

Sports & Entertainment Spotlight

Sports and Entertainment Spotlight: Member of the ROC Figure Skating Team Is Suspected of a Doping Scandal, and Former Miami Dolphins Coach Brian Flores Maintains His Stance on NFL's Discriminatory Hiring Practices

By Joshua Bloomgarden on 2.10.22 | Posted in Sports & Entertainment Spotlight

Welcome back, and in case you've been living under a rock (unless it's a "30 Rock"), two of the biggest sporting events will command millions upon millions of eyeballs for NBC this weekend with the Winter Olympics (already in full swing in Beijing) and the National Football League's (NFL) Super Bowl LVI due to kick-off on Sunday between the Cincinnati Bengals and Los Angeles Rams (and Madison Avenue Agencies). However, at least for the time being, both Olympic and NFL news have largely been focused on matters taking place "outside the lines." At the Olympics, a medal ceremony in figure skating was postponed for legal reasons – namely a member of the purported gold-medal winning Russian Olympic Committee (ROC) team having a suspected positive doping test. Already on thin ice for widespread doping violations, one wonders whether ROC is once again up to its old tricks or whether this is an isolated incident by one triple (k)lutz. Or perhaps, whether the figure skating team will be heralded as mettlesome or admonished as medal-less. In the NFL, former Miami Dolphins coach Brian Flores' lawsuit alleging discriminatory hiring practices remains a hot button topic. Just this past week, we learned of Commissioner Roger Goodell voicing displeasure with the NFL's lack of diversity in coaching and front office positions, while two of the NFL's co-defendant teams, the Miami Dolphins and Houston Texans hired minority coaches Mike McDaniels and Lovie Smith, respectively. Meanwhile, media mogul Byron Allen is rumored to be preparing a bid to buy the Denver Broncos (another co-defendant), and in so doing, make the Broncos the first Black-owned NFL team. While those moves – calculated or not – may undermine Flores' case, in just two weeks, Flores' taking a stand has seemingly sparked soul-searching, for which Flores should be commended. From Olympic torches and stadium lights, let's jump into the "Spotlight."

- *How many comedians does it take to have streaming services pay joke-writing royalties just as they do songwriting royalties? With the Estates of George Carlin and Robin*

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Williams, together with a handful of living court jesters suing Pandora, we may yet find out.

- *Mega singer-songwriter, Sia joins forces with a plant-based pet food company on a mission to tell traditional meat-based pet foods, "see ya."*
 - *Although Amazon is far from an incumbent in the sports broadcasting space, in Al Michaels, they may be bringing aboard an industry veteran to handle its Thursday Night Football broadcasts. Waiting in the wings if Michaels doesn't get the gig? Al-exa.*
 - *A digital plot of land in the metaverse neighboring Snoop Dogg's sold for the low price of \$450,000. Fitting that with respect to the metaverse, what some view as an investment, others see as money going "up in smoke."*
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Endorsement Deals, Sponsorships & Investments

American Skier Eileen Gu, Who Won Gold for China, Now Has Deal Prospects on Both Sides of Pacific

February 8, 2022 via Forbes – Most Popular (subscription may be required)

The American-born Eileen Gu said she decided to compete for China to honor her mother, who was born there. It turned out to be a great financial choice, too.

UConn Star Paige Bueckers Announces Deal With Cash App, Her Third Major NIL Partnership

February 8, 2022 via Forbes – Business (subscription may be required)

University of Connecticut basketball star Paige Beuckers announced a new partnership that's sure to add to her buckets of cash off the court.

NLL's Texas Expansion Team Inks Record Sponsor Deal With PlayUp

February 8, 2022 via Sportico – Business (subscription may be required)

The Panther City Lacrosse Club, the newest National Lacrosse League expansion team in Fort Worth, Texas, has agreed to a record multiyear sponsorship agreement with online gaming company and sportsbook PlayUp.

Wasserman Named as Official Global Agency of Record for FTX

February 7, 2022 via Sports Business Journal

Wasserman has triumphed in an agency review to become a sports and entertainment agency for crypto currency exchange FTX.

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American Track League's Seven-Figure Puma Deal Chases Diamond League

February 7, 2022 via News Break – Top Stories

ATL announced a three-year deal with Puma ahead of its season opener in Louisville. The agreement is worth “multiples of seven figures,” according to people familiar with the deal, and gives the apparel company title sponsorship rights.

On Joins Penn Relays as the Exclusive Footwear and Apparel Sponsor in a Multi-Year Partnership

February 4, 2022 via PR Newswire – News Releases

Global performance brand On and the Penn Relays, one of the greatest and longest-standing traditions in track & field, announced a partnership.

No, Dr. Phil and These Celebrities Are Not Endorsing CBD Gummies

February 3, 2022 via PolitiFact Check News

Before you go out and buy CBD gummies that purportedly help to treat diabetes or to quit smoking, please know that these people are not endorsing or selling them: Baptist pastor Charles Stanley, TV evangelists Joel Olsteen and Pat Robertson, and former Shark Tank contestants Donna and Rosy Khalife.

In Play: Colleges Navigate New World of Athlete Endorsement Deals

February 2, 2022 via Biz Journal – Accounting News

Patrick MacWilliams has long been a big supporter of UMass athletics. So, when a new policy allowed student athletes to sign endorsement deals for the first time last summer, the owner of Five College Movers didn't wait to be asked.

Asics Defies Nike's China Underperformance in Return to Profit

February 2, 2022 via Bloomberg – News (subscription may be required)

Sneaker maker Asics Corp. appears to have dodged the controversies in China that tripped up Nike Inc. last quarter, as the Japanese company's performance there propelled it back to profit in 2021.

LIFEWTR Teams Up With 'Black-ish' Star Marsai Martin for Campaign Supporting Black Creators

February 4, 2022 via BevNet News

This Black History Month, LIFEWTR, a premium bottled water brand committed to advancing and showcasing all sources of creativity, celebrates and uplifts Black creatives who continue to shift the culture of today and reimagine the future of tomorrow through the latest chapter of its Black Art Rising.

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Why Famous People are Joining Food Tech Advisory Boards

February 8, 2022 via Food Dive – News

Hollywood A-listers including Leonardo DiCaprio and Ashton Kutcher, former government officials and other household names are working with companies, lending their expertise and cachet.

Sia Furler Joins Bond Pet Foods as Investor, Adviser

February 8, 2022 via Daily Camera

Bond Pet Foods Inc., a Boulder company that makes pet food out of meatless proteins, has added a prominent new investor and adviser: Grammy-nominated musician Sia Furler.

Sports

Shaun White's Run as Greatest Snowboarder Ever Is Coming to an End

February 8, 2022 via Los Angeles Times

By the end of the day, his body ached all over. His ankle and back, a knee still sore from surgery. Shaun White was feeling every bit of 35 years old, worn down from a lifetime spent attacking the halfpipe, launching himself skyward, spinning and twisting.

How Does Winning a Gold Medal Impact an Olympian's Earnings?

February 8, 2022 via Yahoo Finance - Top Stories

With gold trading at around \$58 per gram as of February 7, the six grams of gilding alone is worth almost \$350 — and that's not counting all that silver, which makes up the other 92.5%.

NHL All-Star Game Returns with Gimmicky, Fun Weekend in Las Vegas

February 7, 2022 via Sports Business Journal

The All-Star Game and its related activities in Las Vegas were “fun-filled, fast-paced and action-packed in an environment up and down the Strip that traffics exclusively in fun-filled, fast-paced and action-packed,” according to Case Keeper of the *Las Vegas Sun*.

Athletes Are Getting Burned by Weed Rules. Is the Sports World Out of Touch?

February 3, 2022 via The Walrus

On February 8, 1998, a Canadian snowboarder launched himself down Mount Yakebitai, in Nagano, Japan. He was one of the first athletes to do so at an Olympic Games: snowboarding had just been made an official Olympic sport.

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W.N.B.A. Raises \$75 Million With Hopes of Business Model Revamp

February 3, 2022 via New York Times (subscription may be required)

The W.N.B.A. has raised \$75 million from more than two dozen investors in a bid to revamp its business model as players call for expansion, higher salaries and better benefits.

SBJ Unpacks: Twitter Taps into SoFi Stadium for Unique Activation

February 3, 2022 via Sports Business Journal

Tonight in Unpacks: Twitter is leaning into SoFi Stadium's innovations for a unique activation ahead of the Big Game. WNBA raises \$75 million in capital funding round MoneyLion leaves Penske, signs with 23XI Racing Throwback.

It'll Be Tom Brady vs. Eli Manning Again — for Retirement Supremacy

February 2, 2022 via The Star-Ledger

Tom Brady, who will be most remembered in our neck of the woods as a two-time Super Bowl loser to Eli Manning, announced his retirement on Tuesday morning, February 1.

The Checkout: Former NFL Player Sued for Promoting Nestle's Plant-Based Protein Brand; Laird Superfood Announces New CEO

February 4, 2022 via Project NOSH - News

The Texas Beef Council this week filed a lawsuit against former NFL-player-turned-celebrity-chef Eddie Jackson in Texas Southern District Court accusing him of a breach of contract after Jackson also announced a partnership with Nestle's Sweet Earth brand to promote its plant-based Chik'n products.

Music Biz

Ol' Dirty Bastard's Widow Sues Wu-Tang Clan for \$1 Million Over Unpaid Royalties

February 9, 2022 via Register Citizen

Icelene Jones claims ODB's estate hasn't been paid 10 years of royalties, though RZA sent her a \$130,000 check last July.

Jimi Hendrix Bandmate's Heirs Sue Sony Over Copyrights in British Court

February 8, 2022 via Billboard

A dispute over the rights to Jimi Hendrix's music has escalated into a transatlantic legal war, with the heirs of his former bandmates filing a new lawsuit in British court against Sony Music Entertainment.

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FNDM Agency Launches to Provide Creative and Technology Partnerships to the Music Industry

February 8, 2022 via Music Week

FNDM has officially launched to offer full-service creative and technology partnerships to the music and entertainment industries.

Estates of Alice in Chains' Layne Staley and Mike Starr Sell Music Rights to Primary Wave

February 7, 2022 via Greenwich Time

Primary Wave Music announced that it has acquired the music rights from the estates of Layne Staley and Mike Starr of the Grammy-nominated Seattle band Alice In Chains.

What the Neil Young-Joe Rogan Dust-Up Tells Us About the Music Industry

February 6, 2022 via Washington Post

The music industry is thriving — but it's not always trickling down to artists. If your 2022 bingo card didn't include Neil Young vs. Joe Rogan, you weren't alone.

Spotify Needs Joe Rogan, CEO Tells Staff in Town Hall

February 3, 2022 via News Break - Top Stories

Spotify founder and CEO Daniel Ek has told employees that exclusive deals like one with Joe Rogan are critical to the company's business, and that while he sometimes finds the podcast offensive he doesn't consider Spotify a "publisher" in terms of bearing responsibility for content it carries.

Film & TV

Relevant Sports Group Awarded to Sell UEFA Champions League Media Rights in U.S.

February 8, 2022 via PR Newswire - News Releases

Relevant Sports Group (RSG), the premier soccer events and media business in North America and Asia, is proud to announce it has been awarded to market the media rights in the United States for UEFA men's club competitions.

Amazon's Thursday Night Football Sets Off Broadcast Musical Chairs

February 7, 2022 via Sportico – Business (subscription may be required)

Al Michaels will become a free agent after the victory confetti blankets the SoFi Stadium turf this Sunday, but the veteran broadcaster says he aims to secure a booth assignment before the 2022 NFL season kicks off.

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Amazon's New Super Bowl Ad Uses Humor and Star Power to Build its Alexa Brand - Forbes

February 7, 2022 via Forbes - Charles Taylor - Google Alert (subscription may be required)

Following a string of successful Super Bowl ads in recent years that have featured celebrities while reinforcing Alexa's capabilities and making viewers laugh, Amazon's Alexa is returning to the Super Bowl this year.

Gaming Giants Like Activision Blizzard, Riot Bet on Esports' TV Prospects

February 4, 2022 via Sheppard Mullin - Media Mentions

Esports is the biggest opportunity in TV that nobody's talking about — yet. That's the view from video game industry veterans who see esports — or the exploding world of live video gaming competitions, complete with crowds of virtual fans cheering them on.

35 Media Rights Deals Agreed as Part of BLAST Premier's Expanded 2022 Global Broadcast Network

February 3, 2022 via Cision - Nordic Companies

BLAST Premier has announced a record 35 global media rights deals that sees the esports tournament organizer's 2022 season broadcast in over 130 TV territories and watched in 25 languages.

NHL Viewership With New Media Partners Slightly Up Heading Into All-Star Weekend

February 2, 2022 via Sports Business Journal

The NHL is seeing a small uptick in viewership headed into All-Star weekend, and with a backloaded linear TV slate, the league could see its best average in years.

Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs)

From MP3s to NFTs

February 7, 2022 via Rolling Stone Magazine

Back in 1876, the only way you could listen to your favorite music was if it was being played live.

They're Digital, Desirable and Can Be Worth Millions – but What are NFTs?

February 4, 2022 via The Age

One of the rarest available NFTs is a small, pixelated image of a bearded man wearing dark sunglasses and a top hat and smoking a cigarette.

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Eminem's Bored Ape NFT Valued At \$462,000

February 3, 2022 via The Inquisitr

Famous Detroit rapper Eminem, real name Marshall Mathers, has a Bored Ape NFT valued at \$462,000.

Someone Just Paid \$450,000 to Be Snoop Dogg's Neighbor in The Metaverse. Here's How You Can Live by a Celebrity Too

February 2, 2022 via Yahoo Finance

Would you pay \$450,000 to be Snoop Dogg's digital neighbor? Somebody did that in December, Decrypt reports, as the famous rapper was selling a "parcel" in the Snoopverse.

Blue Chips: UK Men's Basketball Team Gets in on the NFT Game

February 2, 2022 via Biz Journal - Accounting News

Would you pay \$5,000 for a pair of sneakers? What about \$5,000 for an NFT depicting a pair of 3D sneakers, signed by one of the University of Kentucky's top basketball stars?

Tags: entertainment, music, Olympics, Sports, superbowl