

STREET & SMITH'S
SportsBusiness
 sportsbusinessdaily.com
DAILY

Tuesday, February 16, 2010

Vol. XVI -- No. 107

Medal Of Honor (#1)

The WASHINGTON POST's Tom Shales praises NBC's Olympics coverage, labels it "so satisfying."

Passing The Buck (#1)

Debate continues over NBC's tape-delayed Olympics coverage, as Seattle's KING-TV notes decision is "made by NBC Sports," not affiliate.

Getting Cheeky

Snowboarder Hannah Teter launches personally designed "Sweet Cheeks" underwear line. (#8)

Get Them While They're Hot (#11)

Hudson's Bay expects to sell 3.4 million pairs of red mittens, the "gotta-have" Olympic souvenir.

Spinning Out (#21)

Fox earns 7.7 fast-national rating for Daytona 500, race's lowest rating since '91; DIS not likely to repave track despite pothole. (#28)

Fresh Set Of Tires (#18)

Jeff Gordon leaves IMG after 10 years to pursue business opportunities with Just Marketing.

Falling Stars

TNT's final NBA All-Star Game rating down 15% from '09; dunk contest a "snore fest." (#22)

Preliminary Results

From our perspective, here are the early themes of the Vancouver Games: VANOC faces significant organizational challenges that they must address quickly; the weather isn't cooperating; U.S. and Canada viewers are watching; and Canadians simply love the Games. VANOC's John Furlong says the tragic death of Nodar Kumaritashvili has deeply affected his organization. Furlong:

"There's no question it set us back on our heels." (#4) At the venues, Cypress Mountain is called the "Official Black Eye" of the Games (#2), and the Richmond Oval sees delays of over an hour (#3). Elsewhere, the Canadian fan base is adding energy to Vancouver, as thousands "have clogged the downtown streets" and celebration zones "have been packed." (#5) The Games remain an early hit for NBC, as the net is winning primetime with ratings topping Turin (#1). On the athlete front, Canadian freestyle skier Alexandre Bilodeau seems ready to be the country's next breakout star (#7).



**Weather Just One Issue
 Officials Have Faced**

Also In Today's Issue

Larry Brown indicates **Michael Jordan** is "doing everything he can" to buy Bobcats from **Bob Johnson**. (#25)

Quote Of The Day

"It was quite frankly an embarrassing situation for the organizing committee, the crew here at the Oval. These athletes prepare their whole lives for this one moment in time.

**The crew
needs to do the same."**

-- NBC's **Dan Jansen**, on the hour-plus delay to the men's 500m speedskating event due to ice resurfacing problems at Richmond Olympic Oval
(NBC, 2/15). (#3)

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Olympics

1. PAIRS FIGURE SKATING HELPS NBC MAINTAIN SOLID GAINS FROM TURIN

NBC averaged a 14.3 final Nielsen rating (26.4 million viewers) for Sunday night's Vancouver Games coverage, which featured Alpine women's combined, pairs figure skating short program and men's luge. The rating is up 7.5% from a 13.3 rating (23.2 million viewers) for the same night in Turin in '06, but off 18.8% from a 17.6 rating in Salt Lake City in '02. Through three nights of coverage, NBC is averaging a 15.3 rating and 28.6 million viewers, up 15.9% and 24.9%, respectively, from a 13.2 rating and 22.9 million viewers for Turin. The 15.3 average rating is also down 24.6% from the same period in Salt Lake City (*THE DAILY*).

WINTER OLYMPICS AVERAGE PRIMETIME RATINGS TREND

| | '08 (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 |
| Cumulative | 15.3 | 13.2 | 20.3 | 16.5 |

FAST OUT OF THE STARTING GATE: The HOLLYWOOD REPORTER's James Hibberd notes the average viewership through the first three days is the "highest non-U.S. Winter Games opener since the Lillehammer Games in 1994, which received a boost from the Nancy Kerrigan/Tonya Harding scandal." This past weekend "may have also benefited from some dramatic headlines -- the tragic death of Georgian luger Nodar Kumaritashvili on Friday may have increased public awareness of the Games." Hibberd notes the numbers are "particularly impressive given the lack of ready-made Olympic moments so far this year" (*HOLLYWOOD REPORTER*, 2/16). USA TODAY's Michael Hiestand notes NBC "looks like it will surpass" ratings from the Turin Games and "avoid setting any new lows with its ongoing Vancouver coverage" (*USA TODAY*, 2/16). In N.Y., Michael Starr writes under the header, "Olympics Winning Over Viewers" (*N.Y. POST*, 2/16).

SO FAR, SO GOOD: In DC, Tom Shales notes NBC is "enjoying a fine, high-flying triumph with its HD telecasts" of the Games. The Olympics provide the "greatest show on snow," and the "television version has been so satisfying -- visually, emotionally, aesthetically." The net was presented a challenge Friday by Kumaritashvili's sudden death, but "to its credit, NBC News has kept on the story and not tried to downplay it for the sake of keeping viewers cheery and sponsors calm." Neither have the broadcasters "been guilty of milking the tragedy for gushy and gratuitous melodrama." The "humane approach reflects the presence" of NBC Sports & Olympics Chair Dick Ebersol, "keeping the ship on course despite many opportunities to go astray, if not aground" (*WASHINGTON POST*, 2/16).

MAKING A TOUGH CALL: SPORTINGNEWS.com's Andy Hutchins wrote NBC handled Kumaritashvili's death "fairly well, especially considering that it's much easier to get ripped for commission than omission in this case." But showing the video of his crash "once and with an appropriate warning is probably plenty; slowing it down turns the death of an Olympic athlete into a terrifying snuff film on a deity's DVR" (*SPORTINGNEWS.com*, 2/14). In Philadelphia, Tom Mahon writes NBC electing not to air the video of Kumaritashvili's death anymore is "too little, too late." The video is "all over the Internet, and we suspect, still would be all over NBC if the network thought it would boost ratings" (*PHILADELPHIA DAILY NEWS*, 2/16).

I'M A YANKEE DOODLE DANDY: In N.Y., Bob Raissman writes the emphasis is "always on USA when NBC airs an Olympics," because the focus on American athletes is "supposed to be good for ratings." But all the "pomp and pom-pom waving can lead to bad television," and "even mistakes." NBC's Al Trautwig during Sunday's coverage of the men's Nordic combined race was "so fixated" on U.S. skier Johnny Spillane, who captured the silver medal, "that he couldn't quite comprehend the move" from France's Jason Lamy-Chappuis, who passed Spillane in the final stretch to win the gold. Raissman: "It's always about America. Only on NBC" (*N.Y. DAILY NEWS*, 2/16). However, BROADCASTING & CABLE's John Eggerton wrote there was "not a mention" on NBC Sunday when U.S. moguls skier Bryon Wilson won the bronze medal. Eggerton: "No interview. No announcer said anything about it" (*BROADCASTINGCABLE.com*, 2/15).

TIME IS ON YOUR SIDE? In Detroit, Terry Foster notes NBC last night aired the men's downhill "about four hours after it finished," so by the time Miller was "shown warming up before the event we already knew he'd finished third." After showing Miller's run, NBC "tried to play up whether Miller would hang onto third place," but there was "no drama." Foster: "I don't fault NBC for showing the downhill during prime-time television. ... I fault NBC for not showing it live in the afternoon and then replaying it" (*DETROIT NEWS*, 2/16). SPORTINGNEWS.com's Dan Levy noted NBC "posted the winner of the men's moguls on Twitter more than 25 minutes before it aired on TV" (*SPORTINGNEWS.com*, 2/15). Meanwhile, Seattle's KING-NBC posted a note on its Web site addressing NBC's decision to air tape-delayed coverage in the Pacific Time Zone that read in part, "The 3-hour tape delay on the West Coast, the decision to broadcast the Olympics live or on tape delay is made by NBC Sports, not KING TV. ... We are passing along viewer feedback to NBC Sports" (*SEATTLETIMES.com*, 2/15).

STEPPING OVER THE LINE: YAHOO SPORTS' Chris Chase noted 30-second spots for the upcoming Dreamworks film "How To Train Your Dragon" have been "integrated into live coverage of the Olympics," and NBC officials have "enraged viewers with their blurring of the sacred line between editorial news coverage and advertising." NBC's Bob Costas last night followed a report on U.S. skier Bode Miller winning a Bronze Medal in the men's downhill by saying, "Still to come, the first day of snowboarding competition at Cypress. Though the sport has only been in the Olympics for about a decade, it has a much longer history. In fact, the people of Dreamworks have imagined what it would have been like in the times of the Vikings of old." Chase noted Costas "looked pretty disgusted when reading the script." Chase: "We don't begrudge NBC the right to make money and for Dreamworks to promote its film, but it should be done in the proper forums" (*SPORTS.YAHOO.com*, 2/15).



NBC Integrates Promos For Dreamworks Film Into Live Olympic Coverage Last Night

CAN'T PLEASE EVERYONE: Author John Feinstein said that he has "several problems" with NBC's coverage of the Games. Feinstein: "NBC shows figure skating 49 minutes out of every hour. ... I had heard about the kid getting the Silver Medal in the Nordic combined. I thought that was a great story, but you can't sit around all night waiting for NBC to give it the seven minutes of coverage that you're going to get in between the next figure skater." The other issue is that the net "insists on showing so

much on tape, even though they're in a time zone where they don't have to" (*Washington Post Live*, "Comcast SportsNet Mid-Atlantic, 2/15). Meanwhile, Dallas Morning News columnist Tim Cowlishaw said, "I tried to watch some (Sunday). It was biathalon after biathalon. That's not the most entertaining thing in the world" (*Around The Horn*, "ESPN, 2/15).

