

Clippers will play 11 regular-season games exclusively on KTLA in 2022-23



BY [ANDREW GREIF](#)

How fans will be able to watch every [Clippers](#) game during the upcoming season is not yet fully clear, but a piece of it is after the team announced Tuesday that 15 of its games will air exclusively on KTLA.

Of the [Clippers' 82 regular-season games](#) in the upcoming season, 32 have already been earmarked as national broadcast games on either Turner Sports, ESPN, ABC or NBA TV. KTLA will broadcast four exhibition games starting Sept. 30 and 11 regular-season games, starting Oct. 25. Who will broadcast the rest is still being finalized after the team's deal with Bally Sports expired over the summer. Discussions between Bally, which is owned by Sinclair Broadcast Group, and the team have continued. Seven of the regular-season dates chosen for KTLA broadcasts would have conflicted with Kings games, which also are carried on Bally Sports.

The move to carve out a portion of games on free, over-the-air television is in line with other attempts during [Steve Ballmer's](#) ownership aimed at building a larger fan base by targeting mass audiences. The team, in 2019 [distributed team-branded backpacks](#) to students in Los Angeles and Moreno Valley; in June, it unveiled the last of the 350 public basketball courts it refurbished in Los Angeles parks; and construction on [the team's billion-dollar-plus arena in Inglewood](#), which is scheduled to open in 2024, remains ongoing.

"It's a logical thing to do for purposes of getting wide exposure in a time when fewer people are subscribing to cable and that makes the programming accessible to potentially the entire market," said Ed Desser, a sports media consultant who helped found NBA TV during his 23 years as the NBA's lead electronic media executive.

"That is a time-honored way of generating fan support and driving popularity of a team."

KTLA broadcast Clippers games from 1985 to 1991 and 2002 to 2009 but the eventual end of Clippers basketball on its airwaves mirrored larger industry trends. In the 1980s, regional sports networks were born to function in a complimentary role, carrying some games that would otherwise not be available over the air. But by the mid-1990s, teams began increasingly taking their games off of broadcast TV in favor of selling the rights to RSNs, as money and distribution grew, Desser said.



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Ballmer, the former Microsoft chief executive, has preached technological innovation since purchasing the team in 2014 and in 2019, the team unveiled a complimentary broadcast service dubbed “CourtVision” that overlaid graphics and statistics over game broadcasts and allowed viewers to choose their camera angle. By putting some games back on KTLA, the team could be seen as going “back to the future,” Desser said, trying to remedy one modern TV shift — cord-cutting — by turning to the older, easier to access model of broadcast.

“There is a big chunk of any given market and especially among younger people, who tend not to be cable and satellite subs,” he said. “You don’t want to sacrifice those fans if you can help it and so this is a way of addressing that.”

The 15 games will not only be carried by KTLA but other Nexstar Media-owned stations in Southern California as well: KSWB in San Diego, KGET in Bakersfield and KSEE in Fresno. KTLA will produce pre and postgame shows around its games and other Clippers features on its other broadcasts, Janene Drafs, vice president and general manager, said in a statement.

“The segmentation of the television market has become difficult for consumers,” Gillian Zucker, Clippers president of business operations, said in a statement. “We believe it’s incredibly important for Clippers basketball to be accessible to as many people as possible, and the return of the NBA to KTLA is a critical step.”