THAT
LAST, RESONATE, + EVOLVE



Let identity drive the strategy. Lead with personal storytelling, and design ecosystems that evolve with creators over time.



Turn campaigns into remixable formats that invite community reinterpretation, UGC, and cultural ownership.



Invest in youth initiatives, mentorship programs, and ongoing creator-led activations to extend impact beyond the drop + build sustained brand affinity.





THE A'ONE ISN'T THE END

GIVE A GIRL THE RIGHT SNEAKER & SHE'LL RUN THE WORLD.

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"If you think you've seen my best, think again."
- A'ja Wilson