NUMBER CRUNCHING: The WALL STREET JOURNAL's Amy Choizick reports NBC has hired "at least six different market-research firms to help keep tabs on Olympic viewership," including Nielsen, Arbitron and Integrated Media Measurement. NBC also has hired Keller Fay, which "specializes in word-of-mouth marketing, to monitor social-networking Web sites and viral communication by measuring Olympics-related phone and live face-to-face conversations." About 15,000 participants nationwide "will participate in the lab, hired by the various research firms." Approximately 2,000 of those viewers will use a Portable People Meter, Arbitron's "pager-like device that attaches to a handbag or belt and picks up audio codes embedded in television broadcasts." Another 40 respondents will have their mobile devices "outfitted with an Integrated Media Measurement Inc. of 'IMMI' application that creates an acoustic 'fingerprint' based on ambient noise." Both the people meter and the IMMI technology "can report whether a viewer is watching at home or outside the home" (*WALL STREET JOURNAL*, 2/16).



New Technology Can Create Virtual Images Of Individual Competitors Going Head-To-Head

athletes compete individually," which has been "used in past Olympics by NBC, but now the world feed is supplying it to all networks" (*TORONTO STAR*, 2/16). Meanwhile, the HOLLYWOOD REPORTER's Etan Vlessing notes the Canadian Olympic Broadcast Media Consortium has launched a 24/7 video replay function, allowing viewers to "go online to view the Games live or on-demand in HD, and replay key sporting moments embedded in the online video player." COBMC VP/Digital Media & Research Alon Marcovici said that the new feature "heralds a turning point for Olympic coverage for Canadians." Marcovici argued, "That to me is the eureka moment of these Games from an online perspective, the notion of choice and the notion of being able to stop time" (*HOLLYWOOD REPORTER*, 2/16).

RATINGS MOGUL IN CANADA: In Toronto, Chris Zelkovich reported Canada freestyle skier Alexandre Bilodeau Sunday winning the moguls competition, the host country's first ever Gold Medal win on home soil, was watched by an average of 7.3 million viewers in Canada. His winning run was watched by 9.7 million viewers, "practically one in every three people in the country. Meanwhile, Zelkovich wrote CTV "did a better job" yesterday of "alerting viewers to the other events being broadcast, but it needs to get a lot better." Since the COBMC is "lumping in all the ratings together, it can't be because the bosses are afraid of sending viewers to other channels" (*THESTAR.com*,

FUN & GAMES: In Toronto, Chris Zelkovich notes the Vancouver Games "so far have been the best ever" in terms of technology, "mainly because all the latest TV toys are everywhere." Viewers are "treated to the wonders of super slow-motion cameras, virtual leader lines and virtual lane markers." The slow-motion cameras have "produced eye-popping images," while a helmet cam shot of a crash during yesterday's snowboard cross race was "almost too realistic to watch." In addition, Dartfish technology "creates a virtual image of two competitors going head-to-head in sports where the

2/15).

A MIXED BAG: In Vancouver, Alex Strachan notes CTV has "staked a small fortune" on the Vancouver Games "being a gold bonanza, not just on the medal podium, but in the ratings." TV broadcasters Sunday "fairly burst with pride" when Bilodeau won his gold, but CTV "marred the moment somewhat with a hastily assembled post-race montage of Bilodeau's winning run" (*VANCOUVER SUN*, 2/16). In Toronto, Jim Kernaghan wrote the COBMC has "covered everything quite well, with a glaring exception" being its treatment of this past weekend's protests in downtown Vancouver. CTV covered the protests on local newscasts, but with "all the equipment and talent at its disposal, you'd have thought it would cover the uproar more thoroughly than any breaking story it has ever encountered." Meanwhile, Kernaghan wrote CTV's Brian Williams "has been the consummate host," while TSN's James Duthie "has to be the most unruffled of all the Olympic on-air folks with an agreeably smooth, and sometimes humorous, approach" (*TORONTO SUN*, 2/15).

2. MORE TIX COULD BE CANCELED FOR MUCH-MALIGNED CYPRESS MOUNTAIN

Thousands more Olympic tickets are "in peril of being wiped out as wind and rain play havoc with the Cypress Mountain venue, mirroring VANOC in a major operational -- and public-relations -- calamity," according to Mickleburgh & Waldie of the *GLOBE & MAIL*. VANOC already canceled 8,000 tickets for snowboard cross competitions yesterday and today, and officials now are warning that standing-room tickets for the half-pipe competitions later this week "are also at risk." Unless a "last-ditch effort to use artificial turf in place of a snow base succeeds, VANOC will not have enough time to restore spectator areas to a safe condition." VANOC VP/Communications Renee Smith-Valade: "There are no guarantees. What I can guarantee is that we will look at solutions to create a safe standing area." Canadian Olympic Committee CEO Chris Rudge said that officials are "trying hard to replace the cancelled tickets of athlete family members." Rudge: "This certainly has a disappointing impact." IOC officials "cannot recall last-second cancellations ever happening at an Olympics before -- much less twice" (*GLOBE & MAIL*, 2/16). In Vancouver, Michael Smyth writes, "Don't believe the spin that VANOC cancelled 8,000 tickets up there for 'safety' reasons. The truth is they screwed up and can't handle the crowds." Fans over the weekend "had a miserable experience" at Cypress Mountain "due to three-hour lineups, food-and-water shortages and no shelter from wind and rain." Smyth added, "Get rid of the ridiculous ban on bringing food and beverages into the Cypress Mountain venue" (*Vancouver PROVINCE*, 2/16).

NOTHING BUT TROUBLE SO FAR: In Utah, Amy Donaldson writes, "If you want to crush the Olympic spirit in Vancouver, just say 'Cypress Mountain.' It's almost become an obscenity to refer to the venue that is the ulcer of the 2010 Winter Games." It was "bad enough that wind, rain and unseasonably warm temperatures made the course a constant work in progress," but then "long lines for food, insufficient restrooms and horrific conditions for spectators began to erode what good will remained." However, the "worst ... came late Sunday night" when VANOC announced that it had to cancel more than 8,000 tickets. After "several site inspections Sunday, officials said they had no choice but to close the general admission area, in which spectators purchased tickets through a lottery for \$50 each." VANOC CEO John Furlong: "We regretted having to make that decision very much, because we know for many people that was their moment to be at the Games." Donaldson notes "not only did VANOC worry about the safety of those standing in the muddy areas, but they also felt it eventually would destroy the competition course they've tried so desperately to maintain." When asked if VANOC "made a mistake putting such popular events at Cypress," both Smith-Valade and Furlong said that they "believe they made the right choice, and they'd do it again given the same information." Meanwhile, Smith-Valade said she would "love to talk about any

other venue besides Cypress," as the "problems are weather related, and unfortunately that's the one thing we can't control" (*DESERET NEWS*, 2/16).

BECOMING THE GAMES' BLACK EYE: In Seattle, Ron Judd wrote Cypress Mountain is "quickly becoming the Official Black Eye of the 2010 Winter Games." The problems include "fans stranded at the venue, shortages of food and shelter, and just basic organization for a large-scale event." Fans have "faced concession lines of 90 minutes or more." Also, VANOC "had plenty of warnings about the potential for warm-weather problems at Cypress." Still, Furlong "went so far as to say the organization doesn't regret choosing Cypress as a venue." Judd wrote, "Really? Any sane person would. ... It's an embarrassment for Vancouver. And for the Games themselves" (*SEATTLETIMES.com*, 2/15). In Toronto, Bob Mackin reported food service at Cypress was "disrupted by a power outage during the Saturday night women's moguls competition," and lines were "long and crowd control described as chaotic by fans trying to get out of the wind and rain and onto buses." At least "one bus load of spectators from Burnaby Mountain missed the start of competition because they were picked up almost 90 minutes late" (*TORONTO SUN*, 2/15).

SKELETON, BOBSLED TAKE IT FROM THE TOP: In N.Y., Jonathan Abrams reports while the luge course at the Whistler Sliding Centre was shortened to "reduce speeds" in the wake of Georgia luger Nodar Komaritashvili's death, "no such precautions will be taken for skeleton and bobsled, which can also attain speeds in excess of 85 miles per hour and have had their share of violent crashes." Some bobsled and skeleton athletes "expressed concern over the Whistler track's speed before the Vancouver Games," but International Bobsleigh & Tobogganing Federation Dir of Communications Don Krone said, "Bobsled and skeleton need a running start. For competitions, there are no other starts than at the top." Abrams notes bobsled and skeleton athletes are "less vulnerable in crashes than their counterparts in luge." USA Bobsled & Skeleton Federation CEO Darrin Steele said that in bobsled crashes, athletes are "usually buffered by the sled and are rarely ejected." Meanwhile, skeleton racers "lie stomach-down," and from that position, "gravitational forces make it easier than in luge to control the sled" (*N.Y. TIMES*, 2/16). Meanwhile, SI.com's David Epstein noted even the lugers "who were upset at the lower starting spot were quick to say that the luge federation had to show the world how serious it is about safety." Epstein: "What happened to Nodar Kumaritashvili was a tragedy so deeply affecting that athletes who should have been reveling in the realization of their Olympic dreams were frequently choking back tears. Still, they agreed that the rush to characterize every luge run as a life-and-death gamble is a conclusion reserved for those who only started following the sport on that tragic Friday" (*SI.com*, 2/15).

POOR CROWDS: German Ski Federation Alpine Sports Dir Wolfgang Meier "has complained about paltry crowds at the Winter Games, saying so few turned out for the men's downhill on Monday it might as well have been an event for child racers." Maier: "I find it all a bit thin for an Olympics. This race is a huge event for North America and then only 8,000 spectators come along." The attendance figure officially was "even less at 6,120" (*CTVOLYMPICS.ca*, 2/15).

