

Sports & Entertainment Spotlight

Family Dynamics and Strategic Moves Define a Turbulent Spring in Sports

By Joshua Bloomgarden on 5.2.25

Welcome back to the Spotlight! Based on the layers of pollen caked on my car and nary an unstuffed nose to be found, I would venture to guess that allergists are doing well for themselves this Spring. After the past week in sports, another profession perhaps seeing a boon is family therapy. First, during last week's NFL draft, University of Colorado quarterback Shedeur Sanders, son of NFL Hall of Famer Deion Sanders (who also happened to be Shedeur's coach and vocal supporter), found himself amidst a precipitous fall from being an expected top 3 pick all the way down to the 144th pick. If that was not enough for Sanders to en-deur, he also received a prank phone call from Atlanta Falcons Defensive Coordinator Jeff Ulbrich's son, purporting to be an NFL general manager that was drafting him. As a result of the egregious error in judgment, Ulbrich received a \$100,000 fine (in addition to a \$250,000 fine levied on the Falcons organization. Suffice it to say, Ulbrich's son will not be receiving an allowance for quite some time. Or, at the very least, the elder Ulbrich should never have to do dishes or take out the garbage in his home ever again. Then, this past week in the NBA playoffs, on the heels of an improbable collapse by the Milwaukee Bucks at the hands of the Indiana Pacers and their star point guard Tyrese Haliburton, Bucks' All-Star forward Giannis Antetokounmpo was confronted on the court by Haliburton's overzealous father. Rather than congratulating Giannis on a hard fought series, Haliburton's father shamefully taunted Giannis, the result of which was to overshadow the Pacers' (and his son's) accomplishments and force the NBA to keep the elder Haliburton from attending future games. Both instances are examples of abhorrent behavior by family members trying to claw their way into relevance, and a reminder for those with actual jobs and reputations on the line to keep relatives away from the negative spotlight.

- NBA Hall of Famer, Broadcaster, Entrepreneur, DJ and Investor Shaquille O'Neal is adding another entry to his LinkedIn profile, becoming the General Manager of Sacramento State University's Men's Basketball program— a potential boon for the team's prospects in its efforts to secure name, image and likeness (NIL) dollars for top talent. With Shaq's son Shaqir already on the team's, "Shaq State" may emulate the success that Deion Sanders brought to the University of Colorado's football program—ideally, culminating without a prank call.

- Influence Media Group and music producer DJ Khaled forge a partnership--anchored by Influence's acquisition of Khaled's music catalog—that will see Khaled and his affiliated company We The Best Music enter into two joint ventures for the development and production of film and television content, leveraging Khaled's NIL. They actually started with one joint venture, but Khaled insisted on “another one.”
- 2-time Super Bowl champion quarterback Eli Manning is rumored to be preparing a bid to buy a minority ownership interest in his former team, the New York Giants. Perhaps someone up there misunderstood my and other Giants fans' prayers for an elite quarterback.

For inquiries and/or unabashed compliments, please feel free to contact me at josh.bloomgarden@foster.com or add me on LinkedIn.

Endorsement Deals, Sponsorships & Investments

[Eli Manning to Put Together Bid for New York Giants Stake](#)

May 2, 2025 via Bloomberg

[Influencer marketing campaigns: 8 examples that drive real results](#)

May 1, 2025 via Hootsuite Blog

[Super League Acquires Supersocial, Expanding Brand Partnership Portfolio and Bolstering Business Growth](#)

May 1, 2025 via GlobeNewswire

[As Miami Grand Prix Approaches, F1 Still Without A New U.S. Media Rights Deal](#)

April 28, 2025 via Forbes

[Luxury brands' use of NFTs as digital twins may undermine the perceived value of physical products, study finds](#)

April 28, 2025 via Phys.org

Sports

[NIL legislation advances, has exemption for public records laws](#)

May 1, 2025 via Washington Examiner

U.S. Senate to hold hearing on future of sports broadcasting

May 1, 2025 via *Awful Announcing*

Falcons, Coach Fined for Shedeur Sanders Prank Call

April 30, 2025 via *Sportico*

Texas Longhorns will reportedly spend \$35-40 million on its football roster in 2025

April 30, 2025 via *Dallas Morning News*

Kentucky changes its athletic department to an LLC, hoping to become more nimble in finding revenue

April 30, 2025 via *Lancaster Online*

Proposed legislation targets NIL payments for high school athletes with restrictions

April 30, 2025 via *WVTM 13*

NBA 2K Pushes Paid Contests for Casual Gamers With Few Guardrails

April 30, 2025 via *Sportico*

Shaqramento State or Shaq State? O'Neal becomes GM of Sacramento State basketball program.

April 30, 2025 via *Lancaster Online*

Fan-Driven NIL Player Funding Platform Raises \$6.25 Million

April 29, 2025 via *Sportico*

Does A Kentucky LLC Mean Private Capital Is Next For College Sports?

April 28, 2025 via *Forbes*

Music Biz

Epidemic Sound acquires UGC music recognition technology company Song Sleuth

April 30, 2025 via *Music Week*

Influence Media acquires DJ Khaled catalog; launches two JVs with the artist and his We The Best Music Group

April 29, 2025 via *Music Business Worldwide*

Music creation platform Splice acquires Spitfire Audio

April 29, 2025 via *Music Week*

Film & TV

Shudder Acquires Supernatural Thriller ‘Good Boy’ From Director Ben Leonberg After SXSW Premiere

May 1, 2025 via Deadline

Gillette and EA Sports FC partner on in-game ads and soccer Ultimate Team packs

May 1, 2025 via Venturebeat

What Hollywood Should Take Away from the Success of Ryan Coogler’s ‘Sinners’

April 30, 2025 via FAIL Blog

Pac-12 inks TV deals for Oregon St., Wazzu home games

April 29, 2025 via Fort Worth Star-Telegram

ProBox TV Welcomes Prominent Sports Media Executive, Will Staeger, as a Senior Advisor and Executive Producer

April 29, 2025 via PR Newswire