

# STREET & SMITH'S SportsBusiness sportsbusinessdaily.com DAILY

Thursday, February 18, 2010

Vol. XVI -- No. 109

## Look Who's Talking (#23)

Tiger's ready to talk, but strategy is questioned and criticized -- from his refusal to take questions to holding event during Accenture tourney. (#25)

## Baltimore Sons

Maryland hero Michael Phelps joins forces with local company Under Armour. (#18)

## Leaving The Palace

Tom Wilson says next move is weeks away following resignation from Pistons. (#34)

## Square 'Peg In A Round Hole

Thrashers, NHL officials deny rumors of team's sale, relocation to Manitoba. (#29)

## Teeing Off With Honors

Michael Whan expresses confidence in LPGA's future, hopes to build strong business relationships. (#27)

## Waiting For Dial-Up To Connect (#2)

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## Friday Night Lights

Opening Ceremony advertisers see significant spike in recognition. (#11)

## From Canada, With Love (#12)

Colbert injects dose of unpredictability to NBC's Vancouver coverage in first appearance on net.

## American Pie

Will Wednesday be remembered as the turning point for the Vancouver Games? Team USA has an unbelievably successful day with its top stars delivering six medals, and the memorable performances provide great theater and boffo numbers for NBC (#1). And to top it off, the tide may be turning for VANOC, as the consensus is that the execution and organization of the Games is improving (#5). Meanwhile, Shaun White could become the face of the Games, as his latest Gold Medal proves the world is his oyster (#7). But Lindsey Vonn's win adorns most of today's front-pages, and you get the feeling that this story is not fully written, as her rivalry with Julia Mancuso remains something to watch. Also, Shani Davis provides a lone bright spot for speedskating, as the sport deals with yet another controversy (#6). All of this offers unparalleled commercial exposure for the winter sports, and it is hard to think the USOC and its NGBs could have written a better script as they look to build sustainable and visible platforms going into non-Olympic years.



**America's Dominant Show  
Makes Front Page News**

## Also In Today's Issue

Fan favorite Olympic sport curling not feeling the same love from late-night talk show hosts. (#13)

## Quote Of The Day

**"You know, it's the authenticity that I really appreciate about NBC. Everything is real."**

-- Comedy Central's **Stephen Colbert**,  
after jumping into the fireplace on the net's Olympic  
studio set ("*Winter Olympics*," NBC, 2/17). (#12)

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WANT TO E-MAIL STAFF? E-MAIL: FIRSTINITIALLASTNAME@SPORTSBUSINESSDAILY.COM

EDITORIAL E-MAIL: EDITORIAL@SPORTSBUSINESSDAILY.COM ISSN: 1084-3205

TELEPHONE: (704) 973-1500 FAX: (704) 973-1501

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## Olympics

### 1. NBC GETS BIG AIR WITH WEDNESDAY OLYMPIC RATINGS, TOPS FOX' "IDOL"

NBC scored big last night with its Vancouver Games coverage, averaging a 16.7 final Nielsen rating and 29.4 million viewers from 8:00-11:17pm ET as Team USA captured six medals. That rating is up 47.8% from an 11.3 rating (17.9 million viewers) from the same night during the '06 Turin Games, but off 4.6% from a 17.5 for the '02 Salt Lake City Games. NBC's Olympic coverage beat Fox' "American Idol" head-to-head, earning a 17.0 rating (30.1 million viewers) compared to a 10.4 rating (18.4 million viewers) for "Idol." Last night marks the first time in six years that any telecast has outrated "Idol." On the same night during the Turin Games in '06, when the two telecasts went head-to-head in the 8:00-9:00pm window, "Idol" earned a 16.5 rating (28.9 million viewers), compared to NBC's 9.1 rating and 14.3 million viewers in the time slot. For six nights to date, NBC Olympic coverage is averaging a 14.9 rating (26.9 million viewers), up 19.2% from a 12.5 rating (21.1 million viewers) during the same period in Turin, but down 23.6% from a 19.5 average for Salt Lake City in '02. NBC Tuesday night earned a 12.2 final Nielsen rating (20.3 million viewers), up 8% from Turin in '06 and down 34% from Salt Lake City in '02. NBC's Olympic coverage went head-to-head against "Idol" from 8:00-10:00pm, with Fox earning a 12.9 rating, compared to NBC's 11.8 rating in that time frame (*THE DAILY*).

#### WINTER OLYMPICS AVERAGE PRIMETIME RATINGS TREND

	'10 (Vancouver)	'06 (Turin)	'02 (Salt Lake)	'98 (Nagano)
Opening Ceremony	17.3	12.8	25.5	17.1
2nd Day (Saturday)	14.0	13.5	17.1	12.3
3rd Day (Sunday)	14.3	13.3	17.6	20.2

4th Day (Monday)	14.2	12.8	19.6	14.8
5th Day (Tuesday)	12.2	11.3	18.5	18.2
6th Day (Wednesday)	16.7	11.3	17.5	15.3
<b>Cumulative</b>	<b>14.9</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>19.5</b>	<b>16.4</b>

**TUESDAY'S SILVER MEDAL:** In N.Y., Carter & Sandomir write "no one should have been too surprised" by "Idol" topping the Olympics on Tuesday, since "absolutely nothing on any other channel ... in almost six years" had beaten the show in the ratings. NBC President of Research Alan Wurtzel said of the program, "It's a force of nature." But he added, "We whittled down their margin this time." NBC's coverage of the Olympics on Tuesday earned a 5.4 rating in the 18-49 demo, "slightly lower than Turin," while "Idol" earned a 9.1 in the demo. But Wurtzel noted that the Vancouver Games thus far have "demonstrated a significant upward trend" in the 18-24 and 18-34 adult demos (*N.Y. TIMES*, 2/18). NBC Senior VP/Strategic Marketing, Promotions & Communications Mike McCarley in a statement yesterday said, "Congratulations to 'American Idol;' the show extended its six-year undefeated streak from 221-0 to 222-0. The show is a juggernaut." In DC, Lisa de Moraes notes "Idol's" lead over the Olympics was "less than half its lead over NBC's broadcast" of the Turin Games on the comparable Tuesday (*WASHINGTON POST*, 2/18).

**WESTERN CIVILIZATION:** USA TODAY's Michael Hiestand notes as "traditionally happens with both Winter and Summer Olympics, the highest prime-time viewership is coming from Western time zones, with the Mountain Time Zone" averaging a 19.4 through the first five nights. NBC's primetime coverage is beginning at 8:00pm PT, three hours behind the East Coast feed, but these viewing levels are "often cited as proof that it's largely OK with West Coasters that their prime-time Olympic action is tape-delayed" (*USA TODAY*, 2/18). In Seattle, Ron Judd noted since his column about NBC's "refusal to explain" its decision to tape delay coverage for West Coast viewers was posted on the Seattle Times Web site on Tuesday night, he has been "inundated with emails and cc:'s of complaints to NBC Universal." Judd: "I mean inundated in a good way. It is by far the largest response to any column I've ever filed from the Olympics" (*SEATTLETIMES.com*, 2/17).

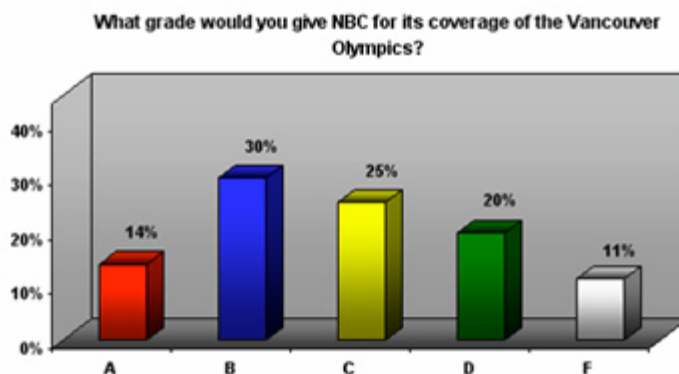
**BLAST FROM THE PAST:** Yesterday's women's downhill race, in which Lindsey Vonn won her first Gold Medal, took place yesterday afternoon, but NBC did not air coverage of the event on any of its platforms until around 9:00pm ET last night. In Newark, Steve Politi wrote NBC is "sucking so much of the joy from the games with its dopey tape delay." Politi: "Can anybody really make it to the TV without knowing the results? This is not 1980. I've given up counting ways I could have heard or read about what happened" (*NJ.com*, 2/17). In N.Y., Mike Vaccaro writes under the header, "Hey, NBC, Ditch That Tape Machine." If there is "one lesson NBC must learn from these Olympics," it is that "it ain't 1980 anymore" (*N.Y. POST*, 2/18). In Boston, Charles Pierce: "The fake drama enveloping a competition the entire world knows already has been run is getting hilarious" (*BOSTON.com*, 2/17). ESPN.com's J.A. Adande said, "Four years ago they were in Italy, a completely different continent. Now we're on the same continent, Pacific Time Zone. You should tailor it for American viewers and show events live. ... You're expecting people not to go on Twitter, not to get any text messages, not to go on the Internet. That's asking too much in this information age" ("*Around The Horn*," *ESPN*, 2/18). SI.com's Michael Rosenberg: "In 2010, how are you supposed to avoid that news? All we do is communicate with each other. We e-mail. We text. ... Are we supposed to avoid our local newspaper's Web site and favorite blogs and Facebook and Twitter and not check our text messages?" (*SI.com*, 2/18).

**NEWS OUTLETS DEALING WITH SPOILERS:** Washington Post Managing Editor Liz Spayd was asked in an online chat, "It is very disappointing to see Olympic results plastered across the homepage [of the paper's Web site] before they are broadcast in prime time. ... Isn't a spoiler alert possible?" Spayd: "It's an issue we're trying to evaluate right now. You aren't the only one frustrated. But it's a tricky one for a news site whose greatest value is to break news. We don't want to be the game spoilers, but when big news happens ... we want it prominently visible on the site" (*WASHINGTONPOST.com*, 2/17). In N.Y., Clark Hoyt noted the N.Y. Times has been posting results from the Games on its Web site prior to NBC airing the events on tape-delay, and the paper has "no intention of changing its approach: report results as soon as it can, as prominently as they deserve." N.Y. Times Sports Editor Tom Jolly: "Our job is to report the news." He said NBC "has made a business decision to show the highlights on a taped basis. We're not beholden to presenting the news the way NBC does." Jolly: "We've got readers around the world watching the Olympics in real time, for us to hide the results from them is preposterous" (*NYTIMES.com*, 2/17).

**DELAY NOT REALLY A BIG DEAL:** Dallas Morning News columnist Tim Cowlshaw said of NBC delaying coverage of Vonn's win, "This is not a mainstream ... game where you hear the score beforehand and you say, 'Okay, now I know the score there's no need to watch it.' A skiing run is far different from that. They know their audience. They know it's not mainstream sports fans. They know their ratings are up 15% from four years ago. They must be doing something right" ("*Around The Horn*," *ESPN*, 2/17). In Dallas, Barry Horn wrote, "Does it really matter? How many folks ever heard of Vonn before these Games? Skiing isn't exactly a TV staple. Now we can't live if we don't see Vonn live" (*DALLASNEWS.com*, 2/17). *SI.com*'s Rosenberg writes NBC "wants to maximize its audience, and theoretically, that is precisely what we should want from NBC: to please as many people as possible." The problem is that, "as entertainment, the Olympics are not a sporting event in any conventional sense," and NBC "understands this." Rosenberg: "The Olympics are a show." Fans can "complain that NBC obsesses over every American and worries too much about storylines and features." But without "patriotic fervor and feel-good stories, the Winter Olympics are just a series of options for going down a mountain" (*SI.com*, 2/18).

**A CHANGE IS GONNA COME?** The *WALL STREET JOURNAL*'s Jason Gay writes NBC's primetime, "deeply edited Olympic formula is out of sync with today's on-demand media fest." Fans want Olympic coverage the "way we want it," and with broadcasting "eroding into nichecasting, we may get that wish." Gay notes "more-reasonable" U.S. TV rights fees for the '14 Sochi and '16 Rio de Janeiro Games "should diminish pressure for megaratings and allow an American broadcaster to spend less time packaging and more time just showing sports" (*WALL STREET JOURNAL*, 2/18). Meanwhile, *SPORTINGNEWS.com*'s Dan Levy writes NBC execs "have to think that holding back events like the women's downhill for exclusive coverage in primetime will help the evening ratings." Levy: "But putting the entire event on CNBC or MSNBC live as it happens cannot put a big enough dent into the ratings to make all of the backlash worthwhile" (*SPORTINGNEWS.com*, 2/18).

**MAKING THE GRADE:** THE DAILY asked its readers to grade NBC's coverage of the Vancouver Games. The net received a passing grade from 88.6% of the 309 respondents, with the largest response -- 30% -- giving NBC a solid B grade. See the chart for the complete results (*THE DAILY*).



**NIR-VONN-A:** With Vonn's win yesterday, ESPN's Tony Kornheiser said, "If you're Dick Ebersol, you're feeling pretty good about NBC and the Olympics, because you don't have an American sweetheart skater this year like you've had before. You were hoping that Lindsey Vonn, with the potential to win five medals, many of them Gold, would actually come through." He added, "NBC can ride this for at least a week because she's got four more races. ... If she wins a bunch of medals -- I don't say it saves the Olympics because I don't think the Olympics are in jeopardy -- but you really sell it that way" (*"PTI," ESPN, 2/17*).

**NOT THE SAME AS BEING THERE:** In S.F., Gwen Knapp writes TV coverage of Olympic figure skating "can't compare" to watching the event in person. The TV coverage "offers only a speck of the real spectacle," and no other sport "gets downsized so dramatically when it comes through the tube." This "is not a knock on NBC," but viewers who "have never seen figure skating in person should know what they're missing." TV coverage does not show the true "speed of the skaters," and it seems "particularly incomplete" with the pairs competition. In addition, "footwork and use of the entire rink" does not translate to TV, nor can viewers differentiate the "good from the bad" (*S.F. CHRONICLE, 2/18*).

**GOING NORTH UP NORTH:** CTV drew 6.2 million viewers for its coverage of Tuesday's Canada-Norway men's hockey game, which helped lead the network to its highest average audience of the Games with 5.7 million viewers for the evening. In addition, an average audience of 3.7 million viewers watched Canada's Maëlle Ricker win the women's snowboard cross gold medal during CTV's mid-afternoon coverage (*CTV*). Those two events were the most-watched events of the Games in Canada thus far, followed by Tuesday's snowboard cross qualification (2.1 million), Tuesday night's men's figure skating (2.08 million) and Tuesday's Canada-Norway men's curling match (1.9 million) (*SEATTLETIMES.com, 2/17*). Meanwhile, in Toronto, Chris Zelkovich wrote the CTV's Brian Stemmler is a "very good ski analyst," but when Sweden's Anja Paerson "took a frightening fall" in the women's downhill race yesterday, Stemmler "made it sound like he was celebrating big air at the halfpipe instead of a potentially serious fall." Stemmler during the live broadcast said, "Wow! Unbelievable air. ... Look how far she's gone in the air." Zelkovich noted as cameras "focused on a rather upset-looking Lindsey Vonn at the bottom of the course, Stemmler continued to celebrate the fall." He said, "That was incredible! Oh my! That was awesome!" (*THESTAR.com, 2/17*).