3. MEN'S 500M SPEEDSKATING COMPETITION MARRED BY LENGTHY DELAY

Two machines "broke down while smoothing the ice midway through the first round" of yesterday's men's 500m speedskating competition at the Richmond Olympic Oval, "causing a delay of over an hour," according to Karen Crouse of the N.Y. TIMES. A replacement machine "with nary an Olympic decal on it, chugged into view to try to resurface an oval that was in worse shape than the potholed Daytona International Speedway track," but it "too soon disappeared because of some defect." Richmond Olympic Oval Venue Manager Magnus Enfeldt "apologized to the athletes and the

spectators for the lengthy delay" and said that an ice resurfacing machine was "being shipped immediately from Calgary." Enfeldt: "We're doing everything we can to prevent this from happening again" (*N.Y. TIMES*, 2/16). NBC's Dan Hicks noted officials in the sport "have never really seen anything quite like it, especially on an indoor rink and in the Olympics" ("*XXI Winter Olympics*," *NBC*, 2/15). In Chicago, Brian Hamilton notes one of the machines yesterday "appeared simply to break down during the first round of ice resurfacing, causing the holdup." This is not the first time "technical difficulties ... underscored an event at these Games" -- an ice resurfer Sunday during preparations for the women's 3,000m competition "spit water onto the ice, requiring a shovel and squeegee cleanup." Int'l Skating Union Technical Dir & VP Gerhard Zimmermann said that he was "assured three functional machines ... would be on hand" today for the women's 500m competition (*CHICAGO TRIBUNE*, 2/16).

WHERE WERE THE ZAMBONIS? YAHOO SPORTS' Martin Rogers noted the machines were "not supplied by Zamboni, the company synonymous with this type of equipment," because VANOC had "struck a deal with Olympia, a rival company." Nineteen of the 39 athletes had "completed their first of two runs" at the time of the delay (*SPORTS.YAHOO.com*, 2/15). The CP's Shi Davidi notes in an effort to "preserve the carbon-neutral goal of the 2010 Games, organizers originally went with the Olympia machines, which run on electricity." But by day's end yesterday, they were "clearly rethinking that decision" (*CP*, 2/16). Canada speedskater Kyle Parrott said of Zambonis, "I don't know why they didn't stick with them, especially when we've had problems with (the Olympias) in training here in the past." Parrott added the Olympia machines have been "nothing but problems" (*GLOBE & MAIL*, 2/16).

COMPETITION SUFFERS: In Minneapolis, Rachel Blount notes U.S. speedskater Tucker Fredricks, who "ranked fourth in the 500 entering the Games, finished a disappointing 12th." Fredricks "did not blame the delay or the surface," but he said that the ice "broke away under his skate on a turn." U.S. speedskating coach Derek Parra said that skaters and coaches "questioned whether conditions were the same for all athletes." Blount notes skaters who "completed the first race before the delay had extra time to rest before the second race." Parra also noted that "more water was put on the inside lane than the outside lane, meaning the skater on the outside would have an advantage with harder ice." Netherlands speedskater Jan Bos said of the quality of the ice, "This is definitely not at an Olympic level. It's laughable. I think (the icemaker) did a bad job four years ago (at the 2006 Olympics), and now he's doing it really bad. It's a shame" (*Minneapolis STAR TRIBUNE*, 2/16). NBC's Hicks noted officials eventually "resurfaced this and got it right, but this created a really uncomfortable situation for the warm-up of the skaters who came after the initial 10 pairs skated" ("*XXI Winter Olympics*," *NBC*, 2/15). In Seattle, Bob Condotta notes an event that started at 3:30pm PT "didn't end until close to 8, with some skaters going roughly three hours between races" (*SEATTLE TIMES*, 2/16).

ANOTHER BLACK EYE: NBC's Dan Jansen said of the delay last night, "It was quite frankly an embarrassing situation for the organizing committee, the crew here at the Oval." Jansen: "These athletes prepare their whole lives for this one moment in time. The crew needs to do the same." NBC's Bob Costas: "Strange situation, and certainly not acceptable at the Olympic Games" ("*XXI Winter Olympics*," *NBC*, 2/15). The *GLOBE & MAIL*'s Michael Grange writes while there is "a lot of stuff going wrong so far at Canada's big party," perhaps the "most egregious screw ups have occurred at what may be the Games signature site," the C\$178M Richmond Olympic Oval. The facility as a speedskating venue has "kind of sucked." The Richmond Oval "until this week ... has never hosted an event of this scale," and it is a "tough time to learn on the job" (*CTVOLYMPICS.ca*, 2/16). In DC, Tracee Hamilton noted there have been "two days of speed skating ... and two days of delays due to, of all things, ice resurfacing machine

malfunctions." Hamilton: "It's incomprehensible to me that the Canadians can't get the ice in competition shape in a timely fashion" (*WASHINGTONPOST.com*, 2/15).

4. VANOC'S FURLONG STILL SHAKEN, HEARTBROKEN OVER LUGER'S DEATH

VANOC CEO John Furlong "remains shaken and heartbroken" by the death of Georgia luger Nodar Kumaritashvili Friday, according to Gary Mason of the *GLOBE & MAIL*. Furlong in his first extensive interview since Kumaritashvili's death indicated that it "deeply affected" VANOC, and the Games organizers are "still attempting to recover." Furlong: "There's no question it set us back on our heels. It's been a tough, tough thing to bounce back from. But you have no choice. You have to forge ahead." Mason reports a "small funeral service was held for Kumaritashvili" yesterday in Vancouver, and "about 60 people attended, including IOC and VANOC officials, members of the Georgian team, other Olympic athletes and a handful of Georgian Canadians who brought flowers and candles." Furlong "spent almost as much time" talking to IOC President Jacques Rogge after the accident as "in the previous seven years combined." Furlong: "We talked a lot. This is a guy who has seen it all as a surgeon. He's operated on people. But this really shook him, really wounded him. It was profound the impact it had on him." Furlong admits that the Games "have had a bumpy start." Furlong: "Nodar's death really set us back as an organization. Then on top of that we've had these other issues, the protests. I was really worried about the effect they would have on the city." However, Mason notes downtown Vancouver is "alive like never before," as "free venues and Olympic houses have been almost overwhelmed by the number of visitors showing up." All of which "has helped improve the mood and attitude of everyone involved" (*GLOBE & MAIL*, 2/16).

TOUGH SITUATION: VANOC VP/Communications Renee Smith-Valade said that Furlong "would probably have liked to accompany the casket back to Georgia," but VANOC is "unable to spare Furlong or other senior officials now, with the Games in progress." Smith-Valade: "Would people have liked to have gone? I believe they would have, but we're just not in a position to lose anyone for three or four days" (*Vancouver PROVINCE*, 2/16). European Olympic Committee President Patrick Hickey also was "among the 50 people in attendance" at the funeral yesterday. Furlong said that the "tight-knit Georgian delegation wanted a private service attended by Olympic team members and coach Felix Kumaritashvili, Nodar's uncle" (*VANCOUVER SUN*, 2/16).

IN MEMORIAM: Georgia President Mikheil Shaakashvili said that a track "will be built in Kumaritashvili's name in his home town" of Bakuriani. AROUND THE RINGS' Ed Hula noted the city, "formerly the training site for winter athletes from the Soviet Union," could become a "new center of winter sport one day." A new track "carrying the name of Nodar Kumaritashvili would help that to happen and perhaps create a place where the Winter Games might take place one day" (*AROUNDTHERINGS.com*, 2/15).

ACCIDENT ERASED EXCITEMENT FOR GAMES: ESPN.com's J.A. Adande said he is not excited about the Olympics, as it is "just too hard for me to get past the fact that a competitor died right before the Games started. That's compounded by the cold-heartedness of the International Luge Foundation (blaming Kumaritashvili's lack of experience for the accident)." Adande: "The spirit of the Games is lacking when you can have this cold-hearted treatment of the death of a competitor and not acknowledge responsibility on the part of those who are supposed to maintain that track." Denver Post columnist Woody Paige said, "There were serious mistakes made by the Federation in regard to the luge track. But I think it's going to be a good Olympics overall" ("*Around The Horn*," *ESPN*, 2/15).

BAD TASTE: N.Y. Daily News columnist Bob Raissman said, "Even if you thought by any stretch of the imagination it was an error on the driver's part, you don't come out and say that after the guy is dead. He has got his family out there, all these other athletes." N.Y. Daily News reporter John Harper: "How can you even think about saying that it is

this guy's fault? Even if you think that is the case, you don't say that publicly" (*"Daily News Live," SNY, 2/15*).

5. CANADIAN FANS STAY ENTHUSED DESPITE ROUGH OPENING WEEKEND

Canadian Olympic fans are "determined to have a good time" at the Vancouver Games, even though a "list of problems continues to grow," according to a front-page piece by Michael Lewis of the SALT LAKE TRIBUNE. Thousands of fans "have clogged the downtown streets so far," and the venues and celebration zones also "have been packed." This past weekend, the "line to merely gain entrance to the official Olympic store snaked nearly the length of a city block." The host country's red-and-white "seems to be everywhere ... along with fans adorned in face paint and Team Canada jerseys." This comes despite the fact there is warm weather, Team Canada's "medal count might not look the way they'd hoped," and the opening days of the Games were "marred by street protests, the death of a luger from Georgia, and an embarrassing malfunction" during the Opening Ceremony (*SALT LAKE TRIBUNE, 2/16*). In Philadelphia, Marcus Hayes notes the unseasonable weather, protests and the death of luger Nodar Kumaritashvili "clearly dampened enthusiasm for these Winter Games," but "that enthusiasm is back." Olympic and Vancouver city officials "continued to contemplate further commemoration of Kumaritashvili's death," but another remembrance "could serve to irritate a wound to the Olympic community that has only just begun healing." Hayes: "Things might be better if the Winter Olympics were allowed to be Olympic" (*PHILADELPHIA DAILY NEWS, 2/16*).

LOUD AND PROUD: In Portland, Rachel Bachman writes if there was "any doubt about Canada's pride or fervor for victory at these Winter Games (and there shouldn't be), an assemblage of nearly 21,000 people put it to rest" last night at the medal ceremony at BC Place. The "close-to-capacity crowd" saw Canada freestyle skier Alexandre Bilodeau presented with his Gold Medal, the country's first while serving as an Olympics host. Spectators paid "at least \$22 apiece to get into the building, the first time Olympics organizers have charged admission for medals" (*Portland OREGONIAN, 2/16*). In Seattle, Bob Condotta wrote he "didn't really realize that the nightly Olympics Victory Ceremonies were such a, well, ceremony," until attending one Sunday night. VANOC and the IOC "no doubt ... have figured out an easy way to make a lot of money out of what is pretty much just seeing a few flags raised, anthems played and mostly B-list entertainers." But Condotta wrote he would "recommend going to one if you can do it cheaply." VANOC has "turned the ceremonies into a two-hour-plus extravaganza worthy of Vegas," and the acoustics "seem really good" inside BC Place (*SEATTLETIMES.com, 2/14*).

