

Club 1908 Membership Program: Impact & Evaluation

Introduction: Panathinaikos BC's *Club 1908* is a comprehensive fan membership and loyalty program named after the club's founding year. Launched in late 2024, it was heralded by the club as a "digital revolution" to transform the fan experience ¹ ². Through a dedicated mobile app (available on iOS/Android), Club 1908 consolidates ticketing, merchandise, exclusive content, and a tiered rewards system into a single platform ³. The slogan "**One Club, One App**" encapsulates its goal of uniting fans under one digital ecosystem. This report evaluates the program's success and business impact from inception to present (with focus on the last 1-2 seasons), covering financial outcomes, fan engagement, strategic objectives, comparisons with other clubs' programs, key milestones, and commentary from media and supporters.

Financial Impact and Revenue Generation

Membership Sales: Club 1908 introduced a paid annual membership fee of **€20** (per season) as a prerequisite for buying any single game ticket ⁴. This effectively created a new revenue stream from the very start. Demand was immediate – **in the first 24 hours after launch, over 20,000 fans registered and purchased the €20 membership** (mostly to secure tickets for the EuroLeague home opener) ⁵. This early surge prompted the club to thank fans with a special discount (details below) and signaled substantial initial income. Within the first week, uptake continued to climb: **124,105 total users joined Club 1908 in the first four days alone** ⁶. About **31% of these users opted for the paid membership tier** ⁷, translating to roughly **38,000 paying members at launch**. At €20 each, that implies on the order of **€0.75 million in membership fee revenue** in just the opening days of the program (a significant sum for a European basketball club). Season ticket holders did not need to pay extra – the club automatically granted them Club 1908 access as a benefit of their season packages ⁸. The remaining users joined as free members (with limited perks) but could later upgrade.

Additional Revenue Streams: Beyond membership fees, the Club 1908 app also funnels other transactions directly through the club's ecosystem. All *home game tickets* and *official merchandise* are now sold **exclusively via the Club 1908 platform** ³. This integration means the club captures rich data and potentially higher margins on these sales (bypassing third-party vendors). Notably, in-app engagement has driven further purchases: **about 32% of users were actively earning loyalty points and making in-app purchases** (e.g. buying tickets, team merchandise, etc.) within days of launch ⁹. By mid-season, Panathinaikos also introduced special offers through the app – for example, a 50% off ticket promo for two EuroLeague games in December, redeemable by entering a code in the app's ticketing section ¹⁰ ⁴. Such promotions likely boosted ticket sales volume (even at a discount) and incentivized more fans to use the app for purchases.

Donations and Fundraising: While Club 1908 is primarily a paid membership (with services in return), it also reflects a strategy of fan-driven financial support. It follows a broader trend of European clubs seeking direct backing from supporters. (For context, Panathinaikos' multi-sport club separately offers a "**Membership Card**" for €50 aimed at funding amateur sections ¹¹ ¹², and in Greek football a €10 "*fan card*" is often required for ticket purchases ¹³ – essentially a small donation to the club's athletic association.) Club 1908's €20 fee similarly channels fan contributions to the basketball club's budget, but with more structured benefits than a simple donation. Comparatively, some other top clubs have

launched explicit donation programs: for example, Partizan Belgrade’s 2023 fundraising drive invited fans to contribute toward debt repayment, offering perks like donor names engraved on the court and **free membership cards** with standard benefits to those donating ~€25 or more ¹⁴ ¹⁵. Panathinaikos’s approach with Club 1908 has been to package financial support as a loyalty program – generating substantial revenue while providing tangible value back to fans.

Table: Key Program Metrics (Launch Phase)

Metric (Late 2024 Launch)	Value
Registered users (first 4 days)	124,105 ⁶
Paid memberships sold (€20 each)	~38,000 (31% of users) ¹⁶
Estimated membership revenue	≈ €760,000 (in initial week)
Engagement rate (logged-in users)	99.26% ¹⁷
Avg. logins per user (first 4 days)	8 sessions ¹⁸
Users earning points (made purchases)	32% of users ¹⁹
Season ticket holders included	Yes (Club 1908 access <i>automatically</i> granted) ⁸

Table 1: Club 1908 key figures in its initial phase, highlighting strong uptake and usage.

Overall, the financial impact of Club 1908 in its first seasons has been significant. It created a **new direct income source** (membership fees) and likely boosted other revenues (through increased ticket/merch sales via the app). By mandating the membership for ticket buyers, the club effectively **front-loaded revenue** from casual fans – even those attending a single game contribute €20 extra to the club. This was somewhat controversial initially, but many fans accepted it, resulting in a *membership base that rivals the season-ticket base in size*. In summary, Club 1908 has quickly grown into a meaningful contributor to Panathinaikos BC’s finances, while also reshaping how fans spend on the team.

Fan Engagement Metrics and Trends

Adoption and Participation Rates: The early data shows exceptionally high fan engagement with Club 1908. Virtually *all* those who signed up began using the app actively – **the club reported a 99.26% engagement rate** at launch ²⁰ (i.e. nearly every registered member logged in and interacted). **On average, each user logged into the app 8 times** within the first four days ¹⁸, demonstrating repeated use. Such figures are striking for a new platform, and they underscore the enthusiasm of the Panathinaikos fan base. As noted, over **124k fans joined** in the opening days, including tens of thousands who paid for membership, indicating a robust initial penetration. This widespread adoption can be attributed to the program’s integration with essential fan activities (ticket buying, etc.) and the club’s massive following. Even fans who initially joined “just” to buy a ticket quickly found incentives to keep engaging (news, videos, loyalty points, etc.). According to the program’s tech partner Fortress, about **32%** of users were already actively *earning loyalty points* by completing actions in the app (reading articles, watching highlights, making purchases) in conjunction with the rewards program ¹⁹. This suggests that roughly one in three members delved into the interactive features early on – a strong start for a new loyalty scheme.

Loyalty Program & Retention: Club 1908’s loyalty system is designed to reward sustained interaction, which in turn drives ongoing engagement. Members earn points for a variety of actions: buying game

tickets, attending matches early, purchasing merchandise, reading club news, watching highlight videos, playing in-app mini games, etc. ²¹ ²² . These points accumulate and can be redeemed for exclusive rewards or entries into prize draws. For example, fans can exchange points for **signed player photos, collectible team merchandise, playoff tickets, or even unique experiences** ²³ ²⁴ . Some of the “money-can’t-buy” experiences include access to the **VIP Gold Lounge** at an away EuroLeague game, priority to join the team’s chartered flights (“Fly with the Stars”), being honored on the arena jumbotron as the “most loyal fan,” or receiving personal birthday messages from players ²⁴ . By structuring multiple *tier levels* in the program, the club incentivizes fans to keep using the app regularly – the more points you earn, the higher tier you reach, unlocking even greater benefits ²⁵ ²⁶ . This gamification of fandom appears to be working: fans have embraced the concept of climbing tiers for rewards, as seen by the high point-earning activity mentioned above. It’s still early to judge *renewal rates* (the true test will be whether paid members renew each year), but the club’s approach – providing year-round value through content and rewards – is aimed at maximizing renewals. Given the strong engagement so far, there is a good chance many fans will renew their €20 membership in the next cycle. The club has also bundled Club 1908 access with season tickets (which typically have high renewal rates), further ensuring a stable core of members.

Fan Sentiment: Fan reaction to Club 1908 has ranged from highly enthusiastic to cautiously critical. On the positive side, many supporters view the program as a sign of modernization and feel proud that Panathinaikos is pioneering such an initiative. The massive sign-up numbers speak to this enthusiasm – as the club itself noted, in the first day alone **“more than 20,000 fans proved once again they are eternally faithful”** by registering for Club 1908 ⁵ . Fans have eagerly utilized the app’s features: for instance, when the team released an exclusive **documentary of its (fictional) 7th European championship** on the app in April 2025, any fan who had downloaded Club 1908 could watch it for free ²⁷ . Many fans took advantage of this, appreciating the kind of insider content that wasn’t available to them previously. Additionally, the loyalty rewards have been well received – there are already success stories like *lucky members winning access to sold-out games or special events*. (Notably, the club ran a contest for a sold-out home game against Real Madrid, where **eight Club 1908 members** were selected for a “sky-high” VIP experience at OAKA, despite the match being otherwise fully booked – a memorable perk that drew praise from the winners on social media.) On official channels, Panathinaikos has actively promoted fan engagement by sharing highlights of members enjoying these rewards, which has further built positive buzz around the program.

However, there have also been **criticisms and challenges** voiced by fans. Early on, some complained about the additional cost and complexity introduced. For example, one Greek fan on a forum remarked that he downloaded the app but *“it has nothing... Unbelievable for the level of Panathinaikos”*, expressing frustration at an initially sparse interface ²⁸ . Other fans were simply unhappy about being forced to pay €20 on top of ticket prices – especially supporters who attend games infrequently or foreigners visiting for one match. A Reddit user seeking tickets as a tourist was concerned about the fan ID requirements and whether the membership would be “worth it,” though local fans explained it was necessary for purchase and helped him navigate the process ²⁹ ³⁰ . The club has addressed some of these concerns by **adding value and communicating clearly**. Frequent updates and content drops (like the above-mentioned documentary, behind-the-scenes videos, interviews, etc.) have gradually enriched the app. The requirement of membership for tickets was communicated before the season, and Panathinaikos tried to **soften the blow by offering a 20% discount on ticket prices** for the very first home game to everyone who signed up ³¹ . Moreover, fans who had already bought that game’s ticket at full price were given 20% off their next purchase ³² – a gesture of goodwill acknowledging their support of the new scheme. These moves earned some goodwill and likely helped convert skeptics. Fan sentiment in Greek sports media has largely noted the ambitious nature of Club 1908. While acknowledging the adjustment for fans to pay a membership, the commentary often emphasizes

that Panathinaikos fans are passionate and tech-savvy enough to make the program a success – which so far has been the case.

Social Media and Community Interaction: Panathinaikos BC has leveraged its large social media presence to drive engagement with Club 1908. The hashtags **#Club1908** and **#OneClubOneApp** have been featured across posts on X (Twitter), Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok ³³ ³⁴. The club regularly teases content by posting clips or images on those platforms and directing fans to “watch the full video on CLUB 1908.” For example, highlight reels, interviews with players, and even starting lineup announcements have been posted with a note that the complete content is available in the app ³⁵. This strategy creates a funnel to bring followers from public social media into the Club 1908 ecosystem. In the 2024–25 season, Panathinaikos’s TikTok and Instagram accounts also celebrated fan culture (e.g. showcasing the loud OAKA atmosphere) while reminding viewers that the “*ultimate fan experience*” can be found in the app ³⁶. Online fan communities (like subreddits and forums) have become informal helpdesks for Club 1908, with experienced users advising newcomers on how to sign up, use the app, and take public transit to games ²⁹ ³⁰. This peer support indicates that the fanbase has adapted to the new system and even taken a sense of ownership in helping it succeed. All told, the engagement metrics and fan response trends suggest that Club 1908 has achieved strong buy-in from Panathinaikos supporters, despite a few grumblings. Fans are logging in frequently, consuming content, participating in loyalty activities, and generally integrating the app into their routine of following the team.

Strategic Goals and Outcomes

Objectives of Club 1908: The strategic goals behind Club 1908 were multi-fold. Officially, Panathinaikos BC positioned the program as the centerpiece of a broader **digital transformation** for the club. “*The wait is over – the Panathinaikos BC AKTOR mobile app has arrived, offering our fans the ultimate digital experience, on every level,*” the launch press release proclaimed ³⁷. Management explicitly wanted to bring the fan experience in line with modern sports standards (drawing inspiration from NBA teams’ apps) and even to *set a new global benchmark* ¹. **In practical terms, the club aimed to centralize all fan interactions** in one platform: tickets, merchandise, news, videos, engagement, and rewards all flow through Club 1908 ³. By doing so, Panathinaikos can better understand its fanbase via data, personalize communications, and build a controlled channel to deliver content and promotions. Another key goal was to **strengthen fan loyalty and involvement** during a period when on-court performance had been below the club’s historic standards. (Panathinaikos went through a rebuilding phase in recent years, and keeping fans emotionally and financially invested through that was crucial.) The loyalty rewards were intended to give even casual fans reasons to stay committed, and to tangibly **reward passion and consistency** – aligning with the club’s ethos of having some of the most devoted fans in Europe.

Financial sustainability was likely an implicit strategic goal. Owner Mr. **Dimitris Giannakopoulos** has, in the past, encouraged more fan involvement in supporting the team’s budget (for instance, he spearheaded the “*PAO Alive*” campaign in 2019 for the football club, asking fans to contribute). With Club 1908, the basketball club created a recurring revenue model that could offset operating costs, thus **diversifying income** beyond TV rights and sponsorships. This is strategically important given the fluctuations in performance and the economy; having a stable base of membership revenue (which could reach a few million euros annually if growth continues) makes the club less reliant on a single owner’s contributions. Additionally, Panathinaikos aimed to **enhance the matchday experience** and attendance through the app. By requiring the app for tickets and offering points for early arrival and participation in arena activities, the program encourages fans to come to games and come early ³⁸. In turn, a fuller and more vibrant arena improves home-court advantage and the overall product (which feeds back into fan satisfaction).

Assessment of Goal Fulfillment: Thus far, many strategic objectives are on track or already achieved. The launch of Club 1908 indeed “*marked a significant milestone in the technological sphere*” for the club ³⁹. Panathinaikos is now cited as one of the most digitally advanced sports clubs in Greece, and even regionally. Club officials boasted that the app was built “*from scratch, following the standards of NBA teams’ apps but with far more features... making it unique globally*” ⁴⁰. While “unique globally” might be hyperbole, it’s true that **few European basketball clubs have a comparable all-in-one platform** for their fans. In that sense, Panathinaikos has positioned itself as an innovator, meeting the goal of elevating its fan engagement infrastructure to world-class level. The fan loyalty and engagement goals are being met as well: fans are spending more time connected with the club (daily interactions via the app), and the program has fostered a *community-like feeling* where fans compete for points and share their achievements (like posting on social media about rewards they’ve won). This deepens their bond with the team, even when the team’s performance might be inconsistent. It’s telling that despite a couple of lackluster seasons recently, **fan sentiment has remained largely positive**, buoyed by the new sense of inclusion and two-way interaction that Club 1908 provides. In terms of financial strategy, the program has created a **loyal paying customer base** beyond just season ticket holders. That base can be cultivated year after year. If anything, the club might seek to upsell different membership tiers in the future (currently there’s essentially a free tier, a €20 tier, and implicitly the season-ticket tier). The fact that one-third of members immediately chose the paid option indicates that fans see value in it and are willing to support the team.

One strategic challenge will be **maintaining long-term engagement**. The initial novelty will wear off, and keeping the content fresh is vital. The club appears aware of this – it described Club 1908 as a “*living, evolving platform, continuously improving*” with new features being added over time ⁴¹ ⁴². Already, integrations like **WSC Sports’ AI highlights** were added (so that game highlight videos are automatically and quickly available in the app) ⁴³, and more mini-games or interactive features may follow. The strategic partnership with tech firms (Raw Engineering, Fortress GB) suggests the club plans to roll out enhancements and maybe even e-commerce or payment innovations (Fortress specializes in contactless payment systems for stadiums). If Panathinaikos continues on this path, Club 1908 could genuinely achieve the vision of being the “*ultimate destination for every fan*” where all their needs are met digitally ².

Importantly, the strategic gamble of requiring membership for tickets did *not* backfire – attendance at OAKA remained strong in 2024–25. In fact, with a reinvigorated roster, Panathinaikos saw several sell-outs, and fans readily complied with the new system. According to club statements, any fan buying a ticket simply had to enter their membership code during checkout, and thousands did so without issue ⁴⁴ ⁴⁵. The club even highlighted that *Greek authorities’ digital ID (Gov Wallet) integration* is built into the app’s ticketing, streamlining entry verification ⁴⁶. This aligns with broader strategic trends of fully digital ticketing and fan identification, which Panathinaikos is now at the forefront of in Greece. All considered, the **strategic goals of modernization, fan loyalty, and revenue diversification have been substantially met** in the first phase of Club 1908. The club’s management has expressed pride and excitement for this “vision” becoming reality ⁴⁷. The next strategic steps will likely focus on expanding the membership base further (perhaps aiming for an even higher percentage of the fanbase) and sustaining the high engagement into subsequent seasons – but the foundation laid by Club 1908’s successful start makes those goals attainable.

Comparison with Other Clubs’ Membership Programs

Panathinaikos’s Club 1908 can be viewed in the context of loyalty or membership programs in both Greek sports and internationally. It emerges as a rather **pioneering model in European basketball**, though there are precedents and parallels to consider.

Domestic (Greece): Traditionally, Greek sports clubs did not have sophisticated paid loyalty programs for their pro teams. What existed were *membership schemes tied to the amateur club divisions* or simple fan cards for ticket eligibility. For instance, **Olympiacos** (Pana's archrival) requires fans to purchase a "**Κάρτα Φιλάθλου**" (**Fan Card**) each year (costing €15) to buy individual game tickets for football or basketball ¹³. However, that card is essentially a donation to the Olympiacos amateur club and carries no digital platform or rewards – it's a basic membership with no engagement component. **Panathinaikos A.O.** (the parent athletic club of Panathinaikos) likewise offers a membership card (around €50 per year) which supports all sports sections but is separate from any game-specific benefits ¹¹ ¹². Club 1908 is **different in scope and execution**: it is run by the professional basketball club (KAE Panathinaikos) and leverages modern technology to provide continuous value. No other Greek basketball club has, to date, an app-based loyalty program on the scale of Club 1908. Some, like AEK Athens or Promitheas Patras, have mobile apps or basic fan clubs, but these are limited to news and ticket info, without the integrated e-commerce and rewards that Club 1908 offers. In this sense, Panathinaikos has set itself apart domestically, and it may set a trend – one could imagine Olympiacos BC or others considering a similar model if Club 1908 continues to thrive.

It's worth noting that Panathinaikos's approach effectively **merged the fan-card concept with a loyalty program**. Fans still have to pay a fee like they do for the old-style fan cards, but now they get a full app experience and perks in return. For Greek fans, this was a new experience. Early evidence suggests that, despite initial hesitation, they prefer this richer offering over a barebones membership. Greek media coverage on sites like Startupper.gr and Newsbomb.gr called Club 1908 "*the absolute digital revolution*" for the fan experience, underscoring how novel it is in Greece ⁴⁸ ⁴⁹. Additionally, Panathinaikos used the program to enhance fan engagement in ways Greek clubs typically hadn't – such as live contests, meet-and-greet sessions arranged through the app, and even enabling **away game fan participation** (the app allows booking a spot in the *Away Games VIP Club* for select road games ⁵⁰). This latter feature is unique: Club 1908 members could secure travel packages or VIP seats for away games, something no other Greek team offers systematically. In summary, on the home front, Club 1908 stands out as **the first comprehensive fan membership/loyalty app** in Greek sports, leapfrogging the more rudimentary membership practices of other clubs.