## 2. NBC ONLINE STREAMING OF EVENTS A MARKED DECREASE FROM BEIJING



The '08 Beijing Games were largely expected to be the "last pre-Internet Olympics," but NBC appears to be

"caught in the mid 1980s when it comes to the Internet" during the Vancouver Games, according to Scott Bradner of COMPUTERWORLD. If you go to the video page on NBC's Olympics Web site and attempt to "view the 'full live streaming schedule' you get a quite pathetic and limited list of events." Last Sunday, curling and hockey "were the only sports listed." The Vancouver Games have "established that NBC has no interest in maximizing viewer interest in the games, or in minimizing the loss of hundreds of millions of dollars it says it will suffer from covering the event." It would "not cost NBC all that much to stream the events it will not be covering on its shows," and such coverage, "particularly of training and preliminary events, would increase interest in the finals, at least some of which NBC will be carrying" (*COMPUTERWORLD.com, 2/17*). However, in N.Y., Brian Stelter writes NBC's online approach highlights "how the Web is not nearly as profitable a platform as TV for most major media companies." NBC Olympics President Gary Zenkel: "When we roll out our digital coverage, there are some financial considerations to take into account. We make a massive investment when we acquire and produce the Olympics. The lions' share of advertising revenue continues to be generated by our television coverage." Stelter did note NBC's coverage from Vancouver has marked a "step backward in online access to marquee events." The Olympics have "become a laboratory for the future of TV viewing, with NBC controlling the experiments to the chagrin of many viewers" (*N.Y. TIMES, 2/18*).

**RECORD BREAKER:** VANOC officials said that the Vancouver Games' official Web site has "beaten all previous Olympic Games records for Internet traffic." VANOC VP/Communications Renee Smith-Valade: "One in three Canadians on average has visited the site and by the end of the games we estimate we will have reached about 15[%] of the North American population and [5-10%] of the global Internet population" (*AFP, 2/18*).

**APP REVIEW:** SPORTINGNEWS.com's Chris Littmann reviewed the NBC Olympics iPhone app, and wrote the app "has a lot of features -- and scores big points for being free -- but ultimately is lacking in some areas." The app "overall offers a lot of content," and videos, "even with a little pre-roll ad, are still a great feature." But the "downside" is that it "loaded slow at times." Also, "one major pet peeve is that on the social media stream, the links are not clickable" (*SPORTINGNEWS.com, 2/16*).

### 3. OLYMPIC ROUNDTABLE PANEL DISCUSSES NBC'S COVERAGE THUS FAR

By William Cooper, Staff Writer

NBC's coverage has generated strong ratings, and media critics questioned by THE DAILY believe the net has done a solid job in producing the first week of the Games.

**PROGRESS REPORT:** St. Petersburg Times media columnist Tom Jones was the most effusive of our panelists with praise when it came to reviewing NBC's coverage, as he gave the net an "A" for its efforts thus far. Jones felt NBC studio hosts Bob Costas and Al Michaels "have been solid," and he had particular praise for the net's willingness to show multiple events. Jones: "The primetime coverage, although some of it taped, has done a good job of bouncing from event to



**Panelist Praises Costas (l) And Michaels (r) For "Solid" Performance Thus Far**

event and has kept the action moving." Jones also "liked NBC putting labels on the screen -- such as, 'Men's Downhill in 14 minutes' -- to let viewers know what is coming up," as well as the net's analysts "for the events that aren't particularly well known." Jones felt the analysts have "done an excellent job analyzing their events, while explaining to novices the basic rules and strategies of the sports they are talking about." Less enthusiastic was Daily Variety reporter Brian Lowry, who called the coverage predictable. Lowry was not surprised by NBC's decision to show newer Olympic sports, such as snowboarding, in primetime because they "appeal to a younger audience and because Americans do well in them." Lowry did say he had been impressed by how the net has "devoted some time to foreign athletes." However that is "partially out of necessity, because the Americans don't necessarily have medal contenders in some of the major events, such as the pairs skating." Meanwhile, the net's emphasis on features during its Olympics coverage has been well documented, and though SportingNews.com's Dan Levy did not necessarily find fault with this approach, he felt the net should "at least keep it to the greater Vancouver area." Mary Carillo did a feature on polar bears from Manitoba during Monday's broadcast, and Levy wondered, "What does that have to do with the Olympics, or Vancouver, B.C.?" Levy: "Less of that, and more live coverage during the day, would be good."

**APPROPRIATE HANDLING:** All of the panelists felt NBC did a good job reporting on Kumaritashvili's death during its Opening Ceremony coverage last Friday. Levy felt the net "handled the crash, and the news elements therein, very well." Lowry labeled the coverage as "appropriate," given that the incident "certainly cast a pall over the start of the Games." He also thought NBC was "wise" to use news anchor Brian Williams to handle the initial coverage. All three also agreed with the decision to air footage of the crash, with Jones noting the video was "more newsworthy than gratuitous." Levy: "The fact is, a man died, but the crash itself wasn't terribly gruesome. I appreciated the transparency of their coverage." Jones noted NBC warned viewers before the footage, and he felt the video "showed viewers how the accident occurred and gave viewers a sense of what went wrong." Jones also said NBC by his count aired the accident "three times during the opening report, which to me was the right number." Jones: "Any more than that would've been morbid or ghoulish." Jones added, "Also thought they did a solid job of looking at just how dangerous the track was."

**DELAY OF GAMES:** The panelists were not in agreement, however, when it came to NBC's decision to tape delay many Olympic events, as well as how good of a job the net does at distinguishing between live and tape-delayed coverage. Lowry felt criticism of NBC's tape-delay policy was "overrated," as "most people don't sit down desperate to know who wins." Lowry: "This is sort of the distinction between sports fans -- who are accustomed to watching sports live -- and the casual viewers who tune in for the Olympics. For them, it's basically another variation on a reality TV show." Jones agreed the criticism was slightly misplaced, as NBC "doesn't have a choice sometimes" when it comes to showing delayed coverage. However, he felt the net "could be more clear with what is on tape and what is live." NBC sometimes designates that the coverage they are showing at a given time is "live," but Jones felt they should go in the opposite direction, saying, "I would like to see some sort of banner in the corner of the screen telling me if something is taped -- something like 'taped coverage' or 'earlier today.'" Meanwhile, Levy was the most critical of the panelists in this area, saying, "It's amazing how much money NBC spent on these games, yet they still can't seem to figure out how to package events on TV or online." Levy expressed particular frustration with the fact that NBC is using multiple networks to televise the Games, "yet at any given time will have coverage on as few as one." Levy: "Why don't they have dedicated channels for skiing, sledding, skating,

hockey, etc. with live coverage as it happens, recaps of events that already took place and even record-breaking moments from other Olympics with interviews from the participants?"

**FLYING HIGH:** Both Levy and Lowry felt NBC would be able to maintain the relatively strong ratings it has seen for the Olympics thus far. While Lowry noted there is "usually some fatigue along the way," he felt the Olympics were benefiting from a "real appetite for big events on TV right now -- witness the recent ratings for the Super Bowl, Grammys and Golden Globes." As a result, Lowry felt ratings "will be pretty strong throughout -- especially when they get into a marquee event like the women's figure skating." Levy also cited the power of figure skating, which "seems to drive an audience, so no matter what, the prime time numbers should remain strong for NBC." Jones was less optimistic, believing the ratings will be dependent on each night's lineup. Jones: "NBC will get another big bump with the ladies figure skating and, perhaps, when some of the stars of these games compete. But I think we will see obvious peaks and valleys in the ratings for the rest of the games."

#### 4. OFFICIALS DEFEND VANCOUVER GAMES AMID MOUNTING MEDIA CRITICISM

VANOC officials yesterday insisted that the Vancouver Games are "going well and that they're correcting any problems as they occur," according to Kines & Lee of the VANCOUVER SUN. VANOC CEO John Furlong said, "You have to keep some perspective. There's thousands of things going on in the Olympic theatre and I think we should be talking about sport and athlete and Olympic records. ... I've read some things that I didn't like reading and I don't believe it's true or fair. But, having said that, when we make mistakes or things don't go well, you have to fix them." VANOC yesterday moved to "squell mounting criticism of the Winter Games by allowing greater public access to the Olympic cauldron and fighting back against attacks by the international media." Furlong said that VANOC "moved as quickly as it could to deal with complaints about the austere chain-link fence around the Olympic cauldron." Furlong then "reeled off a list of things that he says are going well including sold-out venues, massive television audiences, limited traffic congestion, and the positive reaction to media facilities, athletes' food, and the warmth of Canadian volunteers and fans." Meanwhile, Furlong addressed the 19 people injured at a Live City Vancouver concert Tuesday night, saying, "Nobody anticipated that that would happen in that venue, but they fixed it. That's what we need to do when something happens" (*VANCOUVER SUN*, 2/18).

**MR. BRIGHTSIDE:** In N.Y., John Branch writes there is a sense that the Vancouver Games "will be remembered in part for a baffling number of blunders and for the unseasonably warm weather." But Furlong said, "On mistakes, we have to fix them. On the others, honestly, I mean, I think that when I look at the first four or five days, I don't think there's anybody here or anybody in the city that would have been prepared to say I predicted some of the things that Vancouver 2010 had to deal with" (*N.Y. TIMES*, 2/18). The GLOBE & MAIL's Rod Mickleburgh wrote Furlong gave the Games a "rave review." Furlong: "There is euphoria across Canada. ... There have been little things here and there, but the broad feeling is tremendous." Furlong added of the venues, "People there are having a great time. It's exciting to be there. The athletes have been remarking on how warm and friendly everyone is towards them" (*CTVOLYMPICS.ca*, 2/17).

**GLITCHES PILE UP:** In Seattle, Art Thiel wrote, "Unfortunately for the hosts, the pile-on has become easier." There have been "snafus with media and spectator transportation, a power outage at Cypress [Mountain], and lots of empty VIP seats at multiple venues" (*SEATTLEPI.com*, 2/16). SI.com's Alexander Wolff writes under the header, "Gaffes Galore At The Glitch Games." The Games "would be a whole lot easier to

take if the Canadians weren't in the throes of a medal-grubbing campaign to lord it over their guests -- an effort to rival Americans at our jingoistic worst" (*SI.com*, 2/18). In Detroit, Gregg Krupa writes "malfunctions and fate have combined in a succession of hiccups that has spectators and critics alike referring to this as The Glitch Games." Olympic officials "have admitted to some mistakes and acknowledged bad breaks," but they also "assert that some of the criticism is unfair." Krupa: "In truth, most of the difficulties stem from the weather" (*DETROIT NEWS*, 2/18). Meanwhile, in Houston, David Barron notes Furlong yesterday was asked "about a report that Cypress Mountain was suffering a mice infestation after bales of hay were trucked in to reinforce the muddy, snow-starved slopes" (*HOUSTON CHRONICLE*, 2/18).

**STARTING TO TURN THE CORNER:** SportsBusiness Journal's Tripp Mickle writes, "As I walked through the crowds near Vancouver's waterfront Wednesday afternoon, there was a sense that organizers had turned a corner. Crowds spilled into the open area before the flame to snap photos and pose for their I-attended-the-Vancouver-Olympics shot." SportsMark CEO Keith Bruce said that for the first time yesterday the company's morning hospitality briefing began with the words, "No trouble to report." Every other day the company, which is servicing 11 corporate partners in Vancouver, detailed a transportation, venue or ticketing issue. Bruce: "It was trouble here or trouble there. Today, it was nothing" (*THE DAILY*). The NATIONAL POST's Brian Hutchinson writes under the header, "Gloom Over The Games Lifts." The "clouds parted" yesterday, and the "gloom over these 2010 Olympic Winter Games lifted." The sun "took over and hallelujah, the Debbie Downers in the press corps for a moment closed their yaps" (*NATIONAL POST*, 2/18). In Pittsburgh, Dejan Kovacevic writes the "shame" of the Games' troubles is that "areas which usually are a great concern at an Olympics have gone well, notably attendance: The packed houses for hockey were expected, but venues everywhere are filled and loud." There is "genuine, palpable joy, and that extends even to those watching oversized television screens through downtown Vancouver and in the Whistler Village." Still, a "whole lot of flag-waving, so far, has not been enough for Vancouver organizers" (*PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE*, 2/18).

**DEFENDING THEIR HONOUR:** In Toronto, Spencer & Mackin report Canadian politicians yesterday "shot back at the international news media for criticizing" the Games, saying that Canadians "should be proud of the games they're hosting." Liberal Party leader Michael Ignatieff: "It hasn't been perfect, there have been some glitches, but this is a great games and from the Canadian point of view this is one of the greatest moments in our national life since [Canada's centenary in] 1967" (*TORONTO SUN*, 2/18). In Toronto, Bob Hepburn writes, "Without a doubt ... the biggest whiners are British journalists for whom almost everything about Vancouver and Whistler -- and Canadians in general -- is a disaster. Some criticisms are over-the-top laughable, others spot-on accurate." Hepburn adds of the British critics, "They should pay attention to their own 2012 London Summer Olympics, which are truly on track to earning the title of the 'worst Olympics ever.' ... These British critics are silent about major problems with the British team in Vancouver and with the Olympic mess brewing in their own backyard" (*TORONTO STAR*, 2/18). A TORONTO STAR editorial is written under the header, "Games Critics Overreacting." The editorial: "The worst ever? ... Give us a break. The Vancouver Games are no disaster. Poor weather, a few glitches and a tragic death during a pre-Games practice luge run have indeed clouded the opening days. ... But the cheap shot artists, led by the hyperventilating British press, are determined to make moguls out of molehills" (*TORONTO STAR*, 2/18). Also in Toronto, Vinay Menon writes, "It's Day 7 of the Olympics and I have decided to ignore the negativity. ... I don't get it. Are there not 'glitches' during every Olympics?" (*TORONTO STAR*, 2/18).

**FAR FROM THE WORST:** In London, Jacquelin Magnay writes, "These are nowhere near the worst Games, as some have suggested, but they are a Games of the haves, people with tickets, and the have-nots -- 28,000 who have had their Olympic experience crushed after being told their tickets had been cancelled." There also is the "ludicrous decision to fence the Olympic flame off from the public." Still, VANOC VP/Communications Renee Smith-Valade has "expressed 'shock' that there had been negative stories." Magnay: "In the official zeal to remain optimistic, history is being rewritten" (*London TELEGRAPH*, 2/18). CBS News' Jeff Glor reported many experts "still regard Atlanta 1996 as the most disorganized Games." Glor: "These Olympics do still have 11 days left, room to fix some mistakes, maybe space for a majestic athletic achievement to take everyone's focus away from what so far has been a Games replete with glitches" (*Evening News*, CBS, 2/17). In Vancouver, Michael Smyth writes every Olympics "has screw-ups and controversies, not just Vancouver's." Smyth: "Here's where I give VANOC credit: They've figured out the Olympic Games is a global television event. And, on that score, the Vancouver Games are a success" (*Vancouver PROVINCE*, 2/18).

