

Sports & Entertainment Beat

Sports & Entertainment Spotlight - June 10, 2021

By Joshua Bloomgarden on 6.10.21 | Posted in Sports & Entertainment Spotlight

Less than three weeks remain for either the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) or for Congress to act to stem the impending chaos on July 1 when college athletes' name, image and likeness (NIL) laws go into effect in several states. These laws will enable college athletes to enter into endorsement and licensing deals and otherwise monetize their NIL without reprisal from their school or the NCAA itself. This past Wednesday, with the NCAA being an extremely unlikely long shot to meaningfully act, a panel of witnesses consisting of law professors, a head coach, a college sports analyst and NCAA Commissioner Mark Emmert (but conspicuously no current athletes) were convened to testify before the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation as it considered various legislative proposals addressing NIL rights, as well as health care and scholarships. Overall, there appears to be bipartisan support (no small feat in D.C.) for the core issue of monetizing NIL rights, but not all agree on how to accomplish those aims. Still, the clock is ticking, and while we're about as close as we have ever been to sweeping federal legislation giving athletes the same rights that their fellow students have, the question must be asked: "If not now, when?"

As we continue to play the NIL waiting game, I won't keep you waiting any longer for the highlights in this week's Spotlight.

- On the heels of an investment in a company built around an at-home water-rowing machine, Jay-Z is among several celebrities investing in a company touting a vertical climbing machine. Either Jay-Z is bullish on at-home fitness equipment and technology, or he's very serious about preparing for an upcoming camping trip.
- Jay-Z's fellow Roc-A-Fella Records alum, Kanye West caused a stir this week as he was spotted not only in a full mask over his head and face (at least it was reported to be him), but also in Nike sneakers – notwithstanding his Adidas endorsement deal. As his deal with Adidas likely contains language prohibiting his publicly wearing competitors' apparel, it will be interesting to see whether and how Adidas responds, and/or Kanye saves *face*.
- In the latest sign that the entertainment industry is embracing NFTs with open arms, Universal Music Group's branding and merchandising arm, Bravado stood up to its name, closing a licensing deal with prominent digital art brand Ikonick.

Endorsement Deals, Sponsorships & Investments

How Athletes Are Becoming Entrepreneurs

June 8, 2021 via *Off the Post News*

Athletes are increasingly becoming more entrepreneurial by starting their own business ventures and making heaps of money off-field.

Online, Athletes Are Bigger Than the Olympic Rings

June 8, 2021 via *Sportico - Business*

The way Facebook executives explained it to potential Olympians at a recent virtual event, everyone heading to Tokyo is competing in a quadrathlon of sorts.

Kanye West Was Spotted Wearing the New Gap Yeezy Jacket and Nike Shoes — But He Still Has Five Years Left on His Partnership With Adidas

June 8, 2021 via *Business Insider*

Kanye West stepped out wearing Nike shoes and his newly-announced Gap x Yeezy jacket last week. West has a partnership with Adidas, which controls the site his Yeezy shoes are sold on, per Bloomberg.

McDonald's New BTS Meal Is Already Outpacing the Hit Travis Scott Meal in Popularity

June 5, 2021 via *Business Insider - Latest News*

McDonald's launched the BTS meal with the Korean band at the end of May. In its first week, it drove more traffic to stores than the Travis Scott meal.

Vanessa Bryant Nike Dispute Resurfaces With Daughter's Unreleased Shoes

June 3, 2021 via *Sportico - Business*

Vanessa Bryant, wife of the late NBA icon Kobe Bryant, has called out Nike on Instagram after in-hand photos of a shoe that she said were not approved for sale surfaced, Footwear News reports.

Jay-Z, Pitbull Among Investors as Denver-based Fitness Startup CLMBR Raises \$13.5 Million

June 3, 2021 via *Denver Post - Breaking News*

Avrum Elmakis might have 99 problems, but a lack of investors ain't one. The founder and CEO of CLMBR, a Denver-based startup making an 8-foot-tall vertical climbing machine, closed last month on a \$13.5 million funding round involving 29 investors — including celebrities like Jay-Z.

Celebrities and Social Media Influencers Touting Crypto and Special Purpose Acquisition Vehicles Are Not Automatic 'Likes'

June 2, 2021 via Yahoo Finance - Top Stories

The United States Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) often warns investors against falling for the madness of crowds. Observing the behavior of gullible fans, the SEC has flagged celebrity endorsements, from cryptocurrencies to special purpose acquisition vehicles (SPACs).

Film & TV

Endeavour and DJ Khaled Release a New CBD Men's Care Line, Blesswell. But Can It Succeed in Today's Celebrity Saturated Market?

June 8, 2021 via The Ritz Herald

Every other day we discover that celebrities are endorsing distinctive products, sometimes they are not even using the products themselves. Endorsement deals involve huge sums of money and percentages of the revenue at times.

Netflix and Jennifer Lopez's Production Banner, Nuyorican Productions Form Creative Partnership

June 8, 2021 via The Futon Critic

Along with partner Benny Medina, Lopez and Elaine Goldsmith-Thomas will produce a slate of films, television series, scripted and unscripted content, with an emphasis on projects that support diverse female actors, writers and filmmakers.

'Riverdale' Star Lili Reinhart Signs First Look Film and TV Deal With Amazon

June 7, 2021 via Yahoo! News

Lili Reinhart, one of the stars of "Riverdale" and "Hustlers," has signed a first look film and TV producing deal with Amazon Studios.

Former Sony Pictures Executive Eric Paquette Launches Meridian Pictures

June 4, 2021 via Deadline - Hollywood Breaking News

Eric Paquette, former senior Vice President at Sony Pictures and MGM, has launched a new company, Meridian Pictures, with a focus on film and TV projects.

Blumhouse, Jamie Lee Curtis Acquire Patricia Cornwell's 'Kay Scarpetta' for TV

June 3, 2021 via Hollywood Reporter

The companies will develop a scripted series based on the author's crime thrillers.

Lionsgate Lands New Steven Rowley Novel 'The Guncle'; 'Cruella' Producer Kristin Burr Aboard Pic

June 2, 2021 via Deadline - Hollywood Breaking News

Lionsgate has acquired rights to [The Guncle](#), the latest book from bestselling author Steven Rowley.

Music Biz

[Rolling Stones, Tom Jones, Emeli Sandé, Pet Shop Boys and More Join Call for Prime Minister to 'Fix Streaming'](#)

June 7, 2021 via Music Week

The Rolling Stones, Pet Shop Boys, Emeli Sandé, Barry Gibb, Van Morrison, Sir Tom Jones and the estates of John Lennon and Joe Strummer have written to the Prime Minister “on behalf of today’s generation of artists, musicians and songwriters here in the UK”.

[Spotify's Discovery Mode Under Query by Congress: The Issues and Actions](#)

June 7, 2021 via RAIN News

Spotify CEO and Chairman Daniel Ek has received a letter from Congress signed by Jerry Nadler (Chair, Judiciary Committee) and Henry Johnson, Jr. (Chair, Sub-Committee on Courts, Intellectual Property, and the Internet). The letter questions the working and purpose of Spotify’s relatively new “Discovery Mode,” a promotional tool offered to recording artists and record labels which influences which songs get onto listener playlists.

[Universal Music Group Is Officially Special Purpose Acquisition Company Material](#)

June 4, 2021 via Yahoo Finance - Top Stories

New York-based Pershing Square Tontine Holdings (PSTH) confirmed on June 4, 2021 that it's in discussions to acquire ten percent of Universal Music Group for approximately four billion dollars.

[YouTube Paid Out Four Billion Dollars to Music Industry Over Last 12 Months](#)

June 2, 2021 via Music Week

YouTube has announced that it has paid more than four billion dollars (£2.8bn) to the music industry in the last 12 months.

[Vimeo Employees Unaware of Copyright Infringement](#)

June 1, 2021 via Bloomberg Law (subscription may be required)

Capitol Records LLC, Virgin Records America Inc., and other companies lost a bid for summary judgment in a copyright infringement case involving videos uploaded to Vimeo.com, according to a federal court ruling in New York.

Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs)

Ikonick Signs NFT Licensing Deal With Bravado, Universal Music Group's Merchandise Unit (EXCLUSIVE)

June 8, 2021 via Variety

Leading digital art brand Ikonick is teaming up with Bravado, Universal Music Group's global merchandising and brand management company, to produce, market and distribute canvas art and NFTs across their extensive roster of artists.

Nftfy Ushers in a New NFT Era With Their NFT Marketplace

June 8, 2021 via AMB Crypto

A pioneer in the cryptographic space, Nftfy will revolutionize the industry by becoming the first decentralized protocol that enables NFT holders to fractionalize their NFTs in a trustless and permission-less manner.

NFTs Are Coming to the Olympics With Digital Olympic Pins

June 4, 2021 via Crypto News Australia

The International Olympic Committee plans to launch a series of collectibles under the form of digital non-fungible tokens.

Should Crypto and NFTs Be Part of Your Retirement Plan?

June 3, 2021 via Yahoo Finance - Top Stories

Digital assets like NFTs and cryptocurrencies have constantly been in the headlines lately. In May, analysts declared that crypto assets' total market value was almost on par with gold's.

Right of Publicity

Louisiana College Athlete Endorsement Bill Heads to Governor

June 8, 2021 via Greensboro News & Record

Louisiana is poised to join more than a dozen other states allowing college athletes to earn cash from endorsements and sponsorship deals under an effort gaining steam across the country because of the National Collegiate Athletic Association's inaction on a national policy.

Youth Sports Streaming Powerhouse BallerTV Is Empowering the Nation's Future Basketball Stars to Monetize Their Likeness

June 8, 2021 via Business Wire - Multimedia News

BallerTV, the premier streaming destination for youth sports, is taking a stand and forging a path to get youth athletes paid.

New York Post-Mortem Right of Publicity Law Recognizes Rights After Death

June 6, 2021 via Digital Music News

New York State is granting post-mortem rights of publicity to deceased personalities for 40 years – 30 years less than California.

Twitter, Opendorse Deal Targets College Athletes Ready to Cash In

June 3, 2021 via Sportico - Business

With college athletes able to capitalize on their names, images and likenesses as early as this summer, athlete marketing platform Opendorse and social media juggernaut Twitter have teamed up to make those first deals easier.

Circuit Skeptical Anchor Can Sue Platforms Over Publicity Rights

June 2, 2021 via Bloomberg Law (subscription may be required)

A panel of Third Circuit Judges scrutinized a Philadelphia news anchor's claim that social media platforms including Facebook can be liable for use of her image because publicity rights are intellectual property.