PLENTY OF GOOD AND BAD SO FAR: The WALL STREET JOURNAL's Jason Gay writes the Vancouver Games have "already offered plenty of shining moments," including U.S. skier Bode Miller's bronze medal in the men's downhill and Canada moguls winning the host country's first-ever gold medal on home soil. But the "tumultuous long weekend in Vancouver reaffirmed that the Olympics are, at heart, an unmanageable event." Gay: "Where else could you see a tragedy like Mr. Kumaritashvili's death followed so closely by the unintentional comedy of a Spinal Tap-like malfunction to the Olympic cauldron at the opening ceremony?" (*WALL STREET JOURNAL, 2/16*).

6. VANOC EXPLORING ALTERNATIVES TO CHAIN-LINK FENCE NEAR CAULDRON

VANOC officials are "weighing options, including replacing some sections of a chain-link fence with Plexiglas, to address complaints about Vancouver's waterfront cauldron," according to Stueck & Bailey of the GLOBE & MAIL. Thousands of people who have "flocked downtown to see the cauldron have been disappointed to find it behind a

chain-link fence." VANOC VP/Communications Renee Smith-Valade: "Perhaps we underestimated the degree to which people would want to get close to it." Stueck & Bailey note the cauldron is "to be a permanent fixture at Jack Poole Plaza" (*GLOBE & MAIL*, 2/16). The CP's Stephanie Levitz noted IOC officials said that they are hoping VANOC "can find a way to get rid" of the fence. IOC Coordination Commission Chair Rene Fasel: "It's really attracting people and people are so excited to go there and make the pictures. And I think we have to speak with VANOC and try to find a solution where we can satisfy people." Fasel said that Canada has "laws and rules that must be respected but there has to be a solution that will allow people the chance to get close to the flame." Levitz noted while VANOC has "already removed some of the Olympic banners on the fence in order to allow a better glimpse of the spectacular structure, spectators seem hungry for more access" (*CP*, 2/16). Smith-Valade said VANOC's venue team is "looking at what might be possible to replace the existing chain link fence with something that maintains the security and allows people to fully see it and take photos" (*CALGARY SUN*, 2/15). In Vancouver, Michael Smyth notes some tourists "thronging around the cauldron are actually climbing to the top of the fence just to snap an unobstructed picture." Smyth: "The cauldron is a symbol of the human spirit, so why keep it locked up like a caged animal?" (*Vancouver PROVINCE*, 2/16).

ERRORS IMPACTING LEGACY: SportsBusiness Journal's Tripp Mickle writes, "Four days into these Olympics, and things have been far from smooth. Some of that hasn't been organizers' fault. Some of it has. Regardless, they have 12 days to turn it around and the clock is ticking." The organizers' troubles "started with the Olympic torch malfunction on Friday, and they haven't gotten much better since." VANOC has had to deal with delays to speedskating at the Richmond Olympic Oval and ticket cancellations to snowboarding events at Cypress Mountain, and with the men's hockey competition beginning today amid a tight schedule, any delay is the "last thing Vancouver organizers can afford." Mickle: "If Vancouver organizers get it right, all will be forgiven. If not, then these Games' legacy could start to become a long string of errors" (*THE DAILY*).

BILINGUAL EXERCISE: In Toronto, Bob Mackin reports VANOC yesterday "remained on the defensive after Quebec Premier James Charest and Canadian Heritage Minister Jean Moore's weekend comments criticizing the lack of French language and culture in the Games' opening ceremony" (*TORONTO SUN*, 2/16). The CP's Stephanie Levitz noted there is a controversy over the perception Quebec "hasn't seen its mother tongue make it onto the podium." But when asked if he felt the Opening Ceremony "represented the place of Quebec and the French language in Canada," Furlong said, "We're putting on the Olympic Games. It's a 17-day project and there's multiple, multiple layers. I think VANOC has worked tirelessly to present bilingual Canada at every level, every venue, every facility, everything we're doing. ... At every venue you'll see the fact that we have treated this as a completely bilingual exercise." Fasel said that the IOC was "quite happy with the level of French at the ceremonies" (*CP*, 2/15).



BE PREPARED TO WAIT: The *GLOBE & MAIL*'s Ian Bailey writes there is "lots to do" at the Vancouver Games, but there are "long lineups to get to the fun, whether it's the mint pavilion, or Sochi World -- the pavilion celebrating all things Russian in advance of the 2014 Olympics." There also have been "long lineups at live music sites, and at the victory ceremony held at BC Place." VANOC CEO John Furlong: "Every single

Medals Weigh More Than A Pound, Making Them Among Heaviest In Olympic History pavilion; every live site; every house in the city has got people out in the streets wanting to get in. I think it's a great sign" (*GLOBE & MAIL*, 2/16).

GOLDEN EFFORT? In N.Y., Jose Martinez notes the "wavy, plus-sized medals" of the Vancouver Games are "drawing mixed reviews." Designed by Vancouver architect Omer Arbel and artist Connie Hunt, the "one-of-a-kind medals are neither round nor flat; they are inspired by ocean waves, snowdrifts and mountain ranges." Each medal is "plated with 6 grams of gold and weighs more than a pound, making them among the heaviest in Olympic history" (*N.Y. DAILY NEWS*, 2/16).

7. CANADIAN SKIER BILODEAU'S HISTORIC WIN COULD BE MARKETING BOON

Winning Canada's first ever Olympic Gold Medal won on home soil "will likely lead to more opportunities" for freestyle skier Alexandre Bilodeau to "partner up with Corporate Canada," according to Sunny Freeman of the CP. Agenda Sport Marketing Managing Partner Russell Reimer said that Bilodeau, who won the men's moguls event Sunday, "could become a millionaire in his life from corporate gigs." He said that Bilodeau "would make a fitting spokesman for companies with a cutting edge image." Reimer: "Being the first in anything and being known for that is what gives you an opportunity to create a direct association with a brand that is looking to position itself as an innovator." He added that Bilodeau, "who cited a brother with cerebral palsy as his inspiration, also has a tremendous personal and family appeal, which makes him even more marketable." Freeman noted Bilodeau, who is sponsored by Nike, was "featured prominently as the 'Mogul of moguls'" on Nike's Canadian Web site yesterday. Meanwhile, McDonald's Canada National Media Relations Manager Louis Payette said that the QSR, which sponsors Bilodeau, approached the skier after his race, "asking if he would meet the crew behind the counter at the main Olympic media centre on the Vancouver waterfront to give them a taste of the excitement" (*CP*, 2/15).

DIPPED IN GOLD: The *GLOBE & MAIL*'s Andrew Willis notes experts predict that Bilodeau can expect to earn more than C\$1M in endorsements from his win as Canadian companies "rush to link their brand with the Montreal native's feel-good personal story and winning ways." General Mills, a sponsor of Canada's freestyle ski team, "looks prescient for already having boxes of its Oatmeal Crisp Almond cereal on store shelves" featuring an image of Bilodeau "blasting through the bumps, and the slogan: 'Bring on the gold'" (*GLOBE & MAIL*, 2/16). Experts said that his market value "will be enhanced by the positive impression Bilodeau has made in media interviews -- in English as well as French -- as well as his compelling family story." Montreal-based bleulancrouge Dir of Sponsorships Simon Cazalais said Bilodeau could earn C\$200,000-500,000 "over four years, until the 2014 Olympics," and possibly as much as C\$1M.

Rosemere, Quebec, Mayor Helene Daneault said that Bilodeau "has been accepted into university next fall in an undergraduate commerce program, and is looking to specialize in finance" (*Montreal GAZETTE*, 2/16).



Medallion Congratulates Bilodeau For His Historic Victory

yesterday was "up to two hours, for a 'once-in-a-lifetime' chance to plunk down" C\$24.95 for a commemorative "First Canadian Gold Medallion and Nugget." Royal Canadian Mint President Ian Bennett said the medallion congratulates Bilodeau "for his unprecedented victory" (*Vancouver PROVINCE*, 2/16).

ON THE FAST TRACK: In Toronto, Paul Watson writes Bilodeau has "rocketed from relative obscurity to Gretzkyesque celebrity," as he took a "whirlwind victory lap through Vancouver" yesterday. The government of Quebec "laid on a bus to shepherd Bilodeau and his family through the throngs as he satisfied the Canadian and international media's hunger for more words from the freshly anointed national hero." Toronto artist David Arrigo "was busying working on a Bilodeau mural in Canada Olympic House in downtown Vancouver as the skier arrived to whoops and loud applause Monday evening" (*TORONTO STAR*, 2/16). Meanwhile, in Vancouver, Suzanne Fournier reports the wait outside the Royal Canadian Mint Pavilion

8. BOTTOMS UP: HANNAH TETER LAUNCHES PERSONAL LINE OF UNDERWEAR

By [Brian Helfrich](#), Assistant Managing Editor

Hannah Teter is in Vancouver this week to defend her gold medal in the snowboard half-pipe, but the Vermont native has some big post-Olympic plans waiting for her back in the States. Fresh off an appearance in Sports Illustrated's Swimsuit Issue, Teter this past weekend launched "Sweet Cheeks," a personally designed line of underwear, and she used the photo spread to quietly debut the first pair -- "Make Love Not War." The initial effort, aided by her brother and agent, Octagon Associate Dir of Action Sports Amen Teter, benefits relief efforts in Haiti. For each pair of the \$15 panties purchased, Hannah will donate \$5 to Doctors Without Borders. "Sweet Cheeks is Hannah's brainchild," Amen Teter said. "She wanted to find a fun, sassy way of giving back and making a statement about it with your underwear." The line at the moment is available exclusively online at SweetCheeksPanties.com, but could partner with a retail distributor in the future, Amen said.



