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Theme:
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 King and Kloss: More to be conquered What drives Billie Jean King and Ilana Kloss to power forward with decades-long support of women’s sports

Co-authored by Rob Schaefer, Sports Business Journal

From: <https://www.sportsbusinessjour...>:

It is the day of the 2023 FIFA Women’s World Cup Final in Sydney, and Billie Jean King is on the move.

Down under with her wife and longtime business partner, Ilana Kloss, as guests of FIFA, King spent extended time on the Stadium Australia pitch before the historic match — which drew more than 75,000 fans, rounding out record attendance of 1.98 million for the tournament — conducting interviews with international media, imparting perspective on the impact of Title IX and the wave of momentum behind women’s sports to anyone who requested an audience.

Amid the throng, Stephanie Rudnick, head of public relations for MKTG and **Angel City FC**, the **NWSL** club in which King and Kloss invested in 2020, remembers a quiet moment as King stopped to drink in the scene.

“She looks around, and she’s like, ‘Wow, look at all these young women. This is unbelievable.’ She goes, ‘God, I really wish they understood how we got here today,’” Rudnick said. “I said, ‘I think they know who you are.’ And she’s like, ‘No, they don’t. No way. And that’s fine. I don’t need them to know who I am.’”

Rudnick was surprised by the sentiment. Of course, the average spectator at a global sporting event should know of King, a 39-time Grand Slam winner in her playing days and, in the decades during and after, a champion of inclusivity based on gender, race and sexual orientation. That should be especially true at a seminal moment in the modern ascent of women’s sports, for which King has played a foundational role for more than 50 years.

But as Rudnick, King and Kloss walked toward the stadium tunnel, something telling happened. A contingent of young fans spotted King and began thunderously chanting her name.

“She was shocked,” Rudnick said. “To the rest of us, it’s like, ‘How is she shocked?’ ... But these were really young people. They were probably in their teens and 20s, maybe 30s, a couple parents. I was so heartened to see that she was just gobsmacked.”


King, 81, has every reason to stop and reflect on her successes. Her achievements speak for themselves. Her impact spans multiple generations. Both extend well beyond sports.


But sit with her a while, and the passion that has made her a resonant leader for so long is palpable. King and Kloss now have their heads down and hands in as many buckets as ever: minority ownership of the Los Angeles **Dodgers**, Sparks and Angel City; leadership roles stewarding the Professional Women’s Hockey League and Billie Jean King Cup; and continuing as the guiding hands of the five-decade-old Women’s Sports Foundation and ever-evolving Billie Jean King Enterprises.


In King’s eyes, there is too much yet to be conquered to rest on her laurels, or ride into the sunset. She has an unrelenting energy to continue, in her words, moving the ball forward while she’s here, so that it can continue rolling once she’s gone.

“I always think I’m beginning,” King said, when asked to title this chapter of her life. “I know it’s the end, age-wise, but I always feel like we’re beginning. Every morning I wake up, I can’t wait.”

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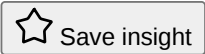
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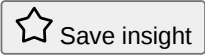
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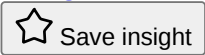
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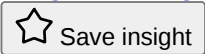
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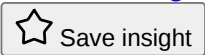
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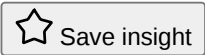
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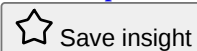
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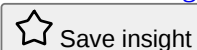


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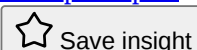
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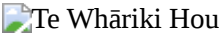
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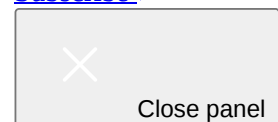
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