

Sports & Entertainment Beat

Labor Day Reflections and Entertainment Insights – From Historical Strikes to Strike Force Five

By Joshua Bloomgarden on 8.31.23 | Posted in Sports & Entertainment Spotlight

Welcome back to the Spotlight! As we approach Labor Day Weekend here in the US, I became curious as to the origins of the federal holiday. Gather round, class – Mr. Bloomgarden has a history lesson to share. (*Clears throat...*) In 1894, President Grover Cleveland (my second favorite Grover to the blue Muppet and second favorite Cleveland to the city) signed into law a bill to make Labor Day a federal holiday to celebrate (traditionally via barbecues and parades) the contributions of American workers to the economy and society. Fast-forward some 129 years and—far from a celebration—we continue to have labor strikes by actors and writers that have ground new film and television production to a screeching halt. So, it is with rather conspicuous timing that five of the most prominent late night television hosts (Stephen Colbert, Jimmy Fallon, Jimmy Kimmel, Seth Meyers and John Oliver) have banded together to create a podcast “Strike Force Five” in solidarity with their respective writers’ rooms to comedically discuss (amongst other things) the strikes plaguing their industry. Commendably, the proceeds from the podcast will be distributed amongst each of the five talk shows’ writing staff to provide relief while the impasse continues. Hopefully, one of the most courageous acts we see post-Labor Day (close runner-up to wearing white) is that the writers, actors, networks and studios return to their sides of the negotiating table to iron out deals once and for all. Regardless, it is refreshing to see the Strike Force Five using their outsized platforms to support their workers.

- Brad Pitt’s Production Company Plan B Entertainment named a new President of Television – presumably because its first choice did not pan out.
- The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia’s Public Investment Fund (PIF) continues to make substantial investments in sports – most recently investing \$100 million in the mixed martial arts league, Professional Fighters League – in its push to become a sports mecca. I guess it is not enough to have the Mecca of meccas.

- Major League Soccer's New York Red Bulls are in talks to sell naming rights to its stadium from Red Bull Arena. If anyone in the marketing department at The Toro Company or at Matador Travel Equipment is reading this, you're welcome.
- Rapper Eminem puts the kibosh on Republican Primary candidate Vivek Ramaswamy's performance of his musical compositions at campaign events. Will be interesting to see if it is enough of a deterrent to one of his debate competitors saying, "nowadays Ramaswamy wanna talk like he got somethin' to say, but nothin' comes out, when he moves his lips, just a bunch of gibberish..."

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