

Sports & Entertainment Spotlight

Draft Dollars, Digital Nostalgia & Data-Driven Judges

By Joshua Bloomgarden on 6.27.25 | Posted in Sports & Entertainment Spotlight

Welcome back to the Spotlight! I write this week with a heavy heart, as I was not selected by a team in the NBA Draft for the 37th straight year. To the naysayers out there who would try to tear me down by pointing out that those who are drafted are generally taller and better than me at basketball, I say that I never completed the paperwork to be eligible for the NBA Draft. So there! Jokes aside, this happens to be the last Draft taking place before the July 1, 2025 date *House* settlement comes into effect, allowing colleges to directly pay their athletes a portion of revenue derived from the use of their athletes' name, image and likeness. In the NIL era, athletes have already performed the calculus of determining whether it would be more lucrative to stay in school and get more experience under their belts rather than playing in the pros under a cut-rate rookie contract. That will only come into sharper focus with more money being available to college athletes and it will be interesting to see how the earning capacity for college athletes affects the talent pool for future professional drafts to come. Whatever the outcome, it is clear that college athletes are finally able to achieve financial independence much earlier in their careers. Speaking of independence, in observance of Independence Day for these United States, the Spotlight will be replaced by fireworks next week but will return the following week. Until then, hopefully this will tide you over.

- Steve Burns, who played the role of...well..."Steve" on the original Blue's Clues children's television show is debuting a grown-up podcast tailored to adults who grew up watching the show. I have to say, I'm intrigued, though mail time stopped making me wag my tail when bills started rolling in.
- Kim Kardashian is rumored to be cast in a starring role in a film based on the popular "Bratz" dolls. The working title of the film? You guessed it: "Keeping Up With the Kardashians."
- Following a debut at the X Games, AI-powered sports tech firm The Owl raises \$10M as it looks to leverage artificial intelligence to displace human judges and officials in competitive sports. That all sounds very impressive, but I am still waiting for The Owl to

give a credible answer as to how many licks it takes to get to the center of a Tootsie Pop.

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

LSU Will Pay Athletes \$20.5 Million Over the Next Year. Here's How the Tigers Plan To Do It

June 27, 2025 via Advocate

How Cooper Flagg and AT&T Schooled Brands on NBA Draft Values

June 26, 2025 via AdWeek

On and FKA Twigs Co-Design Limited-Edition Capsule, Including a Signature Pair of Cloud Shoes

June 26, 2025 via HollywoodReporter

Kalshi, Polymarket Crack \$1B Valuations, Ride Political Wave

June 25, 2025 via Sportico

ESPN Gains Premier Lacrosse League Equity in New Rights Deal

June 25, 2025 via Sportico

Women's Tennis Association Extends Media Rights Deal with Tennis Channel Through 2032

June 25, 2025 via NBC News

Calum Worthy's AI Company 2wai Launches Video Chat App, Aiming to Put 'Control Back in the Hands of the Artists'

June 25, 2025 via Variety

The Party's Over for Kate's Clean Living Brand — Here's Why

June 25, 2025 via The Times

NBA Draft: How College NIL Money is Reshaping the Landscape

June 24, 2025 via Los Angeles Daily News

Minnesota Timberwolves, Lynx Sale to A-Rod, Lore Approved by NBA

June 24, 2025 via Sportico

A Guide to NIL Taxes

June 23, 2025 via Newswise

Jets Owner Woody Johnson Buying John Textor's Crystal Palace Stake

June 23, 2025 via Sportico

Lakers Sale Agreement Follows UAE Investment in Walter's TWG Global

June 21, 2025 via Sportico

Fanatics Fest Prioritizes Building Brand 'Evangelists' Over Profit

June 20, 2025 via Sportico

Wisconsin Sues Miami Over Transfer as College Sports Turns Pro

June 20, 2025 via Sportico

Sports

NCAA Considering Proposal to Allow College Athletes, Staff to Bet on Professional Sports

June 26, 2025 via Lancaster Online

Mavs Take Flagg at No. 1: 'A Dream Come True'

June 26, 2025 via ESPN

House v. NCAA: Era of Revenue Sharing in College Sports Begins

June 25, 2025 via Wisconsin State Bar

The U.S. Revoked Visas from a Top Basketball Player's Country. How the NBA Kept his Dream Alive

June 25, 2025 via NBC News

'Caitlin Clark Effect' Hits Seattle: Storm Ticket Prices, Attendance Soar for Tuesday's Game

June 24, 2025 via KIRO 7

Team Physicians in College Sports Wary of Greater Liability Risk with Athletes Now Making Big Money

June 24, 2025 via ABC News

Heir Ball: How the Cost of Youth Sports Is Changing the N.B.A.

June 23, 2025 via New Yorker

WNBA Players Make Public Push for New CBA Ahead of All-Star Break

June 22, 2025 via Chicago Sun Times

NFL Tries to Build Flag Football Pipeline, With Girls Leagues Spreading Rapidly

June 20, 2025 via Sports Business Journal

Music Biz

Cam’ron Announces Six-Figure Book Deal to Write His Memoir: ‘I’m Happy to Have This Deal Done’

June 26, 2025 via *Billboard*

Sabrina Carpenter Unveils Alternate ‘Man’s Best Friend’ Album Art That’s ‘Approved by God’ Amid Controversy

June 25, 2025 via *Variety*

The Music Industry is Building the Tech to Hunt Down AI Songs

June 23, 2025 via *Techmeme.com*

Senators Urge FTC Probe Into Spotify’s Subscription Bundling

June 22, 2025 via *Radio Ink Magazine*

Film & TV

Ben Affleck, Matt Damon & Gerry Cardinale’s Artists Equity Inks Theatrical Pact With Sony Pictures

June 26, 2025 via *Deadline*

Amazon MGM Studios Developing Animated Comedy ‘No Sleep’ From Writer Brian Schacter; Blake Griffin & Ryan Kalil’s Mortal Media Producing

June 26, 2025 via *Deadline*

Kim Kardashian And Picturestart Team On ‘Bratz’ Movie At Amazon MGM Studios

June 25, 2025 via *Deadline*

Steve Burns, Original ‘Blue’s Clues’ Host, Is Launching a Podcast for Grown-Ups That’s a ‘Continuation’ of the Beloved Kids’ Show

June 25, 2025 via *Variety*

‘Social Network’ Sequel in the Works With Aaron Sorkin Writing, Directing for Sony

June 25, 2025 via *HollywoodReporter*

Byron Allen’s Freestyle Digital Media Acquires ‘One But Many,’ Documentary On Human-Wildlife Conflict, Ahead Of Dances With Films Premiere

June 20, 2025 via *Deadline*

Emerging Sports

Emerging Sports Firm The Owl AI Raises \$11M Seed Round, Taps Google Vet Josh Gwythe As CEO

June 25, 2025 via Deadline

Cirque du Soleil Collaborates With The Sandbox to Bring Its Signature Spectacle Into the Metaverse

June 25, 2025 via Business Wire