

Sports & Entertainment Beat

Sports & Entertainment Spotlight - May 6, 2021

By Joshua Bloomgarden on 5.6.21 | Posted in Sports & Entertainment Spotlight

Hope is in the air (not to mention copious amounts of tree pollen) here in New York – and that’s to say nothing of the Knicks’ hardwood resurgence, the Giants’ highly-acclaimed moves in last week’s NFL Draft and the Yankees’ bats and pitching arms coming to life. Indeed, with hard-won gains from mass vaccinations and other public health measures, New York City—once the epicenter of the coronavirus pandemic—is due to reopen and set the course to something resembling pre-pandemic life as restaurants, bars, comedy clubs, movie theatres, museums, stadiums and arenas return to full (albeit socially-distanced) capacity. We’ve come a long way and still have a ways to go, but there is much to look forward to.

(steps off soapbox)

With that, here’s what I am spotlighting this week:

- Amidst the pandemic-driven boom in the in-home fitness category, Jay-Z and MLB All-Star Adrian Gonzalez are among those investing in a company that makes water-powered rowers. Roc Nation may yet become Row Nation.
- Turner Sports snags NHL media rights from incumbent broadcasters, while Amazon solidifies its standing in the sports landscape, getting exclusive rights to NFL Thursday Night Football starting next year. Meanwhile, I plan on making corresponding long-term commitments with my couch.
- Indianapolis Colts’ rookie defensive end, Kwity Paye, leverages the power of NFTs to do good for his sports and social justice foundation.
- More state legislatures move forward with name, image and likeness legislation, while the NCAA’s predictable silence is deafening. My guess is that this ends up getting resolved with federal legislation.

Thanks for reading, and Happy Mother’s Day to all the moms out there!

Endorsement Deals, Sponsorships & Investments

New York Giants Team Up with Grayscale Investments for NFL's First Cryptocurrency Partnership

May 5, 2021 via Forbes (subscription may be required)

The New York Giants have added another big-time player to their growing team of corporate sponsors. Grayscale Investments, the world's largest cryptocurrency asset manager with more than \$46.65B in assets under management as of April 30, 2021, and the Giants have announced an exclusive partnership—and the first of its kind.

Travis Scott Doesn't Like 'Branding' or 'Marketing,' But He's So Damn Good at Both

May 3, 2021 via Adweek - Creativity

Meet Adweek's Creator Visionary of the Year with Travis Scott, no creative choice is obvious or predictable. In fact, he didn't even want his first album to be released on CD, still the standard format of the day in 2015.

Jay-Z, MLB's Adrian Gonzalez Invest in Fitness Startup LIT Method

April 27, 2021 via Sport Techie

Jay-Z has invested in at-home fitness company LIT Method through his venture capital firm, Marcy Venture Partners. The investment was part of a LIT Method's new funding round, which also included former MLB All-Star Adrian Gonzalez.

Eagles Partner With LifeBrand to Monitor Social Media

April 28, 2021 via Sport Techie

The Philadelphia Eagles have partnered with LifeBrand, a Pennsylvania-based startup that helps build and protect personal and corporate brands. The company's AI-backed platform can confidentially identify and delete social media posts that could be perceived as harmful.

The General Insurance Lends Its Name to Shaq's Esports Team

May 3, 2021 via Insurance Business Mag

The General Automobile Insurance Services (The General Insurance) has scored a turbo-powered goal with its new partnership with NRG Esports. The insurer will lend its name to NRG's World Champion Rocket League team, which will be renamed "The General NRG."

Film & TV

Ryan Reynolds' Maximum Effort Signs Three-Year First-Look Film Deal at Paramount

May 3, 2021 via Variety

Ryan Reynolds' production company Maximum Effort has signed a three-year first-look deal with Paramount Pictures. The pact reunites Reynolds with longtime executive partner Emma

Watts, Paramount's motion picture group president, and the studio's CEO Jim Gianopulos.

Amazon Gets Exclusive NFL Rights One Year Early

May 3, 2021 via Hollywood Reporter - Technology

Fox will drop 'Thursday Night Football' starting in 2022, with the tech giant set to take over exclusive video rights. Who says the NFL's TV rights deals were done?

Mediapro Kicks Off Media Rights to Chinese Super League

May 2, 2021 via Rapid TV News

Spanish pay-TV provider Mediapro has signed an agreement with the Chinese Football Association to commercialize the international media rights to the Chinese Super League.

Canadaland Podcasts to be Adapted for Film and TV Through Storied Media Group Deal (EXCLUSIVE)

April 29, 2021 via Variety

The distinctive podcasts from disruptive Canadian news platform and podcaster Canadaland will soon receive global film and television adaptations thanks to a deal with U.S. outfit Storied Media Group (SMG). In addition to representing Canadaland in the packaging and sales of its multimedia journalism for television and film adaptation, SMG.

N.H.L. and Turner Sports Reach Seven-Year Media Rights Deal

April 27, 2021 via New York Times - Global View (subscription may be required)

The N.H.L. solidified its future on television and multimedia platforms in the United States on Tuesday (April 27) with the announcement of a second broadcast rights deal that will take effect after its agreement with NBC expires after this season. Turner Sports made a seven-year commitment, matching the length of the contract.

Activision Blizzard Expands Media Rights Deal With SPORT1

April 29, 2021 via eSports Insider - Latest News

Activision Blizzard has expanded its distribution rights with German television broadcaster SPORT1. The multi-year agreement renews the broadcaster's TV-exclusive rights to the Overwatch League across Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

Music Biz

Prince's Estate Has Valuable Estate Planning Lessons for Us

April 28, 2021 via Forbes - Top Stories (subscription may be required)

Prince's estate and the legal actions following his death deliver important estate planning lessons to most of the rest of us. Prince Rogers Nelson, the entertainer known generally as Prince, was a successful musician, entertainer and record producer.

