

NATIONAL BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION ALL-STAR GAME AND GREEN WEEK



The NBA began working with NRDC's sports greening project in 2007 to enhance the environmental profile of the league. NRDC and NBA launched the league's greening initiative by creating an environmental policy statement that established the league's goal to improve their environmental performance, and presented their sustainability initiative as an institutional priority.

"Through the NBA Green initiative, the league and its teams are taking steps to become a more environmentally responsible organization," said NBA Commissioner David Stern. "With the NRDC's invaluable partnership, we have implemented recycling programs, installed energy- and water-saving fixtures, encouraged the use of sustainable supplies, and promoted the use of mass transit. We know there is more we can do, and we look forward to continuing to work with the NRDC and our teams to help protect our environment."

During the launch of the NBA's green initiative, NRDC assisted the league with environmental assessments at their front offices and at the NBA Store in New York City. NRDC offered strategic advice to the NBA Store on improving their procurement and operational practices, including waste and paper reduction, better paper procurement, low-VOC and environmentally friendly cleaning products and paints, an improved recycling program, and energy-efficiency improvements. At NRDC's suggestion, the NBA removed all plastic items containing the chemical BPA that might come in contact with children. This NBA initiative was four years before the U.S. FDA recommended removing BPA from plastics.

Environmental features have also been incorporated into the NBA's offices and staff events. For instance, the NBA's company-wide picnic in June 2009 reduced the use of disposable utensils, recycled all aluminum cans and plastic bottles, and used 100 percent post-consumer recycled paper products such as sandwich wrap, inner cartons and trays, napkins, and shopping bags.

Soon after the launch of the league's environmental initiative, the "NBA Green" program was formed under the NBA's philanthropic NBA Cares program, and NRDC created customized Greening Advisors that were distributed to all NBA teams and posted on the NBA's HomeCourt intranet site. These web-based advisors provide a comprehensive toolkit for teams and arenas to green their operations.

In an effort to highlight their growing environmental initiatives and engage fans, sponsors, partners, and players, the NBA held its first-ever NBA Green Week in April 2009 at all NBA arenas around the country. As with subsequent Green Weeks, the league held auctions to support environmental efforts, sponsored hands-on community service projects, and featured special on-court apparel.

The inaugural 2009 Green Week also marked the launch of the NBA Green website at www.nba.com/green, including NRDC green tips for home and office, videos and news about team and player greening efforts, and links to resources such as NRDC's Greening Advisor for NBA. In early 2012, the NBA collaborated with NRDC to produce a public service announcement about the league's greening initiative. This PSA was shown in all arenas and on broadcast TV, including ESPN, ABC-TV, TBS, and TNT, as well as NBA-TV, and was viewed by more than 17 million people. The PSA showcased NBA's commitment to renewable energy, recycling, water conservation, and reduced packaging. NBA plans to air this PSA each Green Week in the future, and possibly during its All-Star Game and playoffs.

"One of the things we do well at the NBA is share information and best practices among all of our teams," said Kathy Behrens, executive vice president of social responsibility and player programs for the NBA. "We're

obviously incredibly competitive when it comes to the game and the action on the court. But off the court, we really focus on the things that we can learn from each other, and a lot of what you see on the NBA Green website is really designed to help educate our teams and fans.”

The NBA continues to sponsor Green Week each year, working closely with NRDC to continuously improve environmental attributes.

For example, the NBA engages in a number of environmental messaging initiatives. The league's official outfitter, adidas, has provided All-Star players with shirts featuring the NBA Green logo and made from 50 percent recycled polyester. During nationally broadcast games throughout Green Week, players also wore NBA Green headbands, wristbands, and socks made from 45 percent organic cotton. NBA.com held an online auction of Spalding basketballs incorporating 40 percent recycled content and autographed by NBA players. The NBA Store, NBAStore.com, and select team retailers also offered organic cotton NBA Green t-shirts, hats, socks, headbands, and wristbands for purchase, along with recycled-content Spalding basketballs.

Each of the league's 30 teams hosts Green Week community service events such as tree plantings, recycling drives, and park clean-up days to encourage fans to get involved in the league's greening initiative. Teams have also hosted in-arena Go Green Awareness Nights, including promotions of “greener living” tips and auctions to support environmental protection organizations.

“Thanks to great guidance from the NRDC, the NBA and our teams continue to implement new measures to reduce energy consumption and waste throughout all of our business areas,” said Kathy Behrens. “NBA Green Week highlights the importance of environmental protection while encouraging fans to do their part by incorporating green habits into their daily lives.”

In 2010, league partner HP worked with the Miami HEAT, the Houston Rockets, and the Dallas Mavericks on special service projects throughout NBA Green Week, including a beach clean-up event, and refurbishing homes with Rebuilding Together.

Also during the 2010 NBA Green Week, the NBA Store in New York City hosted a footwear drive to collect slightly worn athletic shoes for donation to Hoops 4 Hope, a global nonprofit organization teaching life skills through basketball to youth in southern Africa. Customers who brought in shoes received a 20 percent discount on purchases of new athletic shoes.

During the 2011 NBA Green Week, the NBA and Sprint launched a Facebook application called “Unlimited Acts of Green,” designed to help fans make greener choices in their daily lives. The app included a list of green acts for fans to select from, including cell phone recycling, and displayed the resulting environmental benefits associated with all fan pledges, including amounts of greenhouse gases, electricity, and water saved.

Other NBA event greening initiatives have included:

- NRDC assisted in greening NBA's EuropeLive tour in October 2008, which featured NBA games in four countries in Europe. The 02 arenas being used in London and Berlin were a showcase for sustainability, as they already had in place many environmental features. In London, this included the diversion of 100 percent of food waste for composting and 100 percent of used cooking oil for biodiesel; advanced recycling programs for glass, plastic, paper, and cardboard, which diverted 60 percent of all waste from landfills; a rainwater catchment and recycling system and other water conservation measures; enhanced transportation options that enabled 75 percent of attendees to take mass transit; and energy-efficient lighting, HVAC equipment, and building structure.

- NRDC began its NBA All-Star Game greening collaboration at the 2008 NBA All-Star Game in New Orleans by arranging for an energy audit of the New Orleans Arena and adjacent Louisiana Superdome and Convention Center. NRDC helped the NBA to improve the existing recycling program at the arena to include plastic bottles and aluminum cans, to procure 100 percent recycled content bathroom tissue at the arena, and to provide hybrid cars for staff transportation during the event.

- The 2009 All-Star Game in Phoenix provided the US Airways Center with a chance to showcase their newly installed solar power system. The 1,100-panel solar array, spanning 18,000 square feet atop a parking garage at the arena, is capable of generating approximately 332 MW of energy annually. That's enough energy to power the US Airways Center for 26 Suns home games—the equivalent of eliminating the release of 44,000 pounds of carbon dioxide each year. The NBA also purchased Green-e certified windpower RECs from Arizona Public Service, the US Airways Center's utility, to offset the equivalent of 1,500 megawatt hours of power used at the 2009 All-Star Game. Additionally, the NBA purchased carbon offsets for all generator use at US Airways Center during the All-Star Game, and for the All-Star Game Jam Session and NBA Block Party.

- The 2009 All-Star Game also incorporated comprehensive recycling and waste reduction efforts. An expanded recycling program was implemented at US Airways Center, NBA All-Star Jam Session, the NBA All-Star Block Party, the Phoenix Convention Center, and Heritage Square (during the NBA welcome party) for plastic bottles and aluminum cans. Recycling PSAs were aired in US Airways Center and at the Jam Session and NBA Block Party to remind all attendees to recycle their cans and bottles at all events.

- The 2009 All-Star Game also encouraged and promoted public transportation options with maps, schedules and information provided through the Jam Session website. Paper products, including Jam Session brochures, credentials, office copy paper, media guides, and tickets, were printed using soy inks on paper with post-consumer recycled content that was manufactured using windpower.

Subsequent All-Star Games have continued to expand on these positive environmental initiatives, incorporating individual measures appropriate to each venue. Some additional examples of NBA All-Star Game successes include:

- Ongoing purchase of renewable energy credits and carbon offsets to balance power consumed at the All-Star Games.
- Expanding recycling services in facilities used in All-Star events.
- Avoiding potentially harmful polyvinyl chloride (PVC) plastics in producing banners.
- Showcasing the use of an electric vehicle used for Jam Van, with solar panels powering interior accessories.

In addition, the NBA has partnered with host cities and recycling organizations, as well as companies such as Sprint, to conduct electronics recycling drives in conjunction with All-Star Games and Green Week. The NBA and its partner organizations encourage fans to bring electronics nearing their end of life to their e-recycling events, where they are recycled responsibly by e-Steward certified organizations. Fans dropping off electronics for recycling receive prizes such as tickets to NBA All-Star Jam Session, a four-day interactive basketball event featuring more than 500,000 square feet of NBA All-Star entertainment. During the NBA All-Star Games 2012 in Orlando, the NBA and Sprint collected 23,000 pounds of used electronics for recycling.