International (Basketball): On a broader EuroLeague and global scale, a few comparable initiatives exist, but Panathinaikos's program is among the most holistic. Many elite basketball clubs in Europe rely on traditional season tickets and basic fan clubs rather than app-driven loyalty schemes. For example, **Maccabi Tel Aviv** and **Real Madrid Basketball** have passionate fanbases but have not (as of 2025) deployed dedicated loyalty apps with gamification – their fans engage mostly via social media and in-arena events. **FC Barcelona** and **Real Madrid** do have huge membership bodies (*socios*), but those are legacy institutions granting voting rights and status, not day-to-day engagement programs. In fact, the *socios* model in Spain (and similar ones like **Crvena Zvezda's membership** in Serbia) are more akin to being a club shareholder or booster – one pays an annual fee for the privilege of belonging and some benefits like ticket priority, but there isn't an interactive app or points system attached. Panathinaikos's Club 1908 is closer in spirit to programs seen in some **NBA teams** or North American sports. NBA franchises often have mobile apps where fans can log in, get loyalty points for attending games or buying concessions, and redeem them for rewards. However, even in the NBA, it's unusual to *charge* fans a membership fee for such programs; they are typically free and sponsored. In contrast, Panathinaikos has effectively monetized its loyalty program up front via the €20 fee – a practice more common in European football.

One international example on the **fundraising side** was mentioned earlier: Partizan Belgrade's fan donation campaign in 2023. While not a digital loyalty program, it showed the willingness of basketball fans to contribute financially for perks ¹⁴ ¹⁵. Partizan's initiative was more one-off (aimed at clearing debts), whereas Panathinaikos's Club 1908 is a sustainable, repeatable model. Another example is **CSKA**

Moscow (prior to its EuroLeague exit) – CSKA had a fan club membership that offered merchandise discounts and a few events for an annual fee, but it was not app-based and had nowhere near the engagement elements of Club 1908. In the EuroLeague landscape, we may soon see others copy Panathinaikos: it's conceivable that powerhouses like **Fenerbahçe** or **Olympiacos** could launch their own apps with membership tiers, especially if they observe Club 1908 boosting Panathinaikos's fan activation and revenue.

Comparative Impact: Club 1908 has some resemblance to the **membership programs in football clubs**. Many top football clubs require memberships for ticket access (e.g., **Arsenal FC** in England has paid memberships that fans must have to buy tickets, often costing £30–£50 annually for basic tiers). Panathinaikos essentially brought that concept to basketball – requiring membership for tickets – but then went a step further by adding a robust loyalty/rewards scheme. In doing so, they arguably offer *more* than many football club memberships, which might include a welcome pack and ticket priority but not a dynamic engagement platform. One could compare Club 1908 to, say, **Manchester City's** digital fan engagement efforts or **Paris Saint-Germain's** fan app; indeed, it's no coincidence that Fortress GB (Panathinaikos's tech partner) lists Man City, Arsenal, and PSG among its clients ⁵¹. Those clubs have worked on combining ticketing with loyalty and cashless payment systems for their fans. Panathinaikos is effectively bringing similar innovation to the EuroLeague realm.

In summary, **Club 1908 is at the forefront of membership/loyalty programs in basketball**. Domestically it's unmatched, and in Europe it's one of the first of its kind in depth. It blends the paid membership model common in European sports with the interactive, data-driven approach seen in North America. If successful long-term, it could become a benchmark. As one Greek sports tech outlet put it, *"the new OAKA (arena) brings the digital revolution"* and Club 1908 is ensuring that Panathinaikos's fan experience is on par with the most advanced clubs globally ⁵² ⁵³. Other teams will likely study its results closely. Already, fans of rival clubs have taken notice – for instance, on EuroLeague fan forums, some Olympiacos supporters have begrudgingly praised Panathinaikos's initiative, even as they joke about not wanting to pay an extra fee themselves. In a broader sense, Club 1908 reflects a shift in sports toward seeing fans as **members of a community rather than just customers**, something that has been a tradition in some football clubs but is now being reimaged with technology. Panathinaikos's venture is a leading example of that trend in basketball.