Red Hot Chili Peppers to Sell Song Catalog to Hipgnosis for Upwards of \$140 Million

May 3, 2021 via Register Citizen

The Red Hot Chili Peppers are selling their song catalog to Hipgnosis Songs for upwards of \$140 million, sources confirm to Variety, making them the latest heritage artist to benefit from the intellectual property gold rush that has seen Bob Dylan sell his songwriting catalog to Universal Music Publishing.

U.S. Tax Court: Valuation of Performer's Image and Likeness, Music Publishing Trust and Catalog

May 2, 2021 via KPMG - Insights

The U.S. Tax Court today (May 2) issued a memorandum opinion in a case concerning the valuation of an estate of a performance artist. The estate and the IRS agreed on the value of many assets, but continue to dispute the value of three intangible assets.

Twisted Sister Awarded \$A1.5m From Clive Palmer Over Copyright Claim

April 30, 2021 via Radio New Zealand - World Headlines

An Australian court has ordered mining magnate and politician Clive Palmer to pay \$A1.5 million (\$NZ1.6m) to the record label of heavy metal act Twisted Sister.

UMG Sues Bang Energy for Copyright Infringement on TikTok

April 29, 2021 via Bloomberg Law - News Top Stories (subscription may be required)

Bang Energy and its chief executive officer, Jack Owoc, "brag loudly" that their videos on the social media platform TikTok have attracted billions of views, a new lawsuit says, but they've "been silent" since some of the world's leading record labels and music publishers demanded an explanation for their unauthorized.

Musicians Ask Spotify to Publicly Abandon Controversial Speech Recognition Patent

May 4, 2021 via Yahoo! News

At the start of the year, Spotify secured a patent for a voice recognition system that could detect the "emotional state," age and gender of a person and use that information to make personalized listening recommendations. As you might imagine, the possibility that the company was working on a technology.

Non-Fungible Tokens

Kwity Paye to Release 1-of-a-Kind NFT After Being Selected in 2021 NFL Draft

April 29, 2021 via Bleacher Report

Michigan defensive end Kwity Paye will release the first collegiately licensed football NFT (non-fungible token) as soon as he's selected in the 2021 NFL draft, which starts Thursday night (April 29). ESPN's Adam Schechter provided details about the 1-of-1 NFT, which will benefit the

Uniform Funding Foundation.

Sellers Beware: Can NFTs Be Regulated Securities?

April 28, 2021 via Crowdfund Insider

The sudden prevalence of Non-Fungible Tokens has raised important legal considerations for issuers and purchasers alike. While intellectual property rights remain essential, securities laws should not be overlooked. Non-Fungible Tokens, or “NFTs”, are digital assets with unique identifying characteristics that distinguish one from another.

eBay Looking to Adopt Crypto, NFTs – CEO

May 3, 2021 via Cryptopolitan

Leading e-commerce firm eBay is planning to adopt cryptocurrency and is currently exploring several means to add digital currencies as a method of payment on its platform. Jamie Iannone, Chief Executive Officer of eBay disclosed this.

StarColl Celebrates Star Wars Day With NFT Collection

May 4, 2021 via Yahoo! News

StarColl has announced its partnership with the world of Star Wars to release a set of private non-fungible tokens on its digital marketplace. The NFT platform announced it will be releasing a collection of 800 limited edition collectibles as digital mimics.

Right of Publicity

Image Rights Bill for College Athletes Backed

April 27, 2021 via Daily Journal of Commerce - Seattle

U.S. Rep. Anthony Gonzalez, a former Ohio State football player, reintroduced on Monday a bipartisan bill that would give college athletes the right to earn money through endorsements and sponsorship deals. Gonzalez, R-Ohio, and Emanuel Cleaver, D-Mo., co-sponsored the Student Athlete Level Playing Field Act.

Louisiana Bill Would Grant Image Rights to Student Athletes

April 30, 2021 via New Orleans WDSU 6 - Top Stories

Louisiana state senators are moving forward with legislation that would allow college student athletes to earn money for use of their name, image or likeness. The bill is prompted by the NCAA's inaction on a policy for endorsements and sponsorship deals.

Top Female Athletes Jump in on Releasing NFTs

April 30, 2021 via Bitcoinist

Athletes and entertainers announcing new non-fungible token (NFT) releases have recently become a near daily occurrence. Sports agency Wasserman announced last week that several

of their top-tier female athletes will be the forefront of a new NFT release, including US Women's National Team star Megan Rapinoe and 11th-time WNBA All-Star.

NCAA Prez Emmert Given Extension Through 2025

April 28, 2021 via Business Google News

NCAA president Mark Emmert has received a contract extension through 2025, a move that was unanimously approved by the association's board of governors.

Legislature Passes Bill Allowing College Athletes to Earn Money

April 30, 2021 via Nashville Post

Tennessee lawmakers last week gave final approval to a bill that will allow athletes at the University of Tennessee, the University of Memphis, Vanderbilt University and other colleges in the state to earn money off their name, image and likeness.

South Carolina Lawmakers Approve Bill Allowing College Athletes to Make Money From Names, Images

April 28, 2021 via The Hill

The South Carolina State House on Wednesday (April 28) passed a bill that would allow college athletes to be paid for the use of their names and images, sending the legislation to the governor's desk for final approval.