

AUTOMOTIVE

Mercedes emphasizes sportiness in bucket list campaign

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ESPN reporter Maria Taylor is hosting a series with Mercedes-Benz. Image credit: ESPN

By SARAH RAMIREZ

German automaker Mercedes-Benz is turning to popular sports personalities to tout its most accessible model to a wide audience.

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Mercedes has partnered with ESPN reporter Maria Taylor to host a new mini-series on the sports network's YouTube channel, titled "A-Class Bucket List." The series will travel the country to give sports fans an in-depth look at its A-Class model and how driving can lead to fun opportunities.

A-Class bucket list

The first episode takes Ms. Taylor to Tuscaloosa, AL to interview University of Alabama head football coach Nick Saban, a college football icon.

In a style similar to "Carpool Karaoke," Ms. Taylor picks up Mr. Saban in a white Mercedes A-Class sedan for a casual interview on the way to a basketball gymnasium. Ms. Taylor wants to cross off "Play Goat with the G.O.A.T" – an adaption of the game Horse based on the acronym "greatest of all time" – from her bucket list.

Embedded Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/diKARK6-718>

Maria Taylor interviews Coach Nick Saban in the first episode of her A-Class Bucket List Web series

As the pair drive through the college town, Ms. Taylor is able to highlight some of the car's innovative features including the voice-recognition user interface. In addition to making phone calls, the voice system has GPS capabilities.

Making the episode seem more authentic, Ms. Taylor informally interviews Mr. Saban about his experience on teams growing up and how it applies to his successful coaching career. Focusing on sports topics instead of forcing a conversation about cars is a more natural fit for both Ms. Taylor and Mr. Saban, as well as ESPN's audience.

Although ESPN lost 2 million subscribers in fiscal 2018, according to *Sports Illustrated*, it remains the most dominate sports network and attracts enticing viewers for advertisers. By choosing to partner with Ms. Taylor, who primarily

covers college football, Mercedes is bringing its A-Class model to regions many luxury brands neglect.



Maria Taylor interviews Nick Saban in a Mercedes A-Class. Image credit: ESPN

Prior to the launch of the Web series, Mercedes encouraged fans to share their own A-Class bucket lists on social media.

The automaker created bucket list templates on its Instagram Stories so users could post about their own biggest dreams. Brand ambassadors singer Charlie XCX and tennis player Sloane Stephens also shared their own bucket list items with special videos for Mercedes-Benz USA's Instagram.

Mercedes and sports

Mercedes has long embraced athletes and sports, particularly tennis and football, to reach vast audiences.

Ms. Stephens joined the automaker as an ambassador earlier this summer.

With the tennis player's help on Instagram, the automaker also reached out to a wider group of fans with a ticket giveaway that included tickets to the Mercedes-Benz suite during a U.S. Open match. Branded tennis balls were hidden alongside a 2019 Mercedes-Benz G-Class vehicle in different iconic spots around New York ([see story](#)).

Mercedes-Benz also has a naming rights agreement for a new Atlanta stadium, home to the city's professional football team, that opened in 2017.

As the naming partner, the stadium will be referred to as Mercedes-Benz Stadium until the contract is up for renewal in 2042. The high amount of visibility the stadium will receive between athletics and other entertainment events will keep Mercedes-Benz top of mind among local consumers and those tuning in during game time ([see story](#)).

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