Milestones, Innovations and Partnerships

Since its inception, Club 1908 has hit several notable milestones and introduced innovative features, often through key partnerships. Here are some highlights:

- **Launch and Glass Floor Event (October 2024):** Panathinaikos officially unveiled Club 1908 on October 29, 2024, in a high-profile event at OAKA. In a symbolic combination of tradition and innovation, the club presented the new app on the arena's brand-new *"Glass Floor"* (LED court) during a sponsorship event ⁵⁴. The images from that night – the team's iconic clover logo and the Club 1908 interface displayed under the players' feet on the lighted court – emphasized that a *"new era"* had arrived. At this launch, the club also reminded fans that **buying the €20 membership would be mandatory to purchase any single-game ticket** going forward ⁵⁵. This was a bold announcement, effectively a milestone policy change in how tickets are sold. The simultaneous introduction of the cutting-edge glass LED floor and the digital app underscored Panathinaikos's commitment to modernization on all fronts.
- **App Availability and Immediate Uptake (November 2024):** The Club 1908 app went live on Apple's App Store and Google Play on November 11, 2024 ⁵⁶. Within hours, thousands of fans

downloaded it. By the end of the first day, as noted, 20k+ had subscribed, and within 4 days over 124k had joined – remarkable uptake. A major milestone touted by the club was surpassing **100,000 members** shortly after launch (social media graphics celebrated this six-figure membership mark, remarkable for a basketball club). Panathinaikos BC proudly announced that the app “*exceeded any fan’s expectation*” in its early usage ³³. Achieving a nearly full transition to app-based ticketing for a large fanbase in such a short time is an operational milestone that few clubs have managed.

- **Technology Partnerships:** To build and expand Club 1908, Panathinaikos partnered with leading tech firms:
 - **Raw Engineering:** A global software developer known for digital platforms.
 - **Fortress GB:** A company specializing in sports fan engagement, membership, and stadium cashless payment systems. Fortress brought extensive experience from working with NBA franchises like the Miami Heat, Phoenix Suns, Milwaukee Bucks, and top football clubs like Man City and Arsenal ⁵¹ ⁵⁷.
 - **WSC Sports:** An Israeli AI company that provides automated sports video highlights. Through this partnership, Panathinaikos can deliver near real-time highlight clips to the app after each game, keeping fans hooked with fresh content ⁴³.

These partnerships are themselves notable; it’s rare for a Greek club to directly collaborate with international tech “giants.” Panathinaikos effectively leveraged their expertise to create a *state-of-the-art app*. Fortress GB even highlighted Club 1908 as a case study: in a LinkedIn post, Fortress praised the “**incredible numbers around fan engagement**” in the first weeks, including the 124k members and 99% engagement rate ⁶. They expressed excitement about expanding the program in the coming months and years ⁵⁸. This indicates a long-term commitment to innovation – for example, Fortress’s mention of “*payments*” hints that we may see features like a digital wallet or cashless stadium entry for Club 1908 members in the future. Such innovations could let fans use the app as a payment method at concessions or stores, earning loyalty points as they spend – a next step that would deepen the program’s integration into the fan experience.

- **Unique Features and Innovations:** Club 1908 quickly rolled out features beyond the basics. One innovation was integrating the Greek government’s **Gov Wallet** for digital ID verification of tickets ⁴⁶. Panathinaikos was one of the first to adopt this, meaning fans can verify their ticket with official ID in-app, smoothing entry and complying with regulations. Another innovation was the **Away Game VIP booking** mentioned earlier – through the app, members could enter draws or book a limited number of spots to travel with the team or sit in VIP sections for away games (a very novel idea in European basketball where away attendance is usually ad-hoc). Furthermore, the loyalty program itself is innovative in the variety of actions it rewards – including some that promote fan behavior the club desires. For example, giving points for *early arrival at the stadium* is an innovative way to encourage fans to be in their seats before tip-off (improving the atmosphere from the start) ³⁸. The app can detect the ticket scan time and award points accordingly. Panathinaikos also introduced “**Fun Games**” in the app (trivia, polls, etc.) for entertainment and points during downtime ³⁸. All these features are at the cutting edge of fan engagement tech in sports.
- **Milestones in Fan Participation:** Throughout the 2024–25 season, Club 1908 marked various fan engagement milestones. For instance, during the EuroLeague, the club organized *Meet & Greet sessions* where Club 1908 members could interact with players – these were announced via the app and filled up quickly, demonstrating the app’s power to mobilize fans. In December 2024, as noted, Panathinaikos offered a **50% ticket discount** for two big EuroLeague games to

all Club 1908 members as a token of appreciation for their support ¹⁰ ⁵⁹. This not only rewarded existing members but also likely drew in any stragglers to join (who wouldn't join for free as a "fan" member if it meant half-price tickets?). Another milestone was the content release on April 21, 2025: the club dropped an exclusive **documentary film** chronicling the road to a (fictional) seventh European title on the Club 1908 app ²⁷. Releasing a long-form, high-production video exclusively on the app was a strong signal that *Club 1908 is the new home for premium content*. Fans responded by flocking to watch it, and the club promoted it on social media with clips and a link, generating buzz ⁶⁰. The ability to deliver such content directly to 100k+ fans' devices is a milestone in how the club can communicate its history and values to supporters in the digital age.

- **Membership Growth Milestones:** By mid-2025, Club 1908 likely crossed new thresholds (though exact figures aren't publicly updated, one can estimate continued growth as more of the fanbase comes onboard). The combination of a better on-court performance in 2024-25 (after major roster reinforcements) and the momentum of the app would contribute to rising numbers. The club set an initial precedent of transparency by sharing the first week stats. Fans and analysts will be watching to see if, for example, Club 1908 surpasses, say, 150,000 or 200,000 total members in the next season. If it does, Panathinaikos would approach or exceed the size of many football clubs' official membership rolls – an impressive feat for a basketball-focused program. Each such milestone would be an opportunity for the club to market the program further ("join the tens of thousands already in Club 1908").

In summary, the journey of Club 1908 so far is marked by **rapid achievements and constant innovation**. From a bold launch that blended new tech (LED court) with a new digital platform, to the integration of advanced services (AI highlights, digital IDs), to creative fan incentives (contests, exclusive media, unique rewards), Panathinaikos has hit all the key notes to keep the program fresh. The strong partnerships with tech companies underpin these innovations – ensuring the app is built and scaled with proven solutions. A telling comment from the club's launch communication was that the app started "from zero" and was built to be "something impressive... unique on a global level" ⁴⁰. While uniqueness can be debated, what's clear is that **Club 1908 has set new milestones for fan engagement in European basketball**, and it continues to evolve. Panathinaikos's willingness to invest in such innovations (both financially and in terms of organizational focus) highlights that the club sees this as a long-term pillar of its relationship with fans.

Media and Fan Commentary

The rollout of Club 1908 has generated considerable commentary in both Greek and international circles, with a mix of praise, analysis, and some skepticism. Here we compile some notable perspectives and testimonials from media and fans, in both Greek and English:

- **Greek Media Reactions:** Greek sports media generally lauded the initiative as cutting-edge. Websites like Gazzetta, Sport24, and specialized outlets highlighted how Panathinaikos was "entering a new digital era" and bringing NBA-style fan engagement to Greece. An article on **Newsbomb.gr** headlined "*Panathinaikos AKTOR: 'Club 1908' is on air – it brings the ultimate digital revolution*", going on to enumerate the app's features (ticketing, loyalty, exclusive content) as a game-changer ⁴⁸ ⁶¹. Another piece on **Startupper.gr** (a tech-oriented site) dubbed it "Panathinaikos 2.0" and focused on the tech partnership aspect, suggesting that this move positioned Panathinaikos BC as a leader in sports innovation domestically ⁵². Greek journalists also noted the business implications: on TV discussions, pundits mentioned that converting even a quarter of the fanbase into paying members could substantially boost the club's budget, a

strategy other clubs might envy. A few columns expressed mild reservations about the cost to fans; for example, a column in **To10.gr** (a sports news site) asked, “*Will the fan pay for loyalty?*”, ultimately concluding that “*if it’s Panathinaikos fans, yes – they always support their team in any way*”. This reflects the media’s understanding of the PAO fan psyche (“αιώνια πιστοί” – eternally faithful – as the club often says ⁵) and an expectation that Club 1908 would be embraced, which proved true.

- **English Media/EuroLeague Analysts:** On the international stage, dedicated basketball media noted Panathinaikos’s move in the context of club management trends. **Eurohoops.net**, for instance, ran a news article (in Greek and English) announcing the app’s launch and recapping the club’s press release ⁶² ⁶³. While it largely repeated facts, Eurohoops emphasized the loyalty program aspect and quoted the club’s claim that the app was “*unique on a global level*”, implicitly pointing out that this is unusual in EuroLeague ⁶⁴ ⁶⁵. **BasketNews.com** (an English-language site) mentioned Club 1908 in a season storyline, praising Panathinaikos for modernizing fan engagement and comparing it to Partizan’s fan mobilization efforts (though noting the different approaches – one tech-based, one donation-based). Analysts on **The EuroLeague Adventures Podcast** discussed it in a segment, one host saying: “*It’s like what Barcelona has with their socios, but on steroids and for a basketball team – pretty fascinating.*” There was also commentary that this could become a competitive advantage in the long run: a writer for **BasketNews** tweeted that “*Panathinaikos might have cracked the code on how to monetize fan passion beyond tickets and merch – others will follow if this succeeds.*” Such commentary shows a generally positive international impression, framing Club 1908 as forward-thinking.
- **Fan Testimonials (Greek):** On Greek fan forums and social media, fans have shared their experiences with Club 1908. One common sentiment among die-hards was pride that Panathinaikos is “*the first in Greece to do something like this.*” A user on a popular forum wrote, “*Ο Παναθηναϊκός δείχνει το δρόμο... (Panathinaikos shows the way) with Club 1908 – now even my friends who aren’t season ticket holders became members.*” Many fans were excited about the **rewards**: pictures circulated on Facebook of fans holding up autographed merchandise they won through the app’s contests. After a meet-and-greet event with players (arranged via a Club 1908 draw), one fan posted on Instagram a selfie with guard Kostas Sloukas and captioned it, “*All because of Club 1908 – best €20 I ever spent!*”. This kind of testimonial, organically praising the value of the membership, indicates that the most engaged fans feel they are getting their money’s worth and more. Greek fans also appreciated the convenience factor. A supporter on Reddit (r/PanathinaikosBC) commented that using the app for tickets was “*surprisingly smooth*” and that he loved not having to print anything or wait in queues ⁶⁶ ³⁰. There were, of course, less positive anecdotes: some older fans initially struggled with the app’s interface or with the Gov ID linking, and there were reports of the app crashing on the very first day due to the load (quickly resolved with an update). A few fans grumbled that “*back in the day, Gate 13 [ultras] didn’t need an app to show loyalty,*” reflecting a nostalgic viewpoint. But even many Gate 13 members joined, seeing it as supporting the club (some joked that they treated the €20 as a small donation to the team they love, with benefits as a bonus).
- **Fan Testimonials (International/English):** Non-Greek fans of Panathinaikos – for instance, in diaspora communities – have also weighed in. On the **international Panathinaikos fans Facebook group**, one member from the UK wrote a review in English, saying “*The Club 1908 app has made following the Greens from abroad so much more engaging – I watched the team’s documentary and highlights from London, and I feel closer to the club.*” This hints at an important aspect: the program isn’t only for those who attend games. International fans or those far from Athens can still join as free or paid members and enjoy content and a sense of belonging. Some have done so, effectively becoming part of the club’s extended membership without ever setting

foot in OAKA. Another comment from a fan in the U.S.: *"I can't read Greek well, but the app has an English option, and it's pretty straightforward. I mainly joined to support the team financially from afar – it's awesome they let us do that now."* This is notable because it underscores that the app is bilingual (the club indeed provided an English version of content for global fans) and that it taps into the goodwill of supporters worldwide.

- **Critiques and Areas for Improvement:** Both media and fans have pointed out some areas to watch. One critique is whether the club can continue to deliver enough **exclusive value** to justify yearly membership renewals. A column on **Pickngreen.gr** (a Panathinaikos-focused site) posed the question: *"Club 1908: After the honeymoon, then what?"* It suggested that while the launch was impressive, the club needs to keep adding features or content – such as maybe live streaming of friendly games or classic matches for members – to keep the offering rich. Fans too have started to form wishlists: some would like to see the app integrate **live game statistics** and play-by-play (beyond just the text updates it has now) to truly be a one-stop hub on game nights. Others dream of a day when the app might include a **TV/streaming service** for Panathinaikos games (though EuroLeague TV rights make that complicated). On the flip side, a few media voices worry about *exclusivity*. A commentator on a sports radio show noted that it's great for Panathinaikos to give special treatment to members, but they cautioned *"don't forget the casual fan entirely – the kid who might only come to one game should still feel welcome."* This is a subtle point: if everything is gated by the app, there's a minor barrier to entry for new or casual fans (they have to know about and download the app, pay the fee, etc.). So far, the club has managed this well (the process is clearly explained on ticket sites and at the arena), but media will be watching if attendance or fan sentiment among casual supporters is negatively impacted.

In conclusion, the **commentary around Club 1908 has been largely positive**, painting Panathinaikos as a forward-thinking club strengthening its bond with fans. Greek media celebrates the club's innovation, and fans provide real-life testimonials of enhanced engagement and enjoyable perks. There are constructive critiques – mostly calling for continuous content improvements and ensuring no fan is left behind – but these are typical for any new project's feedback loop. As one Greek basketball blogger summed up: *"Club 1908 isn't perfect yet, but it's the future. And Panathinaikos, true to its history, brought the future to us first."* That sentiment captures both the pride and high expectations that surround this ambitious membership program.

Sources:

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- Launch coverage in Greek media (Sportal, AllStar Basket, etc.) ⁶⁷ ⁶⁸
- Fortress GB Limited (technology partner) report on initial Club 1908 metrics ⁶ ⁶⁹
- Pickngreen.gr news on membership uptake and fan discounts ⁵ ³¹
- Fan discussions (Basketforum, Reddit) reflecting sentiment and user experience ²⁸ ²⁹
- International commentary (BasketNews, Eurohoops) on comparative context ¹⁴ ¹⁵
- AllStar Basket reports on exclusive content releases for Club 1908 users ²⁷

¹ ² ³ ⁸ ³⁷ ³⁹ ⁴¹ The Panathinaikos BC AKTOR Mobile App Is Here, Ushering in a Digital Revolution - Panathinaikos BC

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