#### 5. VANOC CREATES ROOFTOP VIEWING PLATFORM FOR OLYMPIC CAULDRON

VANOC officials yesterday "reached a compromise that will allow better access to the Olympic cauldron along the city waterfront," according to Scott Thurston of the *BOSTON GLOBE*. Visitors "complained that an unsightly chain-link fence surrounding the cauldron resulted in an obstructed view of the flame," so VANOC officials "constructed a rooftop viewing platform for better photography, and while maintaining security concerns, moved a safety fence closer to the unique symbol." An opening "has also been cut along the fence to allow people to take photos from ground level." VANOC CEO John Furlong: "The Olympic cauldron is a powerful symbol and the desire to get as close to it as possible has been remarkable -- more than we expected. We actually believe we have a solution that's better than the one people were actually asking for" (*BOSTON GLOBE*, 2/18). In Vancouver, Kelly Sinoski reports the viewing area, "on the west side of Jack Poole Plaza on the grounds of the new wing of the Vancouver Convention Centre, was designed as a scenic lookout point and can hold up to 150 people at a time on a railed pedestrian pathway." It is "also accessible by elevator" (*VANCOUVER SUN*, 2/18). In Seattle, Jack Broom notes the fence "will still be in countless photos" from ground-level, "because the shot most people want isn't just of the caldron, but of themselves or loved ones with the caldron in the background." This is why a second viewing area on the roof is "particularly popular," as it "offers an unobstructed view" (*SEATTLE TIMES*, 2/18). The *GLOBE & MAIL*'s Wendy Stueck wrote the rooftop viewing area "appeared to be a hit" (*CTVOLYMPICS.ca*, 2/17). In Toronto, Petti Fong reported one official said that "crews and VANOC organizers were particularly pained to hear criticisms about the cauldron," located at Jack Poole Plaza, because late VANOC Chair Jack Poole was "such a beloved figure" (*TORONTO STAR*, 2/18).

#### 6. VONN, WHITE, DAVIS HELP PROPEL U.S. TO RECORD ONE-DAY MEDAL HAUL

U.S. skier Lindsey Vonn, snowboarder Shaun White and long-track speedskater Shani Davis -- three of the most highly touted athletes leading into the Games -- all won Gold Medals yesterday, a "day of great expectations for the U.S. Olympic team," according to a front-page piece by Tracee Hamilton of the *WASHINGTON POST*. Team USA won three additional medals yesterday, giving the U.S. a "one-day, Winter Olympic-record six medals." Speedskater Chad Hedrick, who yesterday won a Bronze Medal in the men's 1000m, said, "We have six medals in three different sports. It's an unbelievable feat, and for me to be a part of it is an honor" (*WASHINGTON POST*, 2/18). In N.Y., Filip Bondy

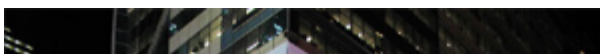
notes the three golds, one silver and two bronzes won by the U.S. team marked "only the second time the U.S. had ever won three Olympic events in the same day, and its gaudiest daily haul ever." Bondy: "The medals were spilling from the mountains, gathering in the suburbs, then heading back out to hills again" (*N.Y. DAILY NEWS*, 2/18). The U.S. enters competition today leading the medal count with 14, four more than second-place Germany, and YAHOO SPORTS' Dan Wetzel writes under the header, "Right Now, U.S. Owns Vancouver Games" (*SPORTS.YAHOO.com*, 2/18).

**JUST GETTING STARTED?** In DC, Barry Svrluga writes an "extraordinary start to the Vancouver Olympics for America's Alpine skiers" could "lead to the largest haul in 26 years, if not ever." The U.S. has won three medals through two Alpine skiing events, and "needs one more Alpine medal to match the totals" from the '64 Innsbruck and '94 Lillehammer Games. Svrluga: "Two more, and they match 1984. Three more? ... There would be a new standard" (*WASHINGTON POST*, 2/18).

**GREETINGS FROM VONNCOOVER:** In L.A., Bill Plaschke writes Vonn "forever changed the face of U.S. women's skiing -- and perhaps women's athletics" -- with her Gold Medal in the women's downhill yesterday. A "new poster has been tacked on the wall of America's teenagers," and Vonn is "moving toward becoming this country's first beloved female sports star since soccer heroes Mia Hamm and Brandi Chastain a decade ago" (*L.A. TIMES*, 2/18). In N.Y., Bill Pennington writes in "one of the most stirring descents in Olympic downhill skiing history, Vonn ignored the pain in her injured shin, chased down" U.S. skier Julia Mancuso, who was leading at the time, and "caught up to nearly a lifetime of expectations" (*N.Y. TIMES*, 2/18). The *GLOBE & MAIL*'s Stephen Brunt writes during the women's downhill, the "delays, the deluges, the glitches" of the Vancouver Games were "at least temporarily forgotten, and in their place, a pure event, a classic race, on a fast, demanding, intimidating course that separated the best from the also-rans." Brunt writes of the Games, "Perhaps it begins with Vonn and ends with Vonn and this is the moment when it all turns for the better" (*GLOBE & MAIL*, 2/18).

**SAVING THE DAY:** YAHOO SPORTS' Martin Rogers writes under the header, "Davis' Performance Saves His Sport." As the Vancouver Games' speedskating competition "hurtled headfirst toward another slew of 'embarrassing' accusations, the sometimes off-putting and elusive but always supremely talented Davis finally provided a spark bright enough to cut through a week of mayhem and mishap." Davis' "magnificent performance" in the men's 1000m "gave this sport something to marvel at." It is ironic that it "turned out to be Davis, an anti-establishment figure in the speedskating world who has a long-standing dispute with his national federation, who saved the day" after another controversy developed at the Richmond Olympic Oval. A "furious collection of the world's best speedskaters was lining up to fling more criticism at Winter Olympic chiefs" after last night's competition. Russia speedskater Dmitry Lobkov after a false start "did not hear the whistle and covered two-thirds of the track at full speed before realizing he would have to restart." That "prompted a significant delay" of 20 minutes in which Lobkov was "allowed time to recover." Lobkov said of Vancouver speedskating officials, "I don't know how they can make so many mistakes. I have never seen things like this before. It feels like the national championships, not the Olympic Games." Netherlands speedskater Simon Kuipers added, "This doesn't feel like an Olympic competition. It's kind of (expletive). They have four years to prepare and they can't even get things right. There are so many mistakes and it is embarrassing for them" (*SPORTS.YAHOO.com*, 2/18).

## 7. SHAUN WHITE'S GOLD BOOSTS HIS TRANSCENDENT CULTURAL STATUS



U.S. snowboarder Shaun White last

night won the Gold Medal in the men's halfpipe at the Vancouver Games, marking the second straight Olympics he has won the event, but White "didn't need the gold to bolster his earning potential," as he "long ago transcended mere competition ... with his status as a cultural icon," according to Bob Ryan of the BOSTON GLOBE. The "preponderance of his fandom doesn't draw much distinction between what goes on here and what takes place on an annual basis when ESPN puts on its wildly successful X Games." Forbes estimated that White earned \$7.5M in endorsements last year, which "may not exactly be pre-scandal Tiger territory, but it dwarfs what any other American Olympian has, and that includes any hockey player you can name" (BOSTON GLOBE, 2/18). CNBC's Darren Rovell said White "breaks through the clutter from his look, from his name, from his brash attitude. ... He can be the most marketable guy in this Olympic Games even though he competes in only one event" ("Squawk Box," CNBC, 2/17). In N.Y., John Branch writes White's "most remarkable trick of the past few years has been fusing counter-culture cool with mass appeal." He arrived at the Olympics "not only as an overwhelming favorite to win the gold medal, but as one of the most recognized athletes of them all." His "famous smile and long red hair were plastered on magazines and television promotions for months in anticipation" for last night. The "game-changer may have come in the Colorado backcountry, where Red Bull, a major sponsor, built White a full-size halfpipe, accessible only by helicopter." In an "impromptu arms race, Nike built one" for U.S. snowboarder Kevin Pearce in California, and he "shared it with some of his closest friends, a group effort to keep pace with White" (N.Y. TIMES, 2/18).

**WELCOME TO CORPORATE AMERICA:** NBC's Matt Lauer said to White, "You've not only become a snowboarder, but you've become a corporation ... and yet what I think is great about you is you have not lost connection with your sport" ("Today," NBC, 2/18). But CTVOLYMPICS.ca's Haley Mick wrote White's second Gold Medal "will do little to silence grumbling from some riders who say his millions in earnings and approach to training make him a symbol of a sport that's losing its way" (CTVOLYMPICS.ca, 2/17). In Toronto, Rosie DiManno writes White is a "tangle of contradictions." He is a "Lamborghini-driving (crashing) Hollywood homeboy with his own fashion line, his own video game, his own DVD, his own headline movie, even his own custom-made, half-a-million-dollar halfpipe playground." White also is a "rebel by athletic profession, yet a corporate phenomenon in practice -- to conventionally cha-ching grossing and gross-outing for many among his particular sporting breed" (TORONTO STAR, 2/18). He said since becoming famous, he misses "some of the way things used to be in the sense -- just going to the grocery store, doing the simple things" ("Nightly News," NBC, 2/17).

## **8. INSIDE PITCH: SNOWBOARDER HANNAH TETER ON VERGE OF MAINSTREAM**

By Brian Helfrich, Assistant Managing Editor

Hannah Teter tonight in Vancouver will attempt to defend her title as the queen of women's snowboarding. But the reigning gold medalist faces heavy competition, not only on the halfpipe but also in the eyes of marketers and the mainstream public. Teter "lacks the exposure and notoriety that a Lindsey Vonn enjoys," said John Rowady, President & CEO of Chicago-based marketing agency rEvolution. "If she repeats as a champion, and/or medals again, it would help cement her place as one of, if not the top women's snowboarder in the country." Hannah boasts a healthy and diverse portfolio of sponsors, including longtime partners Burton and PepsiCo, newly affiliated Samsung, and smaller, more-targeted brands such as Anon Optics and Sierra-at-Tahoe Resort. But another Olympic Gold is "probably a 50% increase to her worth to a brand," said her agent and brother, Octagon Associate Dir of Action Sports Amen Teter.



**Teter Lacks The Exposure, Notoriety That Vonn Enjoys**

**PUSHING THE ENVELOPE:** The normally reserved Teter surprised some with a revealing photo spread in the SI Swimsuit Issue earlier this month, which is "just Hannah having fun," said Amen Teter. "She's really just trying to enjoy being part of this industry. The swimsuit was just a little venture for Hannah to go have some fun." But Rowady believes the SI profile is far more valuable than that. "She's one of four Olympic stars featured in this year's edition, so that's definitely going to raise awareness of her personal brand," he said. "She's young, athletic, attractive -- all things which definitely benefit the marketability of female athletes. Beyond her physical appearance, I think she has the opportunity to be seen as a role model for young women." Hannah also used the Swimsuit appearance as a chance to launch "Sweet Cheeks", a personally designed line of underwear. Fans can expect to see Hannah's face supporting marketing efforts for the line of panties once the Vancouver Games come to a close, said Amen.

**ALL FOR A GOOD CAUSE:** A large portion of proceeds from the sales of Sweet Cheeks will benefit philanthropic efforts, with the initial "Make Love Not War" panties giving aid to Haiti. "She's all about pushing the envelope and cutting down common-held norms on the way things should or shouldn't be," Amen Teter said. "It stems from her compassion for charity work, compassion for women to be empowered and feel confident about themselves." Two sponsors -- Amp Energy and Samsung -- have made "significant contributions to Hannah's charity efforts," Amen said. "It shows the type of relationships that Hannah has with her brand partners." Rowady agrees that Teter's philanthropic side helps her overall marketability and personal brand. "She has an opportunity to stay in the public eye by maintaining her philanthropic voice."

**WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS:** Samsung, Hannah's newest partner, already has made her the face of its Olympic campaign, with activation "all over the Internet," said her brother. She is looking to find sponsors in the eco-friendly and health categories. "Hannah's a real outspoken proponent of organic foods and green living," said Amen. "We've yet to really bump into any sponsors who can fit that into their platform, but I think down the line that's definitely something she's interested in." Rowady believes with "endemic's already on her side" in the snowboard market, "there's an opportunity to move beyond into the mainstream" with a strong performance in Vancouver. "Hannah needs to continue to create her own style that will help separate her from the pack," Rowady said. "She also needs to surround herself with sponsors and brands that embrace her style, and also those sponsors that are committed to building a snowboarding lifestyle"

that people are attracted to."

**GIVING BACK & STANDING TALL:** In Vancouver, Ian Walker notes Sweet Cheeks is "just one of the many charitable endeavours the defending gold medallist in women's halfpipe supports." Teter also "lends her name to PETA's Save the Seals campaign," and she estimated that she has donated more than \$200,000 of her event winnings to charity since the '06 Turin Games. Walker: "Clearly an entrepreneur at heart, she's smart enough to cover all perversions for a good cause" (*VANCOUVER SUN*, 2/18). In L.A., Lisa Dillman notes Teter is "outspoken about what athletes should be doing, saying she opts to cross the line, but not 'too much.'" Teter: "I'd just like to see athletes awake. And aware. There's so much going on and so much to know. ... We stay in out little boxes and don't think much about the outside world" (*L.A. TIMES*, 2/18).

## 9. OLYMPIC NAMES & FACES: BILODEAU IN DEMAND BY CANADIAN COMPANIES

The *GLOBE & MAIL*'s Brenda Bouw reports Canada freestyle skier Alexandre Bilodeau's telephone "hasn't stopped ringing" since he won the men's moguls competition Sunday, becoming the first Canadian to win a Gold Medal on home soil, and e-mails are "piling up by the hundreds as companies compete for a piece" of Bilodeau. He "appears to be playing his cards right by not ruling out representing any particular type of company." Virgin Group Chair Richard Branson said that he is "open to talking to Canada's historic Olympian about a potential role with his various brands." However, Bouw notes Bilodeau "vows to stick with the sponsors that got him this far." Marketing experts indicated that "no matter how many medals other Canadian athletes win during these Games ... being the first will always put Mr. Bilodeau a step ahead of others when it comes to companies choosing a pitch man, or woman, to endorse their products" (*GLOBE & MAIL*, 2/18).

**TIME FOR DESSERT:** Vermont-based Ice cream company Ben & Jerry's has indicated that it will "bring out a new flavor to honor" U.S. Gold Medalist and Vermont native Hannah Kearney, who won the women's moguls event. Kearney's win will be "recognized with her favorite combination of coffee ice cream and chocolate cookies" that should be available "soon after the Olympics end." No name has been given to the flavor, but Ben & Jerry's spokesperson Sean Greenwood said it could be called "Kearney's Java Jolt Bolt & Cookies" (*BOSTON HERALD*, 2/18).

**CHAIR OF THE BOARD:** U.S. snowboarder Gretchen Bleiler in June '06 signed with agent Amy Stanton for representation, and the two have worked to build a business around Bleiler that will be on display today when she takes to the halfpipe. Bleiler has been featured on Coca-Cola cans and at retail in the U.S. nationwide in advance of the Games. AT&T also is showcasing her in a commercial that features Bleiler launching into space on her snowboard. The commercial is airing repeatedly during NBC's broadcast of the Games. Blanton also has signed Bleiler to deals with BlackBerry, Nike and Oakley, among others. Since signing Bleiler, Stanton has signed eight more female action sports athletes, nine other athletes and two marketing consulting clients (*Tripp Mickle, SportsBusiness Journal*). In N.Y., John Branch reports Bleiler is "among the sport's icons who have been leading a cultural shift by example." With "more at stake than ever -- in terms of prestige and money, mostly earned through endorsements -- the ride-hard, party-hard attitude among top snowboarders has given way to a more mainstream, professional athlete work ethic." Bleiler counts 24 Hour Fitness as a sponsor, and she previously has "showed off the body hidden beneath all those baggy clothes in various magazine spreads" (*N.Y. TIMES*, 2/18).

**TECHNICAL SLIDER:** CNET.com's Ina Fried wrote U.S. bobsledder Steven Holcomb is a "reigning world champion ... in addition to being a big computer nerd."

Holcomb is "never too far from technology," as he "administers his own Web site, is a big time poster on Twitter, and carries a variety of gadgets from his BlackBerry to a Creative Zen music player." He has also "found a practical use for that longtime hobby, using video games as a part of his training." Holcomb: "The whole hand-eye coordination thing is a big factor but a lot of it too is special awareness" (*CNET.com, 2/17*).

#### 10. LUGE TRACK DESIGNER SAYS SITE CHOSEN FOR COMMERCIAL REASONS

Udo Gurgel, designer of the luge track at Whistler Sliding Centre, said that the "extremely high speed of the Whistler track was not a function of his design intentions or engineering decisions, but of marketing and investment decisions on behalf of VANOC, according to Von Reppert-Bismarck & Saunders of the *GLOBE & MAIL*. Gurgel: "It wasn't desired or demanded that the track be as fast as it is." The luge track originally "was to be located at Grouse Mountain, north of Vancouver." But Gurgel said that VANOC "soon asked that the track be moved to a location in Whistler that



**Luge Track Designer Says High Speed Of Whistler Sliding Centre Track Not His Intention**

was far steeper," because they "wanted it to be commercially viable after Games." Gurgel told VANOC that moving the track "would create a much faster track, and there were no objections." He indicated that "no one demanded that higher walls than usual be built on the final fast curves." Also, "no objections arose when it became clear two years ago that the chosen steep terrain had resulted in a faster track than planned" (*GLOBE & MAIL, 2/18*). IOC Dir of Communications Mark Adams said, "We emphasized time and again this was a track that was safe, not just in our opinion but in the opinion of the federation people who do the sport day in and day out and in the opinion of the vast majority of athletes." Adams added of the death of Georgia luger Nodar Kumaritashvili, "We think these are very sad circumstances but we are happy with the way the track is and, as I say, the federation and a vast majority of athletes are too" (*TORONTO STAR, 2/18*).

**BOBSLED, SKELETON IMPACTED:** In London, Ben Smith reports Australia bobsledder Duncan Harvey is "recovering in hospital after crashing" yesterday during a training run for the two-man bobsled event. There were seven teams total that crashed during the training session. The incident "raises fresh concerns over the safety of the course" (*LONDON TIMES, 2/18*). Meanwhile, in Toronto, Kevin McGran notes some skeleton racers are "worried about the track, while others bemoan the fact the Canadians have so much more experience using it." Germany skeleton racer Frank Rommel: "The Canadians have had lots more runs than us, so we have to use our experience from other tracks to try to challenge them." Latvia skeleton racer Martins Dukurs: "This track is really fast and tough. I'm getting tired on every run. Speed makes the track dangerous. It's not just the speed -- you can have tracks (that) are fast but not so tough" (*TORONTO STAR, 2/18*).

**QUESTIONS REMAIN ABOUT DOWNHILL COURSE:** The *GLOBE & MAIL*'s James Christie notes "no fewer than six women" during yesterday's women's downhill "lost their grip on the ice-slicked" course. Canada skier Emily Brydon said, "It's a longer course than the women are used to and a challenge. The reason you're seeing so much

carnage is your legs are so exhausted by the end, there's a higher level of fatigue. It's beating people up." Canada skier Shona Rubens added the course is "inconsistent from the top to the bottom." Rubens: "In some cases, we get perfect conditions, but with the weather, things change." However, Italy skier Daniela Merighetti, who "wiped out and finished the course sliding on her seat in a sitting position when she couldn't get stopped," said, "It is not a unfair course" (*GLOBE & MAIL*, 2/18).

**GAMES BECOMING TO DANGEROUS?** TIME's Sean Gregory reported while crashes are part of snowboard cross, things "were getting ridiculous" Tuesday during the women's competition. Snowboarders "weren't just wiping out during their races; they were falling even during their qualifying runs," and athletes "failed to finish in three of the four quarterfinals." Despite the crashes, several snowboarders "refused to admit that their sport was unsafe, pointing out that the weather was beyond their control." But Gregory wrote if "inclement conditions put Olympians at risk, doesn't that make their sport inherently perilous?" (*TIME.com*, 2/17).

#### 11. BRANDS SEE INCREASED SEARCH ACTIVITY FROM OPENING CEREMONY ADS

NBC Tuesday said that brands featured during the net's coverage of Friday's Opening Ceremony saw "huge spikes in search queries," according to research commissioned from Google cited by Steve McClellan of ADWEEK. NBC President of Research Alan Wurtzel said, "We were able to demonstrate that there is a very significant relationship between exposure (on TV) and (resulting viewer) behavior." NBC and Google also "tracked queries for four different movie ads," including spots for "How to Train Your Dragon" and "Green Zone," as well as commercials for Sun Life, and Wurtzel noted that "similar search spikes occurred." Separate research from Nielsen IAG shows that auto ads running during the Opening Ceremony had brand recall levels 40% "greater than the prime-time average, and message recalls approaching" 70% above normal levels. McClellan noted the "likeability score was almost" 50% higher (*ADWEEK.com*, 2/16). AD AGE's Brian Steinberg noted the Nielsen data also indicated that retailers' ads during the Opening Ceremony "proved to be 39% more effective at generating brand recall, 56% more effective at driving message recall and 46% more effective at driving likability" than typical broadcast and cable-TV programming (*ADAGE.com*, 2/16). Wurtzel said that this marked the first time NBC has "commissioned such research from Google" (*NYTIMES.com*, 2/16).

**GAMES BETWEEN THE ADS:** USA TODAY's Robert Bianco writes you "can't blame NBC's prime-time viewers for thinking they're spending more time" on commercial breaks "than they are on skis, skates and snowboards combined." Bianco: "Yet what can a cash-strapped NBC do?" The net in hindsight "clearly bid too much to broadcast these Winter Games, a money-losing mistake for which it, and the viewers, are now paying." Bianco writes "economics are also why the major events you do see ... are confined to prime time, even if that requires ditching 'live' for tape." Ad rates are "highest in prime time, which means the network needs as many viewers there as it can possibly gather," and it "can't afford to diminish that audience by letting you watch, or worse, record, big events in the afternoon" (*USA TODAY*, 2/18). NBC Local Media Division Central & Western Region President Larry Wert: "We are overdelivering for our clients by significant amounts, and the Games and their stories are just getting going" (*CHICAGO SUN-TIMES*, 2/18).

**AD REVIEW:** In N.Y., Stuart Elliott notes NBC's coverage of the Games is "being sponsored by a dozen automotive brands, among them Toyota." A commercial "offering a companywide mea culpa from Toyota, which appeared during the opening ceremony last Friday, has been followed by spots about sales at local dealerships and even the start of a

humorous campaign for the Sienna minivan" (*N.Y. TIMES*, 2/18). Meanwhile, in Toronto, Chris Zelkovich writes of "all the Olympics-themed commercials assaulting our senses every day, none grates more than that McDonald's ad that uses 'O Canada.'" Zelkovich: "Every Canadian should get a rights fee for use of our anthem -- or a free burger" (*TORONTO STAR*, 2/18).

## 12. STATE OF THE NATION: COLBERT MAKES RAUCOUS NBC OLYMPICS DEBUT

Comedy Central's Stephen Colbert last night made his debut appearance on NBC's coverage of the Vancouver Games. NBC's Bob Costas noted Colbert's sponsorship of the U.S. Speedskating team, as he helped raise \$300,000 "to help support their training, to help get them" to the Olympics. Colbert: "Not just me, Bob, 'The Colbert Nation' stepped up. I did give some money. I gave \$6.95, plus the deposit on a 10-ounce Coke bottle."



**Colbert Makes His Debut  
On NBC's Olympic Coverage**

Costas replied, "Eventually it evolves into something more." Colbert: "It snowballed. ... Now, I am the Assistant Sports Psychologist for the U.S. Speedskating team." Colbert then proudly displayed that title on the back of his red Olympic jacket. When Costas asked what the lead psychologist thought about this, Colbert replied, "I don't think he knows. I don't think anyone has told him ... because I think I might be a threat. The players relate to me because I provided them with cash." Costas asked Colbert about his relationship with U.S. speedskater Shani Davis, saying, "There was a time when Shani Davis wasn't especially fond of your role with the team." Colbert: "No, Shani Davis called me a jerk." Costas then asked if Colbert had used his "skills as a sports psychologist to turn that around." Colbert: "I won him back and I inspired him. I'm going to say that I inspired him to win today." At the end of the segment, Colbert asked Costas if he could "warm-up" by the fire on the studio set. Colbert crawled onto the fake fireplace and into the "fire" and said, "This is so nice. It's really lovely in here. You know, it's the authenticity that I really appreciate about NBC. Everything is real."

**COLD WAR KIDS:** Colbert made a second appearance during NBC's late-night broadcast, saying to Costas, "You and I, we grew up during the Cold War, and every four years, nations came together in the spirit of brotherhood to attempt to crush each other. And instead of guns, they had blades." Costas: "Or javelins, depending on the time of the year." The men's figure skating free skate is tonight, with Russia's Yevgeny Plushenko in first place and Evan Lysacek from the U.S. in second. With clips of men's figure skating playing in the background to preview tonight's coverage, Colbert said, "I cannot wait to see how this plays out. ... This is the Cold War all over again, and even better than the Cold War because during the Cold War, we didn't have sequins. Our soldiers weren't bedazzled" ("*XXI Winter Olympics*," *NBC*, 2/17).

**FUN & GAMES:** In L.A., Chris Erskine notes Colbert yesterday morning in Vancouver taped the "first of two giant outdoor" episodes of "The Colbert Report," and it was a "rock-star moment for the popular comedian." Fans started lining up at 1:00am PT for the show that "didn't start until almost" 10:30am. Estimates of the crowd "ranged up to 15,000, in the park setting about a mile from one of the hockey arenas." Colbert said, "This was a welcome we would not have imagined in our wildest dreams. I want to take

back everything I ever said about Canada" (*L.A. TIMES*, 2/18). In Vancouver, Peter McMartin notes the line of fans "stretched out of sight" by 8:00am. The crowd was "uniformly young and urban-hip." Some fans held signs with popular Colbert sayings, including "I believe in truthiness," "Ice-Holes Unite" and his Olympic motto "Defeat the World!" (*VANCOUVER SUN*, 2/18).

### 13. HITTING THE BUTTON: CURLING AN EASY TARGET FOR LATE NIGHT SHOWS



**Late-Night Talks Shows Have Some Fun At Expense Of NBCU's Curling Coverage**

The sport of curling holds an odd fascination among many Winter Olympics observers, including writers for "The Simpsons." However, there does not appear to be many fans on the staffs of late-night talk shows, as both ABC's "Jimmy Kimmel Live" and CBS' "The Late Show" had some fun at the sport's expense last night. ABC's Jimmy Kimmel said, "To those at home, thank you for choosing us over delayed women's curling. Have you watched any of the curling? No sport has been the butt of as many jokes as curling.

But I have to say, I watched maybe nine hours of it today on MSNBC, and it really does suck. One guy pushes what appears to be a cement Roomba down a frozen bowling alley while two guys with Swiffers just swab the ice, and this goes forever. It looks like they are trying to fix something, and someone gets a Gold Medal for it. For that? The same Gold Medal they get for speedskating goes to these guys. One of the curlers on the Canadian women's team is five months pregnant. If you can play it when you're five months pregnant, you cannot call it an Olympic sport. You can't. Curling makes bowling look like wrestling. It's ridiculous" ("*Jimmy Kimmel Live*," *ABC*, 2/17). CBS' David Letterman: "You know what else is good? Curling. Have you watched the curling? I have a lot of respect for the people that invented curling because when it's cold and you've got nothing to do, that is how you get curling. It's all the excitement of shuffleboard -- curling -- plus household chores." Last night's Top Ten list was also dedicated to the sport, titled "Top Ten Surprising Facts About Curling" ("*Late Show*," *CBS*, 2/17).

- 10) "Every year it's watched by dozens of people."
- 9) "Consistently ranked the world's number one broom-related sport."
- 8) "It's a lot like hockey, minus the speed and excitement."
- 7) "No number 7 - writer fell asleep while researching curling facts."
- 6) "Not to be confused with Norwegian sport 'Carling' where you push a guy named Carl across ice."
- 5) "Longest match ever: Unknown, because no one ever stays till the end."
- 4) "No number 4 - writer still asleep. Damn, curling is boring."
- 3) "Mickey Rourke making film about washed-up curling legend who comes back for one last big curl."
- 2) "Thing they slide down the ice is called 'Thing they slide down the ice.'"
- 1) "No one cares."

**PUB-LIC SCRUTINY:** ESPN's Jim Rome acknowledged that curling "is an easy

target," but he said, "What I am seeing is a bar game. A bar game featuring a few dudes with brooms furiously sweeping their shoulders off and another dude sliding a cheesewheel across the ice and screaming bloody murder for 30-seconds. ... The only thing missing is the bucket of beers off to the side because, like any bar game, I'm sure that curlers play better with a few in them. Where's the chalkboard next to the pitch to keep score with tally marks and the quarters lined up on the ice so teams can call 'next?' And the jukebox with Bryan Adams and Nickelback blaring? How do you even get into curling? I mean, are these the guys who the other kids wouldn't let play hockey?" ("*Jim Rome Is Burning*," *ESPN*, 2/17). Scottish-born actor Ewan McGregor, who was promoting his new film, "The Ghost Writer," also poked some fun at the sport. McGregor: "We started it in Scotland. ... I think two drunk guys were coming back from the pub at night and they were fighting over a rock and ... as they fought over it, it slid down the ice and they thought, 'Ohh, that's a good idea'" ("*GMA*," *ABC*, 2/18).

**PANTS ON FIRE:** Norway's men's curling team is wearing pants created by Loudmouth Golf, the same company that outfits golfer John Daly, and NBC's Meredith Vieira reports they are the "pants heard 'round the world." Vieira: "A bold fashion choice by the men's Norwegian curling team ... has blogs abuzzing and fans in Vancouver talking. ... Not since the Czech brothers sketch on 'Saturday Night Live' has so much attention been focused on such 'wild and crazy pants.'" Norway curling team member Christoffer Svae: "I was just trying to find some pants in our Norwegian colors, which is red, white and blue. ... If this makes younger people start curling back home or in other countries, that's just superb." Following the report, the "Today" show's co-hosts were all shown wearing the two different styles of the pants worn by the Norwegians. NBC's Ann Curry asked, "Who would wear these pants?" But NBC's Matt Lauer replied, "I like them" ("*Today*," *NBC*, 2/18).

#### 14. **OLYMPIC NOTES: SECURITY BREACHED NEAR BIDEN AT OPENING CEREMONY**

In Vancouver, Lindsay Kines reports the Vancouver 2010 Integrated Security Unit yesterday confirmed that a "mentally ill man carrying fake credentials managed to get within 12 rows" of Vice President Joe Biden during Friday's Opening Ceremony. Despite the incident, VANOC "insists that venue security is working well." VANOC VP/Security Integration Adam Gray in a statement said, "We're confident that the venue security system ensures a safe and secure environment for all" (*Vancouver PROVINCE*, 2/18). Integrated Security Unit spokesperson Joe Taplin yesterday said, "We don't believe Vice-President Biden was in danger at any time" (*TORONTO STAR*, 2/18).

**RISING COSTS:** In N.Y., Ian Austen reports the security costs for the Vancouver Games have "risen far beyond initial estimates" of C\$175M, with the "final tally widely expected to go beyond" C\$1B. Not included in that total are the "costs for stepped-up operations and special security programs in the United States to deal with any contingency needs for Vancouver." The result is a "police and military presence so vast that some people now worry less about security at the Games than the prospect that Canada's law enforcement community and its military ... may be stretched to their limits." About 20% of Canada's entire policing capacity "has descended on the Olympics" (*N.Y. TIMES*, 2/18).

**CRIME STOPPER:** Vancouver Police Dept. (VPD) stats indicate that crime has "dropped dramatically since the start of the Games." For the week of February 8-14, "calls about 'bellwether' crimes have fallen across the board by" 40% or more compared to that same week in '09. VPD Constable Lindsey Houghton said that "even with Olympic visitor crowds of over 100,000 in the streets on weekend nights, public disorder calls are not skyrocketing" (*Vancouver PROVINCE*, 2/18). Meanwhile, Guillaume Joseph-Marc

Beaulieu, the "alleged ringleader" behind Vancouver's violent protests on Saturday, has been "arrested and charged with mischief." To date, 11 people have been charged in connection with anti-Olympic protests (*THEPROVINCE.com*, 2/17).

**PUBLIC DISPLAY OF AFFECTION:** People are "lining up for as long as four hours" to get into the Royal Canadian Mint pavilion in Vancouver, where the Olympic medals are on display. There are "about 6,000 people" per day visiting the pavilion (*VANCOUVER SUN*, 2/18).

#### 15. OLYMPIC MEDIA MONITOR

The following is a round-up of Olympic coverage of network news shows from Wednesday night and Thursday morning. Only the first three hours of "Today" -- when the show is broadcasting live from Vancouver -- is being monitored.

NETWORK	MORNING SHOW	FIRST REPORT	TOTAL COVERAGE
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Today

**7:00-7:30am** -- U.S. skier Lindsey Vonn winning Gold Medal; medal count; Vonn, snowboarder Shaun White and speedskater Shani Davis winning Gold Medals; other results; today's events; weather update; live interview with White; taped interview with Vonn.

**7:30-8:00am** -- Crashes during the women's downhill; live interviews with U.S. snowboarder Scotty Lago and skiing analyst Picabo Street; taped interview with U.S. skier Julia Mancuso.

**8:00-8:30am** -- Results; men's figure skating competition; Shaun White and his coach plan to get matching tattoos; profile of U.S. women snowboarders; live interviews with figure skating analyst Brian Boitano and snowboarding analyst Tina Dixon.

**8:30-9:00am** -- Profile of White; feature on Norwegian curling team's pants; live food demonstration with Boitano.

**9:00-9:30am** -- Results; today's events; White wins men's halfpipe; weather update.

**9:30-10:00am** -- Crashes during the women's downhill; demonstration of high-tech outfits worn by the athletes in Vancouver; profile of small Quebec town; taped interview Vonn and her husband, Thomas.



The Early Show

12:14

2:31

Security breach at Vancouver Games with man getting close to VP Joe Biden; medal count; Vonn, White and Davis winning Gold Medals; accident at the Whistler Sliding Centre.







GMA

12:47

8:27

Vonn, White and Davis winning Gold Medals; men's figure skating competition; security breach at Vancouver Games with man getting close to Biden; men's figure skating competition; "Olympic diary" from figure skating analyst Michelle Kwan; live interview with Kwan.

NETWORK	EVENING SHOW	FIRST REPORT	TOTAL COVERAGE
	Nightly News	2:45	8:21
Security breach at Vancouver Games with man getting close to Biden; Vonn winning the Gold Medal; results; organizers adjusting the view of the Olympic cauldron; interview with White; profile of speedskater Trevor Marsicano.			
	Evening News	10:05	2:33
Vonn winning the Gold Medal; "bad luck" plaguing Vancouver Games.			
	World News	15:49	2:40
Vonn winning the Gold Medal; men's figure skating competition.			
	SportsCenter (11:00pm ET)	24:48	2:35
Vonn, White and Davis winning Gold Medals.			

#### 16. MEDAL STAND: IMG'S ERVIN SMILING WIDE AS VONN, WHITE GO GOLD

Each day during the Winter Games, *THE DAILY* is offering our take on the business performances of some of the people, sponsors, broadcasters and other entities around Vancouver.

##### MEDAL

##### MEDALIST



**GOLD: MARK ERVIN** -- The IMG agent watched two of his clients -- alpine skier Lindsey Vonn and snowboarder Shaun White -- win gold medals only hours apart. Like Ervin admitted later, "There aren't too many days like that in a career."



**SILVER: VANOC** -- After facing mounting criticism, the organization made some key changes, including dismantling the fence in front of the Olympic cauldron and bringing in a Zamboni for ice resurfacing.



**BRONZE: THE WEATHER** -- After days of rain and clouds, the weather was amazing in Vancouver yesterday. Sun and blue skies offered the perfect backdrop to a much-anticipated and compelling women's downhill.



**TIN: MSN.COM** -- We certainly understand the desire for eye-catching headlines, but using the header "Sloppy Seconds" to describe U.S. snowboarder Lindsey Jacobellis' failure to win a Gold Medal for the second Olympics was simply poor taste -- even if you only kept it on the site for a little while before changing it.

#### 17. CHECK THE LATEST NEWS FROM VANCOUVER AT SBD/SBJ'S OLYMPIC SITE

SportsBusiness Daily/SportsBusiness Journal has launched a free Web site exclusively geared to the Winter Games that will feature news, video, blogs and much more from Vancouver. See the site today for the following news:

\*IMG's Ervin Enjoys Golden Day With Clients Vonn, White

\*Outfitting Teams Helps Burton's Branding, Not Sales

\*The Sun Is Shining, And The Olympic Flame Is Free

\*Bleiler's Agent Targets "Business Behind Women's Sports"

\*Rick Burton Weighs In With His Olympic Observations

Go to [www.sportsbusinessdaily.com/wintergames](http://www.sportsbusinessdaily.com/wintergames)

**WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU:** Going to Vancouver or there already? If so, let us know if you are willing to share your perspective on the Games with THE DAILY. Also, if you plan to tweet, join us in using #olybiz, so we can follow your reports on the ground.

## Sponsorships, Advertising & Marketing

#### 18. MICHAEL PHELPS AGREES TO ENDORSEMENT DEAL WITH UNDER ARMOUR

Under Armour Senior VP/Brand Steve Battista said that the Baltimore-based apparel brand has signed swimmer Michael Phelps to a "multiyear endorsement deal," according to Michael McCarthy of USA TODAY. Phelps will remain under contract with Speedo and "be aligned with Under Armour products for outside-the-pool training." His agent, Octagon Managing Dir of Olympics & Action Sports



Peter Carlisle, said the "expectation" is that the deal will extend beyond the '12 London Olympics. Phelps' first TV commercial for Under Armour will co-star other brand endorsers, including Bucks G Brandon Jennings, UFC fighter Georges St-Pierre and NFL Draft prospect Dez Bryant. The spot "will premiere during coverage of the NFL scouting combine," which Under Armour sponsors. McCarthy notes the partnership with Under Armour is Phelps' "highest-profile deal since a picture of him with a marijuana pipe surfaced" in January '09 (*USA TODAY*, 2/18). In the debut TV ad, viewers "will see a different side of the swimmer." He will be shown "doing pull-ups at a gym and working out with a kettlebell and a pegboard" under the tagline, "Protect This House. I Will." Phelps earns an estimated \$10M annually from endorsements (*USA TODAY*, 2/18).

#### **19. SPONSORSHIP ISSUES PLAGUING USF1 TEAM AS SEASON-OPENER NEARS**

USF1 is "plagued by financial troubles," and even F1 Management Chair Bernie Ecclestone has "expressed skepticism about the team's future," according to Viv Bernstein of the N.Y. TIMES. Ecclestone said earlier this month, "I don't think we will see the Americans." However, USF1 Founders Ken Anderson and Peter Windsor, who announced the formation of the team last February, "insist they will be at" the March 14 season-opening Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix. Anderson: "Yeah, a couple sponsors have let us down a little bit, but we're on track. It's not an option not to be there." A source said, "The bottom line is really simple: Sponsor money didn't come through the way it was supposed to and it has grinded down the company to a halt. They're having trouble making payroll, they're having trouble paying suppliers and that's the situation they find themselves in." Another source said that the team "did not make its January payroll." Employees "have since been paid and their work is being done in the shop, although the team still does not have a fully built racecar or engine." Meanwhile, USF1 signed Jose Maria Lopez of Argentina to drive for the team this year, and the "Argentine government is involved in the sponsorship deal, which is reportedly bringing as much as \$8[M] to USF1." However, Windsor said that he "hoped the team would have an American driver, perhaps as early as 2011" (*N.Y. TIMES*, 2/18).

## **Sports Media**

#### **20. NBA RATINGS, VIEWERSHIP UP ON TNT, FLAT ON ESPN TO DATE**

By Austin Karp, Assistant Managing Editor

TNT is averaging a 1.4 cable rating (1.2 U.S. rating) and 1.774 million viewers through 36 regular-season NBA games this season, up 7.7% and 2.5%, respectively, from a 1.3 cable rating (1.1 U.S. rating) and 1.730 million viewers through 33 games at the same point last season. TNT has the NBA's three most-viewed cable telecasts this season, with the Celtics-Cavaliers game on October 27 topping all games with 4.021 million viewers. ESPN is averaging a 1.3 cable rating (1.1 U.S. rating) and 1.674 million viewers through 45 games this season, flat compared to the same period last year, when the net had aired the same number of games. The net's Heat-Knicks telecast on Christmas Day remains its most-viewed game to date this season with 2.652 million viewers.

**DAYS GO BY:** TNT's primary NBA telecast window is Thursday night, with an early and late telecast. For the early window, which predominantly has started near 8:00pm ET, TNT has averaged 1.870 million viewers for 15 telecasts, up 5.6% from 1.770 million viewers for 14 early-window telecasts at this point last season. The net's 15 late-window telecasts, which normally air just before 11:00pm ET, have averaged 1.424 million

viewers, which is down 7.6% from 1.541 million viewers last season. On ESPN, NBA telecasts air on Wednesday and Friday nights. For 16 Wednesday night telecasts, ESPN has averaged 1.523 million viewers for a combination of early- and late-window telecasts, down 11.2% from 1.715 million viewers for the same number of telecasts last season. For 27 Friday telecasts, ESPN has averaged 1.772 million viewers, up 7.1% from 1.654 million viewers.

**THE CLEVELAND SHOW:** The Cavaliers have played in eight of the top 15 most-viewed NBA games on cable this season to date, with the majority of their telecasts playing in the 8:00pm ET time slot. Between ESPN and TNT, the Cavaliers have played in 15 telecasts to date, averaging 2.289 million viewers. In the late game slot, the Lakers have dominated, as the team has accounted for seven of the NBA's most-viewed cable telecasts this season. The Lakers have had 12 telecasts on ESPN/TNT this season to date, averaging 2.422 million viewers. Below are the top 15 most-viewed NBA regular-season cable telecasts to date.

DATE	NET	MATCHUP	START (ET)	U.S.	CABLE	VIEWERS (ooo)
10/27	TNT	Celtics-Cavaliers	7:31pm	2.6	3.0	4,021
1/21	TNT	Lakers-Cavaliers	8:00pm	2.5	2.9	3,946
10/27	TNT	Clippers-Lakers	10:23pm	2.1	2.4	3,358
12/25	ESPN	Heat-Knicks	12:00pm	1.7	1.9	2,652
2/11	TNT	Magic-Cavaliers	8:16pm	1.7	2.0	2,579
11/12	TNT	Cavaliers-Heat	8:16pm	1.7	2.0	2,564
12/4	ESPN	Heat-Lakers	10:39pm	1.6	1.9	2,483
11/5	TNT	Bulls-Cavaliers	8:17pm	1.6	1.8	2,354
11/13	ESPN	Lakers-Nuggets	10:38pm	1.6	1.8	2,334
2/5	ESPN	Nuggets-Lakers	10:29pm	1.5	1.8	2,256
1/8	ESPN	Cavaliers-Nuggets	10:36pm	1.4	1.6	2,250
2/4	TNT	Heat-Cavaliers	8:16pm	1.4	1.7	2,207
11/11	ESPN	Cavaliers-Magic	8:01pm	1.4	1.7	2,188
11/12	TNT	Suns-Lakers	11:10pm	1.4	1.7	2,148
10/30	ESPN	Mavericks-Lakers	10:33pm	1.5	1.7	2,132

## 21. FOX SEEN AS STRIKING MORE POSITIVE TONE DURING DAYTONA 500



NASCAR this season "wanted more positive coverage from its television partners, and Fox Sports seemingly delivered with its best cheerleading effort in years" during Sunday's Daytona 500, according to Mark Long of the AP. Fox announcers Mike Joy, Larry McReynolds and Darrell Waltrip "gushed Sunday about all the on-track changes NASCAR made during the offseason and raved about nearly every aspect of the opener." Even the "pesky pothole" -- the one that delayed the race

twice for more than two hours and sent fans scurrying to the exits -- couldn't get the Fox guys to say anything negative." Waltrip after the first delay said, "I don't think a soul has left." But Long noted the "stands, parking lot and traffic on Speedway Boulevard said otherwise." Fox' coverage "probably got a thumbs up from NASCAR," which met with its TV partners during the offseason and "expressed concerns that announcers and analysts at Fox and ESPN/ABC had become too critical." Roush Fenway Racing co-Owner Jack Roush also has been "critical of media members who claim fans are unhappy with the racing, and said negativity surrounding the sport should stop." Driver Denny Hamlin was "equally critical," calling Waltrip "the most negative person I have ever heard with a microphone." Fox Sports Chair David Hill said of his announcers, "I don't expect them to be shills for anyone. I expect them to be shills for the fans, and if something is wrong, I expect them to say it. If something is good, then I expect them to say that." Long wrote until things "get turned around, NASCAR's biggest players probably will continue paying close attention to coverage they believe goes a long way toward shaping public perception, driving ticket sales and broadening a fan base that has leveled off in recent years." Meanwhile, driver Kyle Busch called ESPN's coverage last week of Danica Patrick's Nationwide Series debut "horrible." Busch said that she "shouldn't overshadow other race teams needing exposure" (*AP*, 2/17).

**PRERACE APPETIZER:** Fox Sports VP/Communications Dan Bell said that the network today will formally announce that production assistant Chris Pizzi on Sunday will begin weekly "Slice of Pizzi" taped segments during the network's prerace shows. The segments will include "celebs, starting Sunday with driver Jeff Gordon." Pizzi "already appears on foxsports.com's 'Cubed' online show" (*USA TODAY*, 2/18).

**MAIN ATTRACTION:** SI.com's Tom Bowles noted as of Tuesday his story on Patrick from Saturday's race was "beating Sunday's Daytona 500 recap 10 to 1 in readership, leaving NASCAR's Super Bowl fighting for the scraps she leaves behind." This comes "after just one race in the sport's second-tier division." The "one worry going forward for NASCAR is Danica's only going to be around for 12 races this season, far short of the 35 contested in Nationwide." So how does the series "market itself during the other 23?" Bowles: "Could you imagine if she comes over for a full season in 2011 or 2012?" (*SI.com*, 2/16).

## 22. BLOOMBERG, MLBAM TO RELEASE NEW FANTASY BASEBALL PRODUCT

By [Eric Fisher](#), Staff Writer, SportsBusiness Journal

Bloomberg Sports and MLBAM today will formally release the new fantasy baseball product developed as part of their broader data partnership announced in December. Utilizing many of the same concepts of Bloomberg's existing equities research system, as well as MLBAM's real-time statistical feeds and content, Bloomberg Sports Baseball contains a fantasy draft prep kit and a season-long update tool that will enable a wide range of player performance analytics. Bloomberg and MLBAM are selling the services for \$19.95 for the draft kit, \$24.95 for the update tool, or \$31.95 for both. The interactive products will be compatible with every major commissioner-style fantasy baseball game and can also be adapted to self-created games. "We believe there's something here for both the casual player and the avid, experienced one," said Bill Squadron, the former Sportvision and IMG exec consulting for Bloomberg on the effort. "We believe there's a real chance to grow the fantasy market meaningfully." A professional-grade version of the player analytics tools being marketed to MLB teams are currently being tested by about 20 of the major league clubs, with more expected to begin their own testing shortly.

## Leagues & Governing Bodies

### 23. TIGER MAKING FIRST PUBLIC ADDRESS IN TIGHTLY CONTROLLED SETTING

Tiger Woods will use "his own kind of tightly controlled comfort zone" tomorrow during his first public appearance since November, according to Diane Pucin of the L.A. Times. His agent, IMG Global Managing Dir of Golf Mark Steinberg, yesterday in a statement said that Woods will "apologize for his behavior" during an 11:00am ET address from the PGA Tour's HQs at the TPC Sawgrass Clubhouse in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida. Woods is allowing a "single television camera" to be present, as well as "three wire service reporters and an undisclosed number of pre-approved golf writers." Steinberg said that "no questions will be allowed." The address will be televised live on ESPN and Golf Channel, and comes opposite the WGC-Accenture Match Play Championship, whose title sponsor was the first to drop Woods as an endorser following reports of his infidelity (*L.A. TIMES*, 2/18).

**GETTING BACK ON COURSE:** ESPN.com's Jason Sobel noted PGA Tour Commissioner Tim Finchem had a "perma-smile on his face" yesterday after word of Woods' planned address. If Finchem "couldn't hide his pleasure about Woods' impending statement -- if not his return to the competitive arena -- he at least remained mum on the details of the situation." Finchem intimated he "also will be present" at tomorrow's address (*ESPN.com*, 2/17). In N.Y., Larry Dorman notes Finchem yesterday "did not seem pleased about having to answer questions about the timing of Woods' announcement or the fact that it will be held" at PGA Tour HQs. Finchem succinctly said, "They asked to use Sawgrass" (*N.Y. TIMES*, 2/18). More Finchem: "We were asked a few days ago to help provide a place for him to make a statement and work on the logistics, and that is what we've done. I'll be as interested as everybody else in terms of the details of what he says, but I have no knowledge of exactly what he is going to talk about." Asked when Woods will return to the Tour, Finchem said, "I'm assuming that this development means he is making progress in the issues that he indicated a couple of months ago he had to go away and deal with" (*Golf Central*, *Golf Channel*, 2/17). PGA Tour Exec VP/Communications & Int'l Affairs Ty Votaw said that he does not believe Woods will "take advantage of the proximity to Tour headquarters to meet with Tour officials before or after the statement" (*FLORIDA TIMES-UNION*, 2/18).

**IN THE CLUBHOUSE:** ESPN's Tom Rinaldi said the fact that Woods is not answering questions and is hosting the press conference at PGA Tour HQs "will further the notion that Woods is going to try to control, as best he can, his reemergence into the public eye" (*SportsCenter*, *ESPN*, 2/17). In Jacksonville, Garry Smits notes the "audience is being controlled by IMG," and while Woods has been "criticized for the revelations of his behavior, his management company has been grilled nearly as much for mismanaging the response and misjudging the fallout" (*FLORIDA TIMES-UNION*, 2/18). Fox News contributor Monica Crowley said, "He is trying to do this in a very controlled environment, primarily because he's trying to stop the bleeding from his sponsors" (*America's Nightly Scoreboard*, *Fox Business*, 2/17). CNBC's Darren Rovell on his Twitter feed wondered, "What will Tiger wear tomorrow? Will it have Nike swooshes or will it be non-descript." Sports agent Evan Morgenstein replied, "Absolutely Nike! The fact that they staged a run around his neighborhood yesterday in Nike with Getty Images says it all!" (*TWITTER.com*, 2/18).

**ON HIS TERMS:** In Arizona, Greg Hansen writes by addressing the media during a PGA Tour event sponsored by Accenture, Woods "loudly said this: I'm still in charge."

This marks Woods' "first victory on tour this year." He has dictated "terms of his return and has instantly regained the control he seemed to lose on a Florida driveway three months ago." Finchem yesterday confirmed that he "had not spoken to the Accenture group about the timing" of Woods' announcement, but Hansen writes "surely Finchem had the power to protect Accenture's investment and insist Woods" choose a different day (*ARIZONA DAILY STAR*, 2/18). In Toronto, Dave Perkins writes this is Woods saying that he is "still the biggest name in showbiz, with or without" Accenture (*TORONTO STAR*, 2/18). In N.Y., Mike Lupica writes, "On the day when he's supposedly going to show us he's changed, he finds a way to get even with Accenture by stealing their thunder. What a guy" (*N.Y. DAILY NEWS*, 2/18). *GOLF.com*'s Michael Bamberger writes the decision to address the media on Friday "has Tiger Woods written all over it." Do not "blame Steinberg for this move and don't blame the high-priced polo shirts at the PGA Tour." It is a "brilliant" decision by Woods, "reminding us, and his opponents, too: he's still in charge" (*GOLF.com*, 2/18). In Newark, Andrew McCullough writes, "He is handling this in a typical Tiger way, which is to say on his terms" (*Newark STAR-LEDGER*, 2/18). *YAHOO SPORTS'* Dan Wetzel: "Tiger will handle the proceedings. He'll run the show. Watch if you want" (*SPORTS.YAHOO.com*, 2/17).

**WHAT ABOUT THE TIMING?** When asked whether Woods' announcement was undermining the Match Play event, Finchem said, "I don't think so. I think that, you know, we have tournaments every week." Golfer Stewart Cink agreed, noting, "I think it's coincidental that he would pick the Friday of Accenture to announce." But Dorman notes one golfer "reacted angrily to the announcement, cursing loudly off the record, not because it probably signals Woods's return but because of its timing." In addition, golfer Rory McIlroy contends that the timing "was not coincidental." He said, "I suppose he might want to get something back against the sponsor that dropped him" (*N.Y. TIMES*, 2/18). Golfer Ernie Els said, "It's selfish. You can write that. I feel sorry for the sponsor. Mondays are a good day to make statements, not Friday. This takes a lot away from the golf tournament" (*GOLFWEEK.com*, 2/17). *Golf Week's* Alex Miceli said, "Unfortunately, Accenture is the one that is getting the stick in the end in this. They have put millions of dollars into this tournament and Tiger is getting the last laugh on them" ("*Golf Central, Golf Channel*, 2/17). *Golf Channel's* Steve Sands: "He is taking away the headlines of one of the sponsors who dropped him. I find that timing to be a little on the interesting side" ("*Washington Post Live, Comcast SportsNet Mid-Atlantic*, 2/17). *Golf Channel's* Brandel Chamblee added, "The timing of this statement today certainly raised a lot of eyebrows" ("*Chronicle Live, Comcast SportsNet Bay Area*, 2/17).

**WITH OR WITHOUT YOU:** NBCU President & CEO Jeff Zucker, when asked this morning about Woods' coming announcement, said, "Tiger is a transcendent figure in the sport, but golf is much more than just Tiger, and with or without him it's a healthy sport. I can tell you the marketplace for golf has been quite strong as well." Zucker noted the interest in Woods' return "will be quite high. But I would say that we feel very good about where that marketplace is right now. Obviously, we'll all be interested to see what he says on Friday about when he will return" ("*Squawk Box, CNBC*, 2/18).

#### **24. GWAA MAY BOYCOTT WOODS ADDRESS IF MORE WRITERS NOT ALLOWED**

The Golf Writers Association of America is waiting to see if Tiger Woods' handlers grant its request for an additional 12 spots in the news conference at TPC Sawgrass, said a source close to the situation, or they may vote to boycott it. The request follows a meeting this morning among GWAA officers about whether or not the association should formally vote to boycott attendance due to what they perceived as unfair parameters. IMG's Mark Steinberg invited reporters from three wire services and asked the GWAA to

select one reporter each from a newspaper, magazine and online outlet. Those six individuals will be in the room with Woods at TPC Sawgrass, while another estimated 150-200 credentialed reporters will watch a live feed from a ballroom at the nearby Sawgrass Marriott. Questions will not be allowed, according to a document circulated to news outlets by Steinberg. A source said a straw poll by GWAA officers was skewed heavily in favor of boycotting. The GWAA is waiting for Woods' publicist to reply to the request before holding a formal vote (*THE DAILY*).

**QUESTIONS & NO ANSWERS:** In Boston, Charles Pierce wrote the strategy behind tomorrow's address "bespeaks a notion that those folks think that they can go back to the status quo ante, when access to Tiger was the golden coin of the realm, and when that fact alone allowed the golfer and his team to play the media like a violin." But if they "really believe that, they're dreaming." Pierce: "Right now, Tiger Woods is most in demand as a freak show, not as the greatest golfer who ever lived" (*BOSTON.com*, 2/17). Boston Globe columnist Dan Shaughnessy: "If you're invited to that thing don't go. It's an insult. ... He's saying you're one of his 'bobos,' you're going to roll over, not ask questions, not go against the flow." ESPN's Jim Rome: "Don't waste our time. Just go ahead and put it on your Web site instead." ESPN Radio's John Ireland: "You can't control this story. It's too big. ... I'm shocked that a guy who pays as much money as he does for his agents is getting this bad of advice" ("*Jim Rome Is Burning*," *ESPN*, 2/17). Keith Olbermann featured Woods in his regular "World's Worst Person In the World" segment on his MSNBC show last night. Olbermann: "No questions? I guess reporters will take the hint. Nobody will ask Tiger a question about this ever again. That'll be the end of it, won't it?" ("*Countdown with Keith Olbermann*," *MSNBC*, 2/17).

**INTO THE ROUGH:** In N.Y., Hank Gola wrote the Woods news conference is a "farce, a contrived event" that sounds "about as sterile as an execution and gives off as much arrogance as ever" (*NYDAILYNEWS.com*, 2/17). Also in N.Y., Mike Lupica writes if "speaking this way is the best Woods can do, he should skip us and go directly to the golf course" (*NYDAILYNEWS.com*, 2/17). The Chicago Tribune's Teddy Greenstein: "If he really wants to start anew, this is not the way to do it" ("*Chicago Tribune Live*," *Comcast SportsNet Chicago*, 2/17). Still, in DC, Lisa de Moraes writes viewers can expect TV networks to "break into their daytime lineups" tomorrow -- "just as though it were a presidential address to the nation" (*WASHINGTON POST*, 2/18).

## 25. CONSULTANTS ANALYZE STRATEGY BEHIND TIGER'S PLANNED STATEMENT

In anticipation of Tiger Woods' scheduled statement Friday, *THE DAILY* asked a panel of PR consultants to weigh in on various aspects of the strategy, as well as the timing of the statement. Today, Dan Klores Communications Managing Dir Scott Miranda and Leader Enterprises VP/Marketing Communications Marc Altieri share their thoughts on Tiger's refusal to take questions, allowing a limited pool of reporters and holding the event during the WGC-Accenture Match Play Championship.

**Q:** If you were advising Tiger, would you suggest this strategy of not taking questions and limiting the pool of reporters? If not, how would you approach it?

**Miranda:** If Tiger is serious about rehabilitating his image through the media, he needs to let the media do their job. I would advise him to sit down with one national broadcast outlet to tell his story as opposed to hosting a media gathering without questions. There are no practice rounds with the media and the general public will not be satisfied until he has answered the tough questions in a genuine manner. In terms of the outlet I would select for the interview, I would suggest a sit down with Robin Roberts of "Good Morning America." I think Robin would be a legitimate option given her

perspective as a woman, a former athlete and sports journalism background with ESPN. "Good Morning America" would also provide coverage across all ABC platforms, including ESPN, which is important for obvious reasons.

**Altieri:** I'd avoid such a "controlled" scenario. The media will be extremely sensitive to the level of "access" or transparency that was provided, or the level of control that the subject was willing to relinquish. This is why scripted disclosures such as what this appears to be, or even written statements, are dicey propositions that typically provide more gas for the fires of skepticism that pervade the media (and much of the general public as well). ... Why do something that intensifies a sense of negativity amongst the media who will be telling the story? The platform needs to provide media the freedom to do their job, which is not simply reporting news, but probing, questioning and researching it.

**Q:** What do you think about the timing of the statement -- on a Friday during the Olympics?

**Altieri:** It depends on what Tiger and his reps' true goals are. If the goal is to minimize the amount of information, or minimize the impact and reach of the announcement, then this would be a logical move. If the goal is to reach as far and wide as possible, and affect as significant an impact as possible, then he may be better served to do this when there is nothing else pre-occupying or distracting the media and the general public. The Olympics will certainly vie for front-page space in every newspaper and Web site. However, at this point, even the Olympics will likely not be enough of a distraction to pull eyes away from Tiger's statement, or dilute its impact. Bottom line on this is that when we're talking about Tiger Woods, all conventional bets are off.

**Miranda:** I think Tiger will make Saturday newspapers relevant for a change. While the timing is clearly designed to minimize the dialogue with weekend coverage, I am not entirely sure it will work with this story.

**Q:** What would you advise for the tone and context of the statement?

**Miranda:** Tiger needs to be sincere and above all, he needs to be humble. My key message points for the statement would include: expressing regret for the situation and all the damage it has caused, admitting to getting professional help in order to improve as a person, give the public a time table for his return to golf and make another appeal for privacy during this difficult time.

**Altieri:** I think it's an obvious conclusion that the statement should carry an attitude of vulnerability and regret. What I would work hard to ensure is that the tone and context display a sense of respect of the media and an acknowledgement of the job they are tasked with as journalists. Finally, I would work to ensure that it also carries an acceptance of the public's desire to know the story. Any athlete or celebrity that actively markets themselves as a brand spokesperson, and, as Tiger has, allows those brand portrayals to be of a morally sound and exemplary role model (e.g., "I am Tiger Woods" ad campaign), they are opening a door to public access. When you decide to shut that door because things get messy for you, you display selfishness and run the greater risk of appearing hypocritical, arrogant and downright smug.



**Q:** What are your thoughts about delivering this statement during the WGC Accenture Match Play Championship -- the first sponsor to drop him?

**Altieri:** This could be viewed from varying perspectives. On the one hand, it could be a measure to illustrate that he's not caught up in worrying about the impact this situation is having on his future business and marketing prospects. He could be trying to illustrate that he's willing to stand vulnerably within the forum of a sponsor that dropped him, because what's important to him is doing the right thing and being a better person, regardless of business interests. On the other hand, one could look at it as a strategic move of "good will" to potentially mend the fence with this former sponsor,

because it will benefit the sponsor that its event played host to this high-profile announcement that will draw the eyes and attention of the world. I'm not ready to endorse either perspective, but it certainly raises these interesting speculations.

**OTHER OPINIONS IN THE NEWS:** Levick Strategic Communications Senior VP Gene Grabowski said that he "isn't sure Woods' plan will be a winner." Grabowski: "Doing it this way, accepting no questions, sort of putting his hand up and keeping reporters and public at a distance sends the wrong message." Former USOC CMO Rick Burton: "Interesting that he's doing it in the middle of the Accenture and taking eyeballs away from his potential sponsor" (*L.A. TIMES*, 2/18). Ketchum Associate Dir Nick Ragone: "This is a sham, through and through. The fact that he isn't allowing questions and is positioning his friends and handpicked reporters as props is the height of arrogance." MediaOne Management Group CEO & Exec Media Consultant Robert Grossman said that the move "reeks of a desperate effort to salvage his marketability as a corporate pitchman." Grossman: "It's so clear and evident to us that the reasons he's doing this is to help himself financially. It sends the wrong message" (*N.Y. POST*, 2/18).

## 26. THIS YEAR'S NFL DRAFT WILL OPERATE UNDER STANDARD SALARY POOL

NFL Senior VP/PR Greg Aiello confirmed that this April's NFL Draft will "continue to operate under the rookie salary pool and slotting system that have been staples" of the current CBA, according to Don Banks of SI.com. The NFL will "almost certainly enter its long-anticipated 'uncapped' year next month," and the rookie salary pool -- which previously "functioned as a salary cap for first-year players under the NFL's soon-to-expire overall salary cap -- could have been dropped at the league's behest in an uncapped year, as the CBA stipulated." However, the league decided to retain the rookie salary pool this year, "even though it hopes any new CBA negotiations will address what it believes are the inequities of its rookie salary structure." The NFL "would have had to notify" the NFLPA by Saturday if it intended to opt out of the rookie salary pool. Aiello indicated that teams were "made aware of the intention to have a rookie salary pool at the NFL's annual labor seminar in December." But a club official said that he "still hadn't heard any definitive word from the league regarding whether it intended to have a rookie salary pool this year." Banks noted some league observers believed that the "absence of a



slotting system could result in more Michael Crabtree-like contract stalemates, in which agents try to assign value to a player without adhering strictly to where the player was drafted" (*SI.com, 2/17*).

## 27. MICHAEL WHAN CONFIDENT IN LPGA'S FUTURE DESPITE CHALLENGES

The '10 LPGA season officially tees off today at the Honda PTT LPGA Thailand, and though new Commissioner Michael Whan "will admit to facing a learning curve and acknowledging some challenges, he seems confident of where the tour is going," according to Larry Dorman of the N.Y. TIMES. People who know Whan say that he is a "quick study, and he is determined to show just how quick." Whan, who officially assumed his role on January 1, said his "biggest challenge to the job ... has been focus." Whan: "If you're not careful, you can actually finish a 10-, 12-hour day and realize you spent zero amount of time focusing on the most important thing: that is our business partners, who get our players on the golf course." He said his number one priority is "getting us playing a lot more often, a lot more places and on TV." Whan: "We've got to make sure that when these title partners sign up with us that we're working hard for their business, not just working hard for the purse." He added, "I don't even like the term sponsor. A sponsor, you sell something to. A partner, you go into business with." More Whan: "I would like by 2011, when the players and my staff and I roll into a tournament, we all know very well what the objectives are of this tournament sponsor ... and we're all about it, not only the week we're there, but in the weeks before it and the weeks after" (*N.Y. TIMES, 2/17*).

**BACK ON TOUR:** Whan, in a Q&A with ESPN.com's Jason Sobel, said, "I think our sponsors, our marketing partners and our players will benefit from a difficult 2008-09 economic time, because it's forced us to really get back and realized that we've got to be ultimate business partners to our sponsors. ... We've got to make sure that we're a smart economic decision, not just an enjoyable one. I feel confident enough to tell you that we'll be better because of what we've gone through." When asked what the LPGA "needs to grow and succeed over the next few years," Whan said, "First we've got to provide more opportunities in more locations and at more times to showcase the best female golfers in the world, so it's really all about putting our personalities and our performances and our players on display for the fans, the sponsors and for young girls all around the world to see their role models playing. The second thing is to find ways with our media partners to really embrace the differences of our players. ... The last thing for me is just really opening up the tent to fans worldwide. What I mean by that is just inviting them to join us from all around the world." Whan said the bottom line is the league needs to be "playing golf more than 30 times, and doing it around the world and doing it at some of the best venues in the world." But he noted at the "same time, we need to do it where it's right with our partners; we need to do it where it's right with our players" (*ESPN.com, 2/14*).

**ENERGY BOOST:** GOLF WORLD's Ron Sirak in a cover story writes, "Without denying the challenges he faces as the ninth LPGA commissioner, Whan brings an earnestness and energy to the job that has won the hearts and even the most-reluctant minds of all he has contacted since taking over." Even those who "think the obstacles facing the LPGA in its 60th season may be more than anyone can handle believe Whan has the perfect blend of schmooze and savvy." Whan "grasps that the LPGA is not a big business that can be run from on high but rather a mom-and-pop grocery store where the commissioner's main job is service -- making the sponsors and event owners feel appreciated." USGA Senior Technical Dir Dick Rugge said Whan is "as smart as a whip, creative and open to other people's ideas." Sirak notes the LPGA's globalization is a

"thorny issue that concerns both American players and sponsors." But Whan is "clear where he stands." He said, "We are going global because our players are coming from around the world, and our fans are coming from around the world" (*GOLF WORLD*, 2/15 issue).

## **28. NEW AFL TO BEGIN PLAY IN APRIL WITH 15 TEAMS, NFL NETWORK DEAL**

AFL team owners yesterday announced the "formation of the new Arena Football League that will begin play in April," less than a year after the league "ceased operations because of financial problems," according to Austin Knoblauch of the L.A. TIMES. The new league, which paid \$6.1M for the "assets and rights of the old league," will have 15 teams, "some of which migrated over from the now-defunct arenafootball2 league." The teams will "take part in a 16-game regular season that begins April 2," and NFL Network will broadcast "selected games throughout the season." AFL Commissioner Jerry Kurz said in a statement, "The financial trouble the former league ran into was not due to a lack of fan interest and support. The demise of the former AFL was more a function of a severe recession and rising league and team operational costs" (*LATIMES.com*, 2/17). Kurz said that the new AFL "will follow the model" of MLS in having "all players and coaches employed by the league instead of by individual teams in a bid to 'correct an economic model that failed.'" The arrangement "will allow the league to collectively seek out such needs as equipment deals and workers' compensation coverage." Kurz said that all players "will be a paid a uniform amount ... although he kept that figure confidential." The AP's Jeff Lutzke reported former AFL teams that will resume operations include Chicago, Cleveland, Dallas, Arizona, Utah, Orlando and Tampa Bay. af2 teams from Oklahoma City, Tulsa, Alabama, Bossier-Shreveport, Iowa, Spokane, Jacksonville and Milwaukee also will move into the league (*AP*, 2/17).

**MORE TO COME:** Kurz said that he "has visions of expanding before the 2011 season." Kurz: "We are in serious negotiations with a number of markets for the 2011 season already. The four markets that have progressed fairly well so far are Philadelphia, Southern California, Denver and Pittsburgh" (*FT. WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM*, 2/18). ESPN analyst Ron Jaworski, who formerly served as AFL Philadelphia Soul co-Owner along with Jon Bon Jovi and several others, said that his group "continues to explore the possibility of resuming the Soul." Kurz said of the Soul, "We've extended an offer and hope very much they are with us next year" (*PHILADELPHIA DAILY NEWS*, 2/18). Meanwhile, Kurz yesterday said that he is "confident Pittsburgh will be part of a planned 2011 expansion." Kurz: "It's pretty far along (in the process). We're hoping for them to be a 2011 team, but there are a lot of things it depends on, building availability, things like that. ... But it is a place we will be." Kurz "declined to name the ownership group the AFL is in talks with, but confirmed that it is not the Penguins" (*Pittsburgh TRIBUNE-REVIEW*, 2/18).

**OVER THE AIR:** In Phoenix, Richard Obert notes the AFL yesterday officially announced its television partnership with NFL Network, which will include a "game-of-the-week each Friday, beginning April 2." Kurz said the deal is a "huge first step for the success" of the league. He added that there were "other broadcasting offers, but he felt the NFL Network best suited the league." Kurz: "We have to look at the value for us. Exposure. It's educational. It's getting our game on and the revenue that we'll get. It's beneficial for both. Who better than the NFL Network? We'll be in front of absolutely dedicated fans" (*ARIZONA REPUBLIC*, 2/18). The Chicago Rush will appear on NFL Net six times, the most of any AFL club (*CHICAGO SUN-TIMES*, 2/18). Rush co-Owner Mike Ditka said, "The NFL Network is going to provide a great vehicle to get our product to the people" (*CHICAGO TRIBUNE*, 2/18).

## Franchises

### 29. THRASHERS DENY REPORT TEAM SOLD, WILL RELOCATE TO WINNIPEG

The Thrashers said that reports out of Winnipeg that the team has been "sold and will relocate to the city next season are false," according to Chris Vivlamore of the ATLANTA CONSTITUTION. Thrashers GM Don Waddell said "there is absolutely nothing to it, and there is no forthcoming announcement or plans for relocation" (ATLANTA CONSTITUTION, 2/18). NHL Deputy Commissioner Bill Daly yesterday in an e-mail said, "There has been absolutely zero discussion at the league level of Thrashers to Winnipeg. There is no truth whatsoever to these rumors." Daly added NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman "did not visit Winnipeg earlier this week -- or even earlier this year for that matter" (WINNIPEG SUN, 2/18). The WINNIPEG FREE PRESS reported True North Sports & Entertainment, which owns and operates the city's MTS Centre, is "rumoured to be putting the finishing touches on a deal that will see the Thrashers franchise leave Atlanta and come to Winnipeg for the start of the 2010-11 season." True North Sports & Entertainment Dir of Corporate Communications & Hockey Operations Scott Brown said, "Of course we deny it; it's completely false" (WINNIPEG FREE PRESS, 2/17).

### 30. LIONS LOWER SEASON-TICKET PRICES FOR SECOND CONSECUTIVE YEAR

The Lions for the second consecutive season are "reducing prices in an attempt to spur season-ticket sales," according to John Niyo of the DETROIT NEWS. The Lions will lower season-ticket prices for about 19,000 seats at Ford Field. The price cuts range from about \$80 per season ticket for about 13,000 seats in the 100- and 200-level sections, to \$100 and \$140 per season ticket for an estimated 2,900 upper-level seats. About 3,000 club seats "also will see prices lowered." Season-ticket prices, including those for all-you-can-eat seats, "will remain the same for the rest of the building in 2010." The Lions "failed to sell out half of their home games last season, ranking 31st among the NFL's 32 teams in attendance for 2009" (DETROIT NEWS, 2/18).

**STAYING THE COURSE:** The '10 NFL season will be played without a salary cap if a new CBA is not reached by March 5, and in Detroit, Nicholas Cotsonika notes the Lions "don't plan to go on a spending spree, but they don't plan to pull back, either." Lions President Tom Lewand said that the team "would conduct business about as usual." Lewand: "We've always spent to the cap. That's always been our motto" (DETROIT FREE PRESS, 2/18). The DETROIT NEWS' Niyo notes the Lions "will operate under a self-imposed cap." Lewand: "I think the only prudent thing to do, from our perspective, is to engage in the same kind of planning process that we would've if there were a cap. Eventually, there will be a new system. I don't know what that's going to look like yet. The worst thing that could happen would be to make progress in a significant way in 2010 and then have that progress impeded by new rules" (DETROIT NEWS, 2/18).

## Facilities & Venues

### 31. MINNESOTA GOV. DISCUSSES VIKINGS STADIUM FINANCING OPTIONS

Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty yesterday said the Vikings are a "valued asset for

Minnesota, we want to keep them here, and they're not going to stay in the Metrodome," according to Sid Hartman of the Minneapolis STAR TRIBUNE. Pawlenty noted the issue of financing for a new Vikings stadium is "going to come to a head, and there are some examples that I and others have put out that would at least move the debate forward." However, Pawlenty added, "It's very hard to do that when the economy is so bad and so many other aspects of government are being reduced." Hartman notes Pawlenty "talked about a lottery game as possible help." Pawlenty said the new "Mega Millions" game is "not part of the state's budget yet because it's brand new and it's not even factored into the budget forecast, and that would generate to the general fund of the state or to other purposes about \$12[M] a year." Pawlenty added the state will look at "other ways to do it, like looking at tax increment financing -- of course, the Vikings would have to contribute a substantial portion, as well as the league." Pawlenty: "I also think if this ever gets done, it's going to require a local partner, a city or a county is going to have to step forward and say they're willing to be a partner as well." But Pawlenty is "convinced that the stadium will happen, sooner or later." Hartman writes the Vikings are "clearly the most popular team in Minnesota, and Pawlenty realizes that losing them would be devastating to the state." Pawlenty added he believes in Vikings Owner Zygi Wilf's "commitment to Minnesota." Pawlenty: "He said he would not move the team, and I believe him, he's a man of his word" (*Minneapolis STAR TRIBUNE, 2/18*).

### **32. BRAVES INK NAMING-RIGHTS DEAL WITH COOLRAY FOR TRIPLE-A BALLPARK**

The Braves have "signed a multi-million dollar deal with" Atlanta-based Coolray Heating & Cooling for naming rights to the Triple-A Int'l League Gwinnett Braves' ballpark, which will now be called Coolray Field, according to Patrick Fox of the ATLANTA CONSTITUTION. Gwinnett County (GA) officials said that the 16-year deal "will ultimately mean the county will get about a \$4.5[M] share over the life of the contract." Fox notes the county's contract with the Braves "calls for the club to receive the first \$350,000 annually paid in naming rights, the county to receive the next \$350,000 and anything over that to be divided evenly." The Braves "took over naming rights negotiations last fall when Gwinnett County was unable to market the stadium to potential sponsors" (*ATLANTA CONSTITUTION, 2/18*).

## Collegiate Sports

### **33. UNIV. OF NORTH DAKOTA MAY SOON ABANDON FIGHTING SIOUX NICKNAME**

The Univ. of North Dakota (UND) "appears ready to abandon" its Fighting Sioux nickname "over calls of racism despite a petition drive by local tribe members to preserve the school's nickname and logo," according to Valerie Richardson of the WASHINGTON TIMES. UND Chancellor Bill Goetz and President Robert Kelley last month "abandoned their neutral stances on the issue by coming out against keeping the Fighting Sioux nickname," and the North Dakota University System BOD "could rid itself of the controversy by retiring the nickname and logo as early as" today's meeting. Under NCAA rules, universities "may keep their Indian mascots, nicknames and logos as long as they receive the permission of the namesake tribe, which in UND's case consists of two tribes -- the Spirit Lake Sioux and Standing Rock Sioux." The Spirit Lake Sioux tribal council "gave its blessing in September" to the nickname, but Standing Rock Sioux leaders have "long opposed the nickname." Richardson noted even if the BOD "does vote to retire the nickname, the issue isn't expected to disappear." A group of Spirit Lake Sioux have "filed a lawsuit challenging the university's authority to get rid of the nickname before the

NCAA's November deadline," and that case is "expected to be heard by the state Supreme Court in late March." Richardson noted the "limbo" leaves UND "as the last campus with an unresolved Indian nickname" (*WASHINGTON TIMES*, 2/17).

## Sports Industrialists

### 34. TOM WILSON PLANNING NEXT STEPS AFTER RESIGNING FROM PISTONS



**Tom Wilson Spent More Than 32 Years With The Pistons**

**TOM WILSON**, who yesterday resigned from his position as President & CEO of Palace Sports & Entertainment after more than 32 years with the Pistons, said that he "knows what he will do next but would not elaborate," according to Walsh & Ellis of the *DETROIT FREE PRESS*. Wilson said that he "expects to go public with his plans 'in the next couple weeks.'" He "would not say whether he will stay" in Michigan; he also "owns a home in Florida." Wilson said the Pistons made him a "very generous offer to stay." Pistons COO **ALAN OSTFIELD** will replace Wilson, and Ostfield said that discussions about Wilson's departure "have been under way at the Palace for a week or more." Ostfield: "Five or six days ago, it started to become clear." Walsh & Ellis

note the resignation comes in the wake of Owner **KAREN DAVIDSON**'s "decision to sell the team." Wilson said that he "believes it would take 12 to 18 months to sell the Pistons," and that he "would expect that the Pistons and the Palace of Auburn Hills arena would be sold together as a package." He added that the DTE Energy Music Theatre "could be included in such a sale, or could be spun off in a separate deal." He "acknowledged interest by about a half dozen groups -- mostly local -- to buy the team but said no one has looked at the books or entered into any serious negotiations" (*DETROIT FREE PRESS*, 2/18).

**WHAT LIES AHEAD?** In Detroit, Michael Rosenberg writes Wilson "long has been one of the most media-friendly executives in sports," which "makes his vague answers about his exit curious." When asked if he will "join a group that is trying to purchase the Pistons," Wilson said, "I really can't comment on that." However, he did acknowledge he has been "approached by half a dozen" potential owners. Rosenberg writes Wilson's story, "in many ways, is the story of the late-20th Century sports and entertainment boom -- it made him, and, in some impressive ways, he helped make it." As he "leaves an empire, it's worth remembering that when he arrived, it was more like a shack" (*DETROIT FREE PRESS*, 2/18).

**IT WAS TIME:** In Detroit, Drew Sharp writes Wilson's departure is an "unavoidable consequence of the internal tumult swirling within an organization that ownership has placed on the selling block." Wilson "might not be the only one to leave." Despite his titles, he had "no input in the daily operation of the team." He had "many successes, but he also had a character flaw: overreaching his expertise." He was a "businessman who thought he was a basketball man." When **BILL DAVIDSON** died last year, "so too did Wilson's impact within the Palace hierarchy" (*DETROIT FREE PRESS*, 2/18). The *DETROIT NEWS*' Bob Wojnowski writes it was "time to move on, and Tom Wilson knew it." His departure is a "major sign of change" within the Pistons organization. Wilson was "innovative and visible and fiercely loyal to Bill Davidson." Wilson yesterday said, "This is

very difficult, because we've had a remarkable run, and they made me a very, very nice offer to stay. They didn't run me off at all. It's just time for another chapter." Wojnowski writes Wilson is a "terrific marketer and businessman, and it wouldn't surprise me to see him stay in the NBA." Although Wilson "ran the business side, not the basketball side, this is a significant loss for the Pistons" (*DETROIT NEWS*, 2/18).

### 35. INDIANS TO PROMOTE GM MARK SHAPIRO TO PRESIDENT AFTER SEASON

By [Eric Fisher](#), Staff Writer, SportsBusiness Journal

The Indians this afternoon will announce they are promoting GM **MARK SHAPIRO** to team President following the '10 season. Current Indians President **PAUL DOLAN**, son of team Owner **LARRY DOLAN**, will elevate to team Chair & CEO, while Assistant GM **CHRIS ANTONETTI** will be promoted to GM. The moves are a firm vote of continued continuity by the Dolans, as Shapiro has been with the club since '92, and has been GM since late '01. Shapiro is a '06 SportsBusiness Journal Forty Under 40 winner and a two-time Sporting News Exec of the Year. Antonetti, meanwhile, has been with the Indians since '99, and at 35, also continues a trend within many MLB clubs of entrusting their baseball operations to younger executives. The role of **DENNIS LEHMAN**, Indians Exec VP/Business, will be unchanged.

### 36. WHAT I LIKE.... WITH USA HOCKEY EXEC DIR DAVE OGREAN

In our continuing series, SportsBusiness Daily/SportsBusiness Journal asks top sports personalities for their thoughts, ideas, aspirations and likes. Today, USA Hockey Exec Dir **DAVE OGREAN**. Ogrean is enjoying his second stint in his current role and his third stint overall with the amateur hockey organization. The longtime sports exec talks about his love of the game, and of sports in general, as the Olympic hockey competition is under way in Vancouver.



**Ogrean Believes  
Attitude Is Everything**

**What I like in an insight:** Attitude is everything.

**An influential person in my career:** **HAL TRUMBLE**, the first executive director of USA Hockey. He was my first boss and taught me to think big, but pay attention to the details.

**An out-of-the-box idea:** NHL Winter Classic. A celebration of the sport that is clearly working to attract new fans.

**A timeless idea:** Courtesy.

**A business deal:** It's almost 15 years ago, but Disney's acquisition of ABC and ESPN in 1995.

**A sports facility:** Xcel Energy Center in St. Paul, Minn. A multimillion-dollar hockey lodge that touches every level of the game in the state of Minnesota from youth to high school to college to the NHL.

**A sports event:** Olympic Winter Games. Smaller and therefore more collegial than the Summer Games. There's something about cold weather and parkas that puts a smile on everyone's face.

**A strategy:** Bridge building. You'll have more success making alliances and developing partnerships than trying to fly solo.

**A hire:** **SCOTT BLACKMUN** to lead the USOC. It'll be years before we can give out a report card, but I'm more optimistic about the USOC and the Olympic movement than I have been in a long time.

**A brand:** ESPN. When I began there in 1980 we all wondered whether the idea would survive. Now it's one of the most recognizable sports icons in the world.

**A trend:** Mobile delivery of sports inventory.

**An innovation:** High-definition television. Hockey benefits perhaps as much as any, but it makes watching all sports far more enjoyable.

**A pro league or team business initiative:** All four of the major pro leagues launching their own networks and controlling more of their own content.

**A story that bears watching:** Olympic television rights. How high is up? Have we already found out or does the answer lie in the future?

**An idea or invention I wish I had thought of:** Bottled water.

**A fantasy job:** I have it and I feel extremely fortunate to have been able to come back and do it a second time.

**What I like about my job:** The overriding sense of community in the sport of hockey. This is evident every day when I walk in our office, as well as in my interactions with other people in the sport at every level.

**Sports:** Sports is the original reality TV. It's a competition in which you participate or have a rooting interest that brings out passion in everyone.

**Sports business:** Most of the people love what they do. Even though the skill sets might be the same as in the rest of the business world, we get to do it in life's toy store.

**Sports media:** Everything except bloggers.

**Sports technology:** The immediacy of information.

**Competing:** The wins and losses, having teammates with you, and knowing that if the outcome isn't what you hoped there's always another game.

**The future (or direction) of sports business:** That it only appears to be growing, which means sports must be coming more and more relevant to the general public as well as corporate America.

**Sports fans:** Their passion and enthusiasm. The games wouldn't be much fun if the crowds never cheered.

**What I would like to change:** The escalation of ticket prices to the general public.

**See:** People no longer thinking of states as red and blue, but rather everybody cooperating to make progress.

**See more of in sports:** Postgame handshakes.

**See more of in sports business:** More promos for ESPN "SportsCenter." There's already enough in the archive to turn into a high-rated comedy series.

**See less of in sports:** Showboating and trash talking.

**See less of in sports business:** Price gouging, especially at the Olympics.

**See different:** Shorter seasons.

**Eliminate:** Shootouts determining champions in hockey. You'd never end the World Series with a home run derby.

**What I don't like in general:** Negativity.

**Pet peeve:** People who aren't on time and disingenuousness.

**In sports:** Fair weather fans.

**In business:** Uncivil negotiations.

**About sports fans:** Vulgarity and behavior they would be embarrassed by if they were sober.

**What I like in people:** Honesty and character.

**That would surprise those who know me:** When I go to a country for the first time, I like to travel there alone. It makes it more of an adventure.

**Above all else:** Time with my family.

**About myself:** My optimism.

**Hero:** My father. He had a sense of character and conducted himself in a way that was always genuine and by which he could never be embarrassed.

**Players: PEYTON MANNING.** He is the epitome of a complete athlete, excelling in his chosen game, while also serving as a role model. In hockey, we've had so many great players over the years, it's hard to narrow the list.

**Teams:** Boston Red Sox, University of Connecticut Huskies.

**City:** Boston. Can never get enough of the seafood. I always have clam chowder within my first 12 hours in town.

**Possession:** I have a lot of memorabilia from my years in sports, but I'm not one who gets attached to "things."

**Memento:** The credentials from every sporting event I've attended since the 1980 Olympic Winter Games.

**Time of year (because):** The fall. College and pro football in full swing. Start of hockey season. Weather is turning cooler and the leaves are crisp under foot.

**Books:** "Forever," by **PETE HAMILL**; "Paths of Glory," by **JEFFREY ARCHER**; "The Tipping Point," by **MALCOLM GLADWELL**.

**Authors:** **JOHN IRVING**, **JOHN LECARRE**, **JOHN BERENDT**, Pete Hamill.

**Magazines:** Continuous subscriber to SI and either Time or Newsweek for the last 35 years.

**Web sites:** ESPN.com, NHL.com, USAHockey.com, CNN.com, TheOnion.com.

**Gadget:** My BlackBerry.

**Hobbies:** Traveling on vacation (despite all the travel I do in my job). Reading fiction. Socializing with my closest friends. Wine.

**Trip:** Havana, Cuba. Not luxurious, but the 1991 Pan American Games was one of the most indelible experiences of my life.

**TV:** I watch almost exclusively sports, movies and news, but have recently become hooked on "30 Rock."

**Concerts:** I have seen **ELTON JOHN** five times in the U.S., England and Spain.

**Artist:** **MARY CHAPIN CARPENTER**  
-- exceptionally intelligent lyrics.

**Food:** Seafood. Almost any kind, especially shellfish.

**Dessert:** Crème brûlée. But not too often.

**Drink:** A good Pinot Noir or a cold Bud Light.

**Scent:** Anything my wife's wearing.

**Vacation spot:** The Big Island of Hawaii.

**Quotes:** "Character means doing the right thing even when nobody's looking." And "If you're fortunate enough to get into the end zone, act like you've been there before."



**Ogrea Lists Creme Brulee  
As His Favorite Dessert**

The Cotton Bowl Association elected Dallas-based Bain Development President **THOMAS BAIN, JR.** to a two-year term as Chair (*Cotton Bowl*)....The New York state Senate appointed Professions Inc. President & CEO of Administrators **ANTHONY BONOMO** to the NYRA BOD (*BLOODHORSE.com, 2/15*)....USA Triathlon named former U.S. Olympic runner and former U.S. Rep. **JIM RYUN** to its BOD (*USA Triathlon*)....Loyola Univ. Maryland named Boston College Associate AD for Development **JIM PAQUETTE** Assistant VP & AD, effective April 1 (*Loyola*)....USF1 Head of Business Development **BRIAN BONNER** is "no longer working with USF1." Bonner is now co-Director of Ohio-based B4 Marketing (*MOTORSPORT.com, 2/17*)....Comcast SportsNet Bay Area named **SEAN MCDERMOTT** to the newly created position of Digital Sales Manager. McDermott, who joins CSN from Hearst Media Services, will be responsible for all facets of digital media ad sales initiatives (*CSN*)....USA Football named **DAVE FANUCCHI** South Regional Manager where he will direct the organization's initiatives, events and outreach throughout Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas (*USA Football*).

**EXECS:** SB Nation announced sales execs **ZACH CHAPMAN** and **DAVID BORSTEIN** have joined the online sports media outlet. Previously, Chapman ran sales for NBCSports.com and NBCOlympics.com and Borstein was MySpace.com Dir of Sales (*SB Nation*)....The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America has elected **JAMES FITZROY** President. Fitzroy is Dir & Superintendent of Wollaston Recreational Facility and Presidents Golf Club in North Quincy, Massachusetts (*GCSAA*)....Continental Baseball League Alexandria Aces GM **ANDREW AGUILAR** has left the team to become GM of the Wilmington Sharks in the Coastal Plain League (*Alexandria TOWN TALK, 2/17*)....Octagon's Merchandise & Licensing group has promoted **RICK SHAHUM** to Account Dir and **STEFANIE MAZEL** and **EDWARD ANDRADE** both to Senior Account Exec (*Octagon*).

Do you have an executive announcement? If so, please send to [editorial@sportsbusinessdaily.com](mailto:editorial@sportsbusinessdaily.com).

### 38. NAMES IN THE NEWS

Hockey players **GREG DE VRIES**, **JASON WOOLLEY**, **CHRIS SIMON** and **BRYAN BERARD** have "violated a court order compelling them to appear for depositions in the explosive lawsuit they filed along with 15 other players last year claiming golf course developer **KEN JOWDY** squandered" \$25M of their money. The players are "expected to drop the lawsuit to avoid facing sanctions, which could include having the suit dismissed at a hearing scheduled for March 3" in L.A. (*N.Y. DAILY NEWS, 2/18*).

**EXECUTIVE SUPPORT:** Penske Racing Owner **ROGER PENSKE**, Hurricanes Owner **PETER KARMANOS**, Tigers and Red Wings Owner **MIKE ILITCH** and Cavaliers Owner **DAN GILBERT** are backing a \$125M "private effort to bring light rail transit to a portion of Detroit's Woodward Avenue" (*CRAINSDETROIT.com, 2/17*).

**RIGHT MAN FOR THE JOB?** In Tacoma, Dave Boling writes former Univ. of Oregon AD **BILL MOOS** "could be the perfect man" to become Washington State Univ.'s new AD. **JIM STERK** vacated the position earlier this month to become San Diego State Univ. AD. However, Moos reportedly got a \$2M buyout "over 10 years and is restricted by a non-compete clause" (*Tacoma NEWS TRIBUNE, 2/18*).

**NAMES:** Spike TV has greenlighted a golf-themed pilot titled "**BACK NINE**." The show stars actor **JOHN SCHNEIDER** as **RONNIE BARNES**, a "hard-drinking, larger-than-life, washed-up former U.S. Open champion." Barnes "travels the country competing in small-time tournaments" with a character named **TIGER**, "his

sex-addicted longtime caddy, in order to qualify again for the PGA Tour." The show is written by **JASON FILARDI** and **MARK PEREZ** (*HOLLYWOOD REPORTER*, 2/18)...The shareholders of PepsiCo's two "largest independent bottlers," Pepsi Bottling Group Inc. and PepsiAmericas Inc., have "approved merger plans to become part" of PepsiCo. The Minneapolis-based PepsiAmericas is run by **ROBERT POHLAD**, son of late Twins Owner **CARL POHLAD**, and Robert will be PepsiAmericas' second-largest shareholder after PepsiCo itself (*Minneapolis STAR TRIBUNE*, 2/18)...Saints LB **SCOTT FUJITA** and his wife, **JACLYN**, donated half of his \$82,000 Super Bowl XLIV check to charity. Fujita said that "some of the money will go to coastal wetlands restoration projects," and that the "rest will go to Haiti" (*New Orleans TIMES-PICAYUNE*, 2/18)...The Office Depot Foundation has awarded its Listen Learn Care Award to NASCAR driver **TONY STEWART** and his mother **PAM BOAS**. Office Depot sponsors Stewart's Sprint Cup Series entry (*Office Depot Foundation*).

## Classified Advertisements

### 39. CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

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#### **40. SBJ IN-DEPTH: WORLD CONGRESS OF SPORTS**

SportsBusiness Journal gears up for our biggest conference of the year, the World Congress of Sports in Los Angeles, by gauging the health of the industry and outlining the growth areas that are drawing the most attention. Coming off one of the most challenging years in recent memory, where are the signs of strength and how is the industry evolving to cater to changing demands from both consumers and business partners? **Publishing Date:** March 15 **Close:** March 1 **Materials Close:** March 3.

For information on advertising contact National Ad Director, Julie Tuttle at 212 500 0711 or [jtuttle@sportsbusinessjournal.com](mailto:jtuttle@sportsbusinessjournal.com).