

The NBA Stars Behind the Highlights Report 2024/25

The 2024/25 NBA season marked a turning point in fan viewing habits and content consumption. Highlights lived in vertical video across TikTok, Instagram, YouTube Shorts, and team apps. This report ranks the top 20 players by volume of videos created around them, based on content produced by NBA rights holders across the WSC Sports network. We analyzed millions of clips to show who drove the most creation, which moments and formats traveled farthest, and how those patterns should inform plans for 2025/26.

The signal is clear. **Players drive viewing.** Sports rights holders must capture moments quickly, personalize by fan and language, and connect viewing to outcomes. It is key to prioritize vertical video, automate to ship at game speed, personalize feeds around top names and international stars, and tie engagement to tickets, partners, and merchandise.



Why It Matters?

Players drive viewing and this ranking shows where attention concentrates. In this dataset, the top 10 account for **56.1%** of all Top-20 videos and the top 5 account for **30.2%**. Use the list to focus programming and personalization on these players to lift return visits. Prioritize their moments in vertical formats, localize by fan and language, and connect engagement to clear outcomes. Treat the ranking as a planning tool: build weekly slates around these names and test formats on rising players.

4 Key Takeaways

1. **Player-first engagement:** Modern audiences follow athletes more than teams, and star-driven storytelling drives higher loyalty and retention.
2. **Global localization:** Different regions prioritize different players, from Luka Dončić in Europe to Shai Gilgeous-Alexander in North America, making localized workflows essential.
3. **Vertical dominance:** Short-form vertical video is now the default consumption format for younger audiences.
4. **Monetization opportunities:** Understanding where attention flows allows leagues and broadcasters to sell premium sponsorship packages tied to specific stars.

Heading into the 2025/26 season, these factors will shape not just fan engagement, but **business outcomes**.

Top 20 Players by Video Volume – 2024/25 Season

Ranking	Player name	Team	# of Videos
1	Shai Gilgeous-Alexander	Oklahoma City Thunder	54,691
2	Nikola Jokic	Denver Nuggets	44,997
3	Stephen Curry	Golden State Warriors	44,093
4	Karl-Anthony Towns	New York Knicks	42,759
5	Anthony Edwards	Minnesota Timberwolves	42,367
6	Giannis Antetokounmpo	Milwaukee Bucks	41,307
7	LeBron James	Los Angeles Lakers	39,823
8	Tyrese Haliburton	Indiana Pacers	39,761
9	Jayson Tatum	Boston Celtics	38,489
10	Jalen Brunson	New York Knicks	37,402
11	Donovan Mitchell	Cleveland Cavaliers	36,071
12	Jalen Williams	Oklahoma City Thunder	35,048
13	Jalen Green	Houston Rockets (now Phoenix Suns)	34,219
14	James Harden	Los Angeles Clippers	33,981
15	Trae Young	Atlanta Hawks	33,636
16	OG Anunoby	New York Knicks	32,994
17	Luka Doncic	Los Angeles Lakers	32,675
18	Alperen Sengun	Houston Rockets	32,245
19	Pascal Siakam	Indiana Pacers	31,854
20	Scottie Barnes	Toronto Raptors	30,392

Analysis

1. A new #1 rises: Shai Gilgeous-Alexander: SGA topped all players for content creation, surpassing established icons like Curry and LeBron.

- His rise signals a changing of the guard as younger stars begin to dominate both on-court performance and digital engagement.

2. Generational shift in the top 10: Anthony Edwards, Jalen Brunson, and Tyrese Haliburton broke into the top 10, showing that emerging stars are reshaping the league's narrative.

- This offers opportunities to grow younger fan bases and expand into new markets.

3. Attention concentration: The top 5 account for 30.2% of all Top-20 videos; the top 10 account for 56.1%.

4. Neck-and-neck at 7–8: LeBron James and Tyrese Haliburton are separated by just 62 videos (39,823 vs 39,761), a 0.16% gap.

5. The “Jalen” cluster: Jalen Brunson (#10), Jalen Williams (#12), and Jalen Green (#13) combine for 106,669 videos, 14.1% of the Top-20 total.

6. New York leads all markets by volume. Knicks trio Towns + Brunson + Anunoby = 113,155 videos, 14.9% of the Top-20 total (113,155 / 758,804). That tops every other single market cluster.

7. Small-market Thunder punch above weight. SGA + Jalen Williams = 89,739 videos, **11.8%** share, second only to the Knicks despite Oklahoma City’s smaller DMA.

8. Indianapolis is a quiet #3. Pacers’ Haliburton + Siakam = 71,615 videos, **9.4%** share, edging bigger markets with fewer star entries.

9. Coastal brand stack still matters, but doesn’t dominate. Warriors (Curry), Lakers (LeBron), Celtics (Tatum), plus the Knicks trio sum to 235,560 videos, 31.0% of the Top-20. The other markets account for 69.0%.

10. International stars carry over a third of volume. 8 of 20 are internationals (SGA, Jokić, Giannis, Dončić, Şengün, Siakam, Anunoby and we’re including Karl-Anthony Towns) totaling 313,522 videos, 41.3% of the Top-20. Notably, #1 and #2 are both international.

Notable Absences

Some perennial superstars didn’t crack the top 20 this season, showing how injuries and narratives impact engagement:

- **Joel Embiid (Philadelphia 76ers)** – Injuries limited his availability during key stretches.
- **Kevin Durant (Phoenix Suns, now Houston Rockets)** – Shared spotlight with Booker and Beal diluted his content footprint.
- **Damian Lillard (Milwaukee Bucks, now Portland Trailblazers)** – Initial trade buzz faded as Giannis dominated team storylines.
- **Anthony Davis (Los Angeles Lakers now Dallas Mavericks)** – Despite his production and publicized trade, LeBron remained the dominant Lakers figure.
- **Kyrie Irving (Dallas Mavericks)** – Luka Dončić (#17) was the central focus for Dallas-related content.

Recommendations for Rights Holders – 2025/26 Season

1. Double down on player-first strategies: Fans are following players above all else.

- Build highlight packages and storylines around both top stars and rising talents.
- Personalization is key: tailor content to each fan's favorite players.

2. Localize for global audiences: Different regions have different heroes.

- Luka Dončić drives engagement in Europe, Giannis in Greece, Edwards among U.S. Gen Z fans.

3. Prepare for peak demand: January, March, and the playoff window will see explosive spikes in content needs.

- Automation ensures workflows scale seamlessly to handle these surges.

4. Monetize with data-driven sponsorships: The top 20 list highlights where attention lives.

- Create branded highlight packages and sponsorship activations tied to the league's most engaging players.

Conclusion

The 2024/25 NBA season proved once again that players are the heartbeat of the game.

As we head into 2025/26, rights holders must embrace automation, personalization, and vertical-first storytelling to keep pace with fan expectations and capitalize on the moments that define the sport.

With WSC Sports, leagues, broadcasters, and teams can capture every play, deliver personalized fan experiences, and unlock new revenue streams, ensuring they are ready not just for the next season, but for the future of sports content.

See top 10 infographic on next page.

Top 10 Infographic