Teter Unveiled First Sweet Cheeks Pair In SI's Swimsuit Issue

WE'VE ONLY JUST BEGUN: While Hannah hopes to parlay the exposure from both the Vancouver Games and the Swimsuit Issue appearance into a successful launch of the "Make Love Not War" panties, the foray into underwear design will not stop with the first pair. Sweet Cheeks has plans to unveil a new design each month for at least the rest of this calendar year, with every pair targeting a different charitable cause, Amen Teter said. The goal is to raise \$100,000 by this spring. This past weekend's soft launch will be aided by a heavier marketing blitz after Vancouver, when the IOC's Rule 41 "doesn't hamstring our use of Hannah in marketing," Amen said. "For now people can check out the Facebook page." He added, "We're very interested in working with other female athletes and celebrities who want to be part of the team Sweet Cheeks and help us get the word out."

9. INSIDE PITCH: SPONSORS BACK EVAN LYSACEK'S QUEST FOR FIRST MEDAL

By [Preston Bounds](#), Staff Writer

U.S. figure skater Evan Lysacek is no stranger to success in international competition, as he is now a two-time Olympian, two-time U.S. champion, and the reigning men's solo world champion. When men's short program competition begins tonight, Lysacek will have the chance to further cement his legacy and expand his brand in Vancouver by winning his first Olympic medal. His agent, IMG's Yuki Saegusa, in an e-mail said Lysacek's "longevity in the sport along with his competitive successes have helped tremendously with his popularity and name recognition." He already boasts a strong lineup of existing sponsors: Coca-Cola, AT&T, Polo Ralph Lauren, Total Gym, Vera Wang and Toyota, plus a modeling contract with DNA Models. Saegusa said Coca-Cola and AT&T in particular have been "great companies" for Evan, as both are high-profile, non-endemic brands. But he added Lysacek "has been dying" to fill the timepiece category and would also like to land electronics and men's toiletries sponsors.

TOUGH SKATING: There are several marketing challenges that many figure skaters face, not the least of which is the gap between Winter Olympics. Saegusa noted in figure skating, there are "tours, televised skating shows, and other various skating projects throughout the year between Olympic cycles" -- all of which could contribute to Lysacek's post-Olympic success. But the L.A. Times' Helene Elliott, who has covered the skater's career for several years, speculated Lysacek "will not stay in the sport to compete in Sochi" if he wins a medal in Vancouver. Elliott also pointed out, "Usually it's female skaters who get the attention and endorsements." Lysacek, she said, would "have to win gold to have a major impact and even then, it would be tough for him to get endorsements outside of skating stuff and companies like Campbell's that have traditionally employed skaters as spokespeople."

WORKERS MOVEMENT: Both Saegusa and Elliott mentioned Lysacek's work ethic as a key component of his brand identity. Elliott: "I could see Evan doing endorsements for companies that want to project the value of dedication and precision and hard work." Elliott also mentioned his looks and fashion choices as assets, saying Lysacek "likes designer clothes and wears them well but not ostentatiously." This certainly distinguishes him from some of the more extravagant dressers in the sport, such as fellow Team USA member Johnny Weir. Finally, Lysacek has fully embraced new media. Elliott notes he is "very active" on [Twitter](#) (4,816 followers) and [Facebook](#) (3,446 fans). Saegusa admits Lysacek was "reluctant" to join Twitter at first, but he "understands the importance of staying connected with the fans." [A well-designed Web site](#) -- with sponsors on prominent display -- rounds out his digital presence.

10. OLYMPIC NAMES & FACES: BODE MILLER COULD BOOST U.S. PORTFOLIO

U.S. skier Bode Miller won the Bronze Medal yesterday in the men's downhill, and CNBC.com's Darren Rovell noted if Miller is "able to pick up a couple more medals in the four events he has left in this Olympics, his sponsors should be able to use him in the US market" after he lost much of his marketing clout in the U.S. following his disastrous '06 Turin Games. Miller "reportedly lost about \$3[M] in annual sponsorship deals" after he failed to medal in five events at Turin. But Nike "stood by him, ski maker Head felt he could still sell and there were others waiting in the wings." Most of them, "not surprisingly," were "European-based businesses" ([CNBC.com](#), 2/15). CAA's Lowell Taub, who reps Miller, said Miller has more than one sponsorship renewal up at the end of the year, but declined to name with whom. He expects the Bronze Medal to help in renewal discussions, but said he had not given any thought to those or potential new deals

following the Games (*Tripp Mickle, SportsBusiness Journal*). Meanwhile, SI.com's Tim Layden reported Miller Sunday night "went to dinner with a group of friends" including Nike Dir of Global Sports Marketing for Action Sports Curtis Graham (*SI.com, 2/15*).

MASKING THE PROBLEM: The AP's Larry Lage reports U.S. men's hockey Gs Ryan Miller and Jonathan Quick "have to cover or remove some words from their helmets that are in violation" of IOC rules. Miller "had 'Miller Time' on the back of his helmet on Monday during practice and Jonathan Quick's helmet has 'Support Our Troops' adorned on his mask." USOC Dir of Media Services Bob Condron yesterday said, "We're going to meet with USA Hockey tonight to see what their thoughts are. We don't know if it's a federation or a USOC situation" (*AP, 2/16*). YAHOO SPORTS' Dan Wetzel reported the "one part Miller wasn't anticipating trouble with -- and the one he will fight the hardest to keep -- is the simple inscription 'Matt Man.'" That is a nickname for his cousin, Matt Schoals, who died in '07 "from complications of a bone marrow transplant to treat leukemia." Miller said, "I'll contest. My aunt and uncle and my family, it's important to them. It's important to me. I'm going to stand up for that" (*SPORTS.YAHOO.com, 2/15*).

ONE SUCH LOGO APPROVED: MSNBC's A.J. Mieczko said Canada women's hockey G Shannon Szabados has a friend who lost a leg to bone cancer and "wears a sticker on the back of her helmet that says FLM: Fight Like Mad with his Junior hockey jersey, No. 23." Mieczko: "There are very strict logo regulations here at the Olympics and a very important matter leading up to it, Szabados had to get that okayed by the IOC ... logo police." MSNBC's Mike Emrick: "This is certainly a worthy, inspirational thing to have on your helmet" (*MSNBC, 2/15*).

MARKETING GOLD: AD AGE's Rich Thomaselli handicaps the potential "marketing medalists" of the Vancouver Games, noting the Winter Games have always "produced their fair share of marketing success stories for athletes that emerged after strong performances in the games." U.S. skier Lindsey Vonn ranks in the Gold category, as she "certainly has the telegenic good looks that advertisers crave." If she "pulls through and wins a gold or two, she'll be an advertiser darling." Canada men's hockey C Sidney Crosby "will be quite visible as he returns to the NHL ... no matter what happens in the Olympics." But if Crosby "can lead Canada to the one gold medal the nation absolutely demands, in front of the home crowd, in a sport that Canada created, he'll be a legend in two countries." Meanwhile, U.S. speedskater Apolo Anton Ohno's chance for future endorsements will grow "with another solid performance in his third Olympiad" (*AD AGE, 2/15 issue*). The David Wiener Collection (DWC) yesterday announced that it has signed Ohno to endorse its line of home and office music systems (*DWC*).

11. OLYMPIC MARKETING NOTES: RED MITTENS BECOME "IT" SOUVENIR OF GAMES



USA TODAY's Bruce Horovitz reports the "gotta-have souvenir at the Vancouver Games" is a C\$10 pair of red mittens from Hudson's Bay Company, as "no merchandise is catching on like these." The mittens "have the country's maple leaf symbol in each palm," and Vice President Joe Biden and model Cindy Crawford "have been spotted in them." Hudson's Bay "figured it would sell about 1 million pairs," but it is "now projecting to sell 3.4 million pairs of the mittens -- whose profits help aid Canada's Olympic athletes." Hudson's

Bay VP/Olympics Mark Kinnin: "The \$10 mittens are the 'it' souvenir of the Olympics." Horovitz notes the mittens are "currently out of stock on the Vancouver 2010 site." Hudson's Bay "has them in stock in stores, but isn't licensed to ship them outside Canada," so some fans are "turning to eBay and paying twice the price, or more" (*USA TODAY*, 2/16).

NO END IN SIGHT: IOC TOP sponsor Coca-Cola President & CEO Muhtar Kent yesterday said that the company "will probably extend its global Olympics sponsorship beyond 2020." Kent: "I wouldn't see any reason why it shouldn't continue. ... We admire the people in charge of running the Olympics, Jacques Rogge and his team at the IOC. We believe and they believe in a mutually-beneficial association." The company sponsored the torch relay for the Vancouver Games, and Kent said that the relay "helped to strengthen the Coca-Cola brand in Canada." Coca-Cola, which has been involved with the Olympics since the '28 Amsterdam Games, began its current deal with the IOC in '05. TOP sponsors "pay on average about \$100[M] for a four-year commitment" (*BLOOMBERG NEWS*, 2/16).

LOOSENING UP A BIT: The *GLOBE & MAIL*'s Andrew Willis reported VANOC in the past has "aggressively targeted companies" it deemed to be guilty of ambush marketing, but the organization now is "trying to show more sensitivity in the companies it targets." Thousands of Vancouver commuters "sipped a free Ocean Spray Cranberry Cocktail while riding the SkyTrain this weekend" as part of a promo around the Games. The Ocean Spray promo is "acceptable as there's no use of Olympic logos or direct link to the Games," but VANOC "continues to be vigilant in defending the rights of sponsors who drop millions on the Games." Recent targets of VANOC's "wrath" include Scotiabank, which "wrapped the outside of Vancouver branches with pictures of fans cheering at a sporting event," part of a campaign that also features former Canada hockey player Cassie Campbell. To "add to consumer confusion," Campbell also is "pitching for" IOC TOP sponsor McDonald's (*CTVOLYMPICS.ca*, 2/15).

FIRST IN LINE: In London, James Thompson reports Scotland-based FirstGroup "dealt a blow to its major rivals yesterday" by landing a US\$31.3M contract "to provide the buses and coaches that will transport spectators" to the '12 London Games. While the size of the deal is "relatively modest, the contract is highly prestigious and will provide a global branding platform" for FirstGroup (*London INDEPENDENT*, 2/16).

12. VERSUS TO DEBUT NHL-THEMED ADS DURING OLYMPIC HOCKEY COVERAGE

By [John Ourand](#), Staff Writer

Versus bought a series of commercials that will debut today during the U.S. men's Olympic hockey team's game against Switzerland on USA Network. The campaign, called "Make It Happen," will promote Versus' exclusive NHL programming. The network will run 30-second ads locally twice per game during early round men's hockey games, hitting NHL markets from Atlanta to Minneapolis. It will show the spots at least twice nationally during the quarterfinal and semifinal games, and it has a 60-second spot planned to run just before the puck drops on the gold medal game on NBC. The commercials show fans mimicking the league's stars while watching games. One ad shows a woman wearing an Alex Ovechkin jersey nudging people out of the way in a crowded bar just before a highlight of the Capitals' star nudging a Rangers player into the boards. "Fans are an important part of any sport and consider themselves an extension of the team," said Versus Senior VP/Marketing Bill Bergofin. "We wanted to tap into that passion." The commercial cuts to black after showing Penguins C Sidney Crosby kissing the Stanley Cup, with the words "Make It Happen" appearing on screen, followed by a logo of the NHL on Versus that tells viewers "Season Resumes in March" and "Playoffs Begin in April." The spot ends with logos for Versus and Versus.com. The campaign was

developed in-house and directed by Brett Morgen, who most recently directed "Truth in Motion: The US Ski Team's Road to Vancouver."

13. **WOMEN'S HOCKEY MAY NEED GREATER PARITY TO CONTINUE IN OLYMPICS**

The IOC "should issue an ultimatum" to women's hockey officials to "figure out how to balance the sport's competitiveness or risk losing standing as an Olympic competition after the 2018 Games," according to Jeff Passan of YAHOO SPORTS. The opening rounds of women's hockey at the Games are "not sport" but "ritual slaughter," as Canada defeated Slovakia 18-0 Saturday and the U.S. defeated China 12-1 Sunday. The Vancouver Games "mark the fourth for women's hockey," and by giving officials "eight years to grow the game ... it gives respite to a sport that deserves a chance." Passan noted softball "got only four chances before the IOC whacked it, competitive balance and United States dominance the foremost issue" (*SPORTS.YAHOO.com, 2/14*). But IIHF President Rene Fasel Sunday "defended the inclusion of women's hockey in the Olympic Games," noting that "one-side blowouts ... were once a part of the men's game." Fasel said that hockey fans are "going to have to get used to the disparity between superpowers Canada and the U.S. and the rest of the Olympic field until they can develop more female players in non-traditional hockey-playing countries" (*CTVOLYMPICS.ca, 2/14*).

TWO TEAM RACE? In Boston, Kevin Paul Dupont wrote women's hockey "isn't exactly a Two Nations tournament at the Olympics, but it's not far from it." Canada and the U.S. "have been the champions since the start of play in '98," with the U.S. winning the Gold Medal the first year and Canada taking the top spot in '02 and '06. But for the sport to "stay in the Games," something "has to change." When asked if the future of women's hockey "could be in peril at the Olympics if the rest of the field doesn't start to catch up," U.S. RW Natalie Darwitz said, "I am sure it's a concern. Personally, I think it would be very unfortunate. This is all we have, it's our NHL" (*BOSTON GLOBE, 2/15*). In N.Y., Filip Bondy wrote women's hockey is "very much in jeopardy, forever the next potential target" of the IOC. The sport "could easily become softball, banished for lack of global competition, and these lopsided, first-round scores are not helping matters" (*N.Y. DAILY NEWS, 2/15*). In Toronto, Rosie DiManno writes under the header, "Canada-U.S. Women's Final Won't Help Grow Game." The Olympic tournament is "en route to what everyone knows will be a Canada-U.S. final," and the problem for the sport is that "only two countries on Earth play it with elite talent." It would be "easy to say the female game doesn't belong in the Olympics," but "no one's about to send women's hockey to Coventry." DiManno: "At this point I can't advocate dumping it. The rest of a bad lot are reasonably competitive amongst each other. An argument can be made that Games exposure is growing women's hockey, although I'm not sure that should be an responsibility of the IOC" (*TORONTO STAR, 2/16*).

VICE PRESIDENTIAL SUPPORT: Vice President Joe Biden and former U.S. hockey player Mike Eruzione Sunday "sat side by side at Thunderbird Arena" for the U.S.-China women's hockey game (*BOSTON GLOBE, 2/15*). Meanwhile, a spokesperson for Biden said that former U.S. figure skater Peggy Fleming and former U.S. bobsledder Vonetta Flowers "sustained 'minor injuries' in a traffic accident while riding in Biden's motorcade" (*AP, 2/14*).

GAZING INTO THE FUTURE: The GLOBE & MAIL's Eric Duhatschek reported a "second Open Ice Summit will take place in Toronto this coming August, in part to discuss the future of international hockey and review the NHL's Olympic participation," and the debate "may go forward without input from the NHL." NHL Deputy Commissioner Bill Daly said Sunday, "We're at very preliminary stages right now. What the parties have agreed to do is put together a steering committee and an agenda. It may very well [be] that everybody else will have a very nice debate on that (Olympic) issue and we won't necessarily be part of that. Who knows? The issue ultimately has to be decided

by the NHL and the NHL players association -- and a whole host of factors will have to be considered." Duhatschek noted the NHLPA was "noticeable by its absence from Sunday's gathering which confirmed that a series of stakeholders, including the International Ice Hockey Federation, would gather to discuss a broad range of issues relating to the future of hockey" (*GLOBE & MAIL*, 2/15).

WORKING WITH A HEAVY HEART: U.S. Hockey GM and Maple Leafs Exec VP & GM Brian Burke "began his official duties with the U.S. Olympic hockey team Sunday because ... his late son Brendan would have wanted it that way." Brendan Burke was killed in a February 5 car accident. Burke: "I was asked to do a job here and I'm going to do it. The fact that I've had a tragic event in my life shouldn't change that. ... I think about him. He would have wanted me to do this" (*TORONTO STAR*, 2/15).

14. QUEBEC PREMIER CONFIRMS PROVINCE PREPARING TO BID FOR '22 OLYMPICS

Quebec Premier Jean Charest yesterday confirmed that the province is "preparing a bid to host" the '22 Winter Olympics, according to the AFP. Charest: "We understand there's a cycle to all of this and we're obviously aware of that but we happen to have what I believe to be one of the best cities in the world, a city made to measure to host the Winter Games and that happens to be one of the most beautiful. You can expect to hear from us in the next year in regards to that" (*AFP*, 2/15). Charest "echoed Quebec City Mayor Regis Labeaume in wanting the city to have the proper infrastructure before putting forward any official submission." He added that the city "definitely needs a new arena if it is to live its dream of becoming an Olympic host" (*TORONTO STAR*, 2/16).



Charest Says Quebec City Needs New Arena For Bid

A NEW TRIPLE CAST: AROUND THE RINGS' Hula & Rosen noted for the "first time since becoming candidates for the 2018 Winter Olympics, the three cities" in contention -- Annecy, France; Munich, Germany; and Pyeongchang, South Korea -- held briefings for int'l media. The three cities are in the applicant phase "when only limited contact with international media is permitted." Annecy "made its first presentation with a team drawn from the local and national levels." Annecy 2018 CEO Edgar Grosperon said that the city "offers a solid platform to stage the Games." Hula & Rosen noted Annecy "offers a three-cluster venue plan." Alpine skiing and hockey would be played "about 100km away in Mount Blanc/Chamonix," while the sliding events are "set for La Plagne, 100 km south of Annecy." Pyeongchang "boasts what it calls 'the most compact venue concept,' which is clustered around" a \$1.5B new resort complex. All of the venues are "within 30 minutes of each other." Meanwhile, Munich's bid includes an "ice cluster" in the capital city, a "snow cluster" in Garmisch-Partenkirchen and the sliding center in Koenigssee. Munich "must build only three venues" for the Games (*AROUNDTHERINGS.com*, 2/15).

LONDON BRIDGE: In London, Kevin Eason writes under the header, "London 2012 Can't Be Worse Than The Vancouver Games This Winter." LOCOG "cannot afford gaffes and calamities on the same scale as those of the past few days" in Vancouver. Whitestone Int'l Managing Dir Chris Lightfoot said LOCOG "would be hung, drawn and quartered" if that happened. Lightfoot: "Vancouver might survive the worst of the things happening, but Britain has a global reputation and there are plenty of people who will be ready to step up and take a swipe if things start to go wrong" (*LONDON TIMES*, 2/16).

15. OLYMPIC MEDIA MONITOR

The following is a round-up of Olympic coverage of network news shows from

Monday night and Tuesday 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 |
|---------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
|---------|--------------|--------------|----------------|



Today

7:00-7:30am -- Medal count; results; memorial service for Georgia luger Nodar Kumaritashvili; U.S. skier Bode Miller wins Bronze Medal in men's downhill; live interview with U.S. snowboarder Seth Wescott.

7:30-8:00am -- Live interview with U.S. figure skater Evan Lysacek; figure skating analysis from Kristi Yamaguchi and Paul Wylie; profile of late U.S. hockey team coach Herb Brooks; U.S. snowboarder Seth Wescott wins Gold Medal in snowboard cross.

8:00-8:30am -- Results; weather update in Vancouver; profile of U.S. snowboarder Lindsey Jacobellis; Canada celebrates freestyle skier Alexandre Bilodeau winning the country's first Gold Medal on home soil; NBC's Meredith Vieira, Natalie Morales and Yamaguchi go out on the town in Vancouver.

8:30-9:00am -- Live interview with Wescott and snowboarder Nate Holland; profile of U.S. skier Ted Ligety; technology used by U.S. Olympic team.

9:00-9:30am -- Results; memorial service for Kumaritashvili; re-air of Westcott interview; weather update; shopping in Vancouver; images from the Games.

9:30-10:00am -- Olympic athletes sharing their nicknames; English company Snow Business creates artificial snow for the Opening Ceremony; cooking demonstration from local restaurant chef and owner; learning the local lingo in Canada.



The Early Show

15:02

4:48

Medal count; results; Mitt Romney attacked on an airplane flight from Vancouver but was uninjured; live interview with U.S. pairs figure skaters Amanda Evora and Jeremy Barrett.



GMA

14:01

2:46

Mitt Romney attacked on an airplane flight from Vancouver but was uninjured; results; weather conditions.

| NETWORK | EVENING SHOW | FIRST REPORT | TOTAL COVERAGE |
|---------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
|---------|--------------|--------------|----------------|



Nightly News

7:49

9:57

Memorial service for Kumaritashvili; results; profile of injured snowboarder Kevin Pearce; profile of U.S. luger Erin Hamlin.



Evening News

22:42

0:17

Memorial service for Kumaritashvili.



World News

9:32

2:21

Vancouver weather conditions.



SportsCenter
(11:00pm ET)

10:06

3:36

U.S. skier Bode Miller wins Bronze Medal; U.S. skier Lindsey Vonn practicing; results; medal count.

16. MEDAL STAND: USOC HAILED FOR ADDING BP AS CORPORATE SPONSOR

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: USOC -- In arguably the toughest selling market in memory, the USOC added worldwide energy company BP to its roster of sponsors, following an announcement to start the first full week of the Games.



SILVER: BILL MAROLT -- The U.S. Ski & Snowboard Association President & CEO funneled money into Nordic Combined for 10 years, and it paid off Sunday when Johnny Spillane won the first U.S. medal ever in the sport.



BRONZE: BODE MILLER -- Four years after leaving Turin empty-handed and sounding like a poor sport, the greatest American skier of all time cemented his place in history by winning his third Olympic medal. Will his first medal in eight years change his legacy, or will he need more?

TIN: OLYMPIA -- VANOC's official ice-resurfacing machines have gone bust not once, but three times in recent days. Two Olympia machines broke at the Richmond Olympic Oval last night, causing a one-hour delay in the men's 500m competition. That comes after a similar breakdown Sunday during the women's 3,000m event.



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:

- *Step It Up, Or Vancouver's Legacy Could Be Its Errors
- *Behind BP: How The USOC Secured Its Latest Partnership
- *Blackmun To Rogge: "Reach Out (I'll Be There)"
- *CAA's Taub, Bronze Help Miller Repair Public Image
- *Catching Up With Acer Executive Gianpiero Morbello
- *News Notes: Visa Rolls Out Ad Congratulating Spillane

Go to 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. DRIVER JEFF GORDON LEAVES IMG, SIGNS WITH JUST MARKETING INT'L

NASCAR driver Jeff Gordon is "leaving IMG to chart a new course with" Just Marketing Int'l (JMI), according to Michael Smith of SPORTSBUSINESS JOURNAL. Gordon spent "more than 10 years with IMG." Jeff Gordon Inc. VP & GM John Bickford: "I think Jeff is past the point of looking for the traditional deal that gets you a patch on his sleeve. What we're looking for is more integrated business opportunities that will position Jeff post-racing." Bickford said that those opportunities "could involve racetrack design, team ownership or other business ventures inside motorsports." Smith notes Gordon is the first driver that JMI has formally



Jeff Gordon Spent More Than 10 Years With IMG

represented. JMI Founder & CEO Zak Brown: "We're not looking to get into the driver representation business. But we do want to get into the Jeff Gordon business. We're not going to have a roster of drivers, but Jeff is the biggest name in the sport, especially internationally, and we think he provides a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity." Brown said that he "would personally work on the Gordon business" (*SPORTSBUSINESS JOURNAL, 2/15 issue*).

19. PHILLIES COULD SEE MERCHANDISE SPIKE FROM HALLADAY ACQUISITION

The Phillies, who "already do well in merchandise and ticket sales, "could see a spike off the field from their most substantial offseason acquisition," P Roy Halladay, according to Nick Hollenstein of the PHILADELPHIA DAILY NEWS. Phillies Dir of Merchandising Scott Brandreth said the team "certainly got a spike" in merchandise sales after the December trade, in which the team sent P Cliff Lee to the Mariners and got Halladay from the Blue Jays. But he noted January and February is the "slowest time of the year" for the team's merchandise sales, which "won't pick up until March and then obviously the season." Temple Univ. assistant sports marketing professor Joe Mahan said that he "would not expect Halladay's acquisition to cause a significant surge in merchandise sales." Mahan: "The initial spike in demand for Halladay jerseys will most likely just replace that from Cliff Lee's short time with the club." But Mahan added that Halladay "could have an impact on promotions and sponsorships." Mahan said, "In the case of sponsorships, current team sponsors will look to add Halladay to their ad campaigns and it might help to 'tip the scales' in enticing potential sponsors to buy in." Meanwhile, Brandreth said of dealing with leftover Lee merchandise, "We slash it to half-price, we try to find different ways to move it. ... We are not going to have any more Cliff Lee merchandise in the store when the season starts" (*PHILADELPHIA DAILY NEWS, 2/16*).

20. MARKETPLACE ROUNDUP

USA TODAY notes during warm-ups before the February 6 Michigan State-Illinois men's basketball game on ESPN, Illinois players "wore customized T-shirts with 'ESPN GameDay' on them, a potential secondary violation of an NCAA rule that allows only the manufacturer's logo on uniforms and warm-ups." The T-shirts were "clearly visible" during ESPN's "College GameDay" broadcast. Illinois Assistant AD/Compliance Ryan Squire said that the athletic department's marketing arm "came up with the idea to promote its appearance" on the telecast (*USA TODAY, 2/16*).

GRAND GESTURE: In N.Y., Ben Shpigel notes Yankees CF Curtis Granderson, "instead of accepting a fee from companies he endorses, like Nike and Louisville Slugger," has asked the companies to "donate equipment to teams across Michigan." His Grand Kids Foundation "raises money for educational initiatives." One "potential initiative" Granderson might get involved with in N.Y. is Rosetta Stone, the language-learning software, "which Granderson would like to see used in schools." He also said that he "expected to play a big role in the Yankees' Hope Week, which was initiated last season" (*N.Y. TIMES, 2/16*).

FAKE ID: In Dallas, Dianne Solis reports federal agents "seized more than 4,000 pieces of unlicensed merchandise ranging from jerseys to caps to decals during NBA All-Star Weekend." Many of the "\$200,000 worth of items seized were substandard with smudged lettering on names such as Dirk Nowitzki and Chris Bosh." Some had "tags that featured what appeared to be holograms like those on licensed merchandise," but those holograms "lacked serial numbers or bar codes that prove authenticity" (*DALLAS MORNING NEWS, 2/16*).

CHIPS & PUTTS: Golfer Ricky Barnes has signed a one-year deal with Audi North

America and will wear the company's logo on his right sleeve. Barnes, who is repped by Blake Sports Group, was a runner-up at the '09 U.S. Open. Blake Sports Group signed a new deal for golfer Jeff Quinney to wear the logo of ticket management firm Concierge Live on his left sleeve. Meanwhile, Houston-based electricity provider StarTex Power signed a one-year deal with PGA Tour rookie Jerod Turner, a former contractor turned professional golfer. Turner is repped by Goal Marketing (*Jon Show, SportsBusiness Journal*).

Sports Media

21. FOX' 7.7 RATING FOR DAYTONA 500 IS LOWEST MARK FOR RACE SINCE '91

Fox' Sunday telecast of the Daytona 500 earned a 7.7 fast-national Nielsen rating (13.3 million viewers), down 16.3% from a 9.2 rating (16.0 million viewers) for last year's rain-shortened race. The rating for this year's telecast excludes the delays caused by a pothole on the track. The 7.7 rating marks the lowest-rated Daytona 500 since '91 on CBS, when the telecast earned a 7.6 rating and 10.9 million viewers (*THE DAILY*). USA TODAY's Michael Hiestand notes the 7.7 rating is down 24% from a 10.2 rating in '08. But the "interminable down time ... meant the broadcast's total number of viewers, who have to watch at least six minutes to be duly noted by Nielsen, increased 14% over last year" (*USA TODAY, 2/16*). However, in Virginia, Dustin Long noted the "most telling numbers could come later." Long: "Will there be a further drop-off in TV viewership for upcoming Sprint Cup races?" (*Norfolk VIRGINIAN-PILOT, 2/16*).

DRIVE TIME TALK: YAHOO SPORTS' Nick Bromberg wrote Fox "did an acceptable job ... for most of the red flag coverage" of the Daytona 500. Bromberg: "I was impressed with the number of different driver and crew chief interviews, and while the line of questioning during these red flags isn't always the best, the diversity made up for it." But Bromberg wrote the broadcast had "plenty of figurative potholes." The "low point of Fox' broadcast was the cheering" from Fox analyst Darrell Waltrip during driver Dale Earnhardt Jr.'s "last lap charge." Bromberg: "You just can't openly cheer for a driver ... to win the race, no matter how good his last-lap drive is" (*SPORTS.YAHOO.com, 2/15*). In N.Y., Bob Raissman writes Fox "deserves major credit for sticking with its Daytona 500 coverage during the two-hour, 15-minute Operation Pothole," and "much of the filler was entertaining, even for viewers who could care less about NASCAR" (*N.Y. DAILY NEWS, 2/16*). ESPN's Michael Wilbon said the first delay to fix the pothole "was sort of entertaining because I thought the Fox reporters did a great job getting to the drivers and getting them to talk about the delay" ("*PTI*," *ESPN, 2/15*). SPORTINGNEWS.com's Dan Levy wrote Fox "made lemonade out of the Daytona 500 coverage during two lengthy breaks." Fox, "with a lot of time to fill," did a "very good job of interviewing drivers, showing recaps of the race and even doing an exhaustive breakdown of a NASCAR engine and drivetrain" (*SPORTINGNEWS.com 2/15*).

QUICK CLICKS: NASCAR.com on Sunday recorded its highest number of daily unique visitors and video streams ever for a Daytona race day. The site saw 1.5 million unique visitors and more than 807,000 video streams, according to data from Omniture. For the race weekend from Thursday, February 11 through Sunday, February 14, NASCAR.com saw 2.4 million total video views, up 135% from the same period a year ago (*THE DAILY*).

22. TNT'S COVERAGE OF NBA ALL-STAR GAME DOWN 15.4% FROM LAST YEAR

TNT's coverage of Sunday's NBA All-Star Game earned a 4.4 cable rating (6.9 million

viewers) based on Nielsen fast-national data. That figure is down 15.4% from a 5.2 rating (7.6 million viewers) for last year's game on TNT. This year's game aired opposite Vancouver Olympic coverage on NBC. The '06 All-Star Game, which went up against coverage of the Turin Games, earned a 5.2 cable rating and 7.1 million viewers. Meanwhile, NBA.com notched more than 13.8 million live and on-demand video streams during All-Star Weekend (February 12-14), up 43% from last year. NBA Mobile's number of visitors was up 146% for the weekend (*THE DAILY*).

DUNK TANK: In Detroit, Jamie Samuelsen wrote "nothing about All-Star Saturday screamed out to me as must-see TV." The solution is "obvious and impossible at the same time." If it were Kobe Bryant vs. LeBron James for the "title of greatest dunker, we'd all be watching." But instead it was Knicks G Nate Robinson and "a lot of players most of America has never heard of." But what do Bryant and James "have to gain by taking part in the event?" Samuelsen: "So the wait continues, and the boredom continues" (*FREEP.com*, 2/15). ESPN's Michael Wilbon said the dunk contest "was a flop." Wilbon: "A league that used to be very inventive and creative, imaginative, now just says, 'No, this is what we got and we're got to stand over this and tell you in a loud voice how great it is.' It's not great. All-Star Saturday needs revamping. The All-Star Game needs revamping. ... These things are mostly boring" ("*PTI*," *ESPN*, 2/15). The Dallas Morning News' Tim Cowlshaw said, "The dunk contest was just terrible and they've got to figure out what to do with that." ESPN.com's J.A. Adande: "I've always found that for whatever reason the dunk contest kind of reflects the state of the league and this year it was such a blah dunk contest. ... The dunk contest makes you wonder about the future of that event." ESPN's Gene Wojciechowski: "The talk about the labor, the strike, the possibility of a lockout, whatever, that was a total buzz kill. Then you have the slam dunk competition. That was a snore fest" ("*Around The Horn*," *ESPN*, 2/15).

IS BIGGER BETTER? ESPN Radio's John Ireland said of hosting the All--Star Game at Cowboys Stadium, "They stumbled onto something with that 108,000 people. I think that gimmick is perfect for an All-Star Game." However, Boston Globe columnist Dan Shaughnessy said the crowd at the game "wasn't into it at all ... because there was no crowd noise" ("*Jim Rome Is Burning*," *ESPN*, 2/15). The Dallas Morning News' Cowlshaw said "they put on a great spectacle," but "once the game starts, everybody gets quiet." Cowlshaw: "There are 100,000 people sitting there making very little noise because other than the occasional dunk, there's not much that's really happening" ("*Around The Horn*," *ESPN*, 2/15).

Leagues & Governing Bodies

23. LOCKOUT AFTER '10-11 SEASON COULD HAVE DEVASTATING EFFECT ON NBA

If there is an NBA lockout after the '10-11 season, "it will come with LeBron James, Kobe Bryant and other superstars near the peak of their careers, and an interruption in what should be a 20-year upward growth chart for the NBA as a business entity would have an even more devastating effect than the '98-99 lockout," according to Chris Sheridan of ESPN.com. NBA Commissioner David Stern and Deputy Commissioner & COO Adam Silver are "representing a largely different group of owners from the ones who imposed the lockout in the summer of 1998, and this new generation of owners ... paid big bucks for their teams and thus are more financially leveraged than their predecessors, and therefore are approaching the talks with the same hard-line stance they'd bring to negotiations in their other businesses." The next step in CBA talks is for the NBPA to "present a proposal of their own, which should happen before the NBA Finals" in June. Whether this labor negotiation "remains consistently contentious will hinge on whether the sides can bridge the fundamental difference they have regarding

whether the current system is broken and unsustainable, as the owners say, or working -- albeit imperfectly -- as the union contends." Sheridan wrote a labor deal "eventually will get done" because both sides "might be a little crazy, but neither is suicidal" (*ESPN.com, 2/16*).

DECK THE HALL: ESPN.com's John Hollinger wrote "one of the biggest areas the NBA falls short is with its" HOF, which is not "affiliated with the league and doesn't serve the league particularly well." Basketball HOF Chair Jerry Colangelo: "We're at a time of change in the Hall of Fame. That's my charge, that's where I'm headed, so stay tuned." Colangelo has "already done some surgery on how the Hall operates." He said, "By restructuring the board into a board of governors and then a board of trustees, by raising the bar with the people I've asked to serve, that changes the whole thing." While Colangelo said that he would "like to add more transparency to the voting process, he enumerated goals that fell well short of most fans' hopes." Colangelo: "I look at the process that has existed: the number of committees, the makeup of the committees, the lack of transparency, and I'm being general, but I do know this -- the more we can let people know what the process is (the better)" (*ESPN.com, 2/15*).

24. NBA TO OPEN OFFICE IN RUSSIA PENDING PROKHOROV'S NETS PURCHASE

The NBA "will open an office in Russia after the league approves" prospective Nets Owner Mikhail Prokhorov's purchase of the team, "which is expected this spring," according to John Lombardo of *SPORTSBUSINESS JOURNAL*. The league "has been interviewing executives for a managing director position for the Russian office, which will most likely be in Moscow as the NBA continues its push to grow internationally." Lombardo notes the NBA is "not planning a Russian spin-off similar to its NBA China entity that includes outside investors" (*SPORTSBUSINESS JOURNAL, 2/15 issue*).

NEXT HORIZON: In Ft. Worth, Gary West reported NBA Commissioner David Stern Saturday officially announced that the league "will open an office this spring in Johannesburg, South Africa," where NBA VP/Development for Africa Amadou Gallo Fall "and a small staff will work to promote the game, encourage development and expand partnerships." Before joining the NBA, Fall served as Mavericks Dir of Player Personnel & VP/Int'l Affairs. He also has "worked in Africa with the NBA's Basketball Without Borders" (*FT. WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM, 2/14*).

Franchises

25. JORDAN SAID TO BE DOING EVERYTHING HE CAN TO PURCHASE BOBCATS

Bobcats Managing Member of Basketball Operations Michael Jordan recently told coach Larry Brown that he is "doing everything he can to buy controlling interest in the team from Bob Johnson," according to Rick Bonnell of the *CHARLOTTE OBSERVER*. Brown said Jordan last week told him, "I'm trying my hardest to get this thing done." NBA Commissioner David Stern Saturday said, "I like the level, the increased level, of Michael's involvement and if Michael were to be a buyer, that would be a good thing." Brown yesterday said, "I'm hopeful that at the end of the day (after a sale) Michael will be running the Bobcats." Brown said that he "would welcome any closure on the ownership issue." Bonnell notes the "only other known bidder is a group led by" The Postolos Group Owner George Postolos. Stern Saturday said that he "believes Johnson selling is inevitable and 'sooner rather than later, within the next 60 days or so'" (*CHARLOTTE OBSERVER, 2/16*). Brown said of Jordan, "He said he's doing his best to put himself in a position to get the team. He wants it badly." Brown added, "I didn't talk to him about the particulars. He just told me don't believe everything you read in the paper and I'm trying

my hardest to get this thing done." Meanwhile, Postolos in an e-mail yesterday said, "I am still not talking to media about Charlotte" ([AP, 2/15](#)).

26. MLB FRANCHISE NOTES: RAYS WILL REDUCE PAYROLL IN COMING YEARS

The Rays have pushed their player payroll past the \$70M mark for the upcoming season, but Owner Stuart Sternberg yesterday said that it "will be different in coming years, with a significant reduction in payroll." Sternberg, on WDAE-AM, said, "We did out-spend ourselves last year (at \$63-million) and completely have out-spent ourselves this year. And unfortunately we're going to feel the effect of that the next couple years for certain. ... There's no \$60-million payroll next year either, let alone a \$70-million payroll. It's going to be a tough transition, but it's something that given the economics of the game and specifically the economics of what we are in Tampa Bay and in St. Petersburg, it makes it impossible to do it for more than a couple of years" ([TAMPABAY.com, 2/15](#)).

COSTLY PROMO: In Baltimore, Zrebiec & Connolly reported Orioles P Brad Bergesen "will not be able to fully participate in spring training for at least 10 days" due to a "strained right shoulder capsule that he injured during the filming of an Orioles TV commercial in early December." Bergesen "hadn't thrown off a mound" between last July and when he filmed the spot, which was shot in an indoor batting cage at Camden Yards. Bergesen said of the ad, "The production company that came in wanted it to be as realistic as possible. And I was trying to please, and I got caught up in a moment." Orioles President of Baseball Operations Andy MacPhail said, "We have already made some adjustments in terms of making sure we have medical personnel or baseball personnel present for anything we do in the future" ([Baltimore SUN, 2/12](#)).

EARLY BIRD SALE: In Chicago, Paul Sullivan notes the Cubs "declared the first day of their ticket presale a 'big success' on Monday, though figures won't be released until later this week." The Cubs "teamed up with MasterCard to promote the plan," which gives fans a chance to buy individual-game tickets at a 20% premium from Monