

WNBA

LAS VEGAS ACES



Mitchell Lane

PUBLISHERS

Kerry Kelaher Fredeen



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PUBLISHERS

mitchelllanepub.com

2001 SW 31st Avenue
Hallandale, FL 33009

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First Edition, 2026.

Author: Kerry Kelaher Fredeen

Designer: Ed Morgan

Editor: Tammy Gagne

Series: WNBA

Title: Las Vegas Aces

Library bound ISBN: 979-8-89260-480-2

eBook ISBN: 979-8-89260-492-5

Photo credits: p. 7, 11, 15 newscom; p. 27 wikimedia;
balance Alamy



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Chapter **ONE**

BACK-TO-BACK CHAMPIONS



BASKETBALL

CHAMPIONSHIP



It was October 18, 2023, game four of the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) Championship. The Las Vegas Aces were one win away from taking home the title. The team won the trophy in 2022. Only two WNBA teams had ever been back-to-back champions, and the last time it happened was twenty-one years ago. There was a great deal on the line.

CHAPTER ONE

The Aces came into the series with a 34-6 record, the best in the league. But their opponents, the New York Liberty, had an impressive season too, with a 32-8 record. The Aces were ahead in the series, two games to one. The trophy was well within reach if they kept working toward it together.

But the deck was stacked against the Aces. Two of their starting players were on the sidelines due to injuries. **Center** Kiah Stokes and **guard** Chelsea Gray both suffered foot injuries in game three and had to sit out the rest of the finals.

The Liberty got off to a fast start with a 23-13 lead at the end of the first quarter. But the Aces pulled together, led by **forward** and center A'ja Wilson. With just 41.7 seconds left in the game, the Aces were ahead by a single point. They used a timeout to hold on to the lead. With just 8 seconds left, the Liberty got the ball but missed the shot that would have tied the series. Soon the buzzer sounded. The Aces won their second championship in a row.

Back-to-Back Champions



The Aces celebrate their win over the Liberty in the 2023 WNBA Championship.

CHAPTER ONE

Wilson scored 24 points and was named Finals Most Valuable Player (MVP). She gave credit for the win to her teammates. “We fought through so much **adversity** throughout the season. . . . We came out on top. I can’t express how proud I am of my teammates. They picked me up when I was down. We cried together. We prayed together and now we are popping champagne together!” she told reporters at the end of the game.

The Las Vegas Aces began as the Utah Starzz, one of the original WNBA teams in 1997. They had the worst record in the league that first year. But they gambled by making some changes and made their way to the top.

Back-to-Back Champions



FAST FACT

A'ja Wilson has written a book called *Dear Black Girls: How to Be True to You*. It includes stories and lessons from Wilson's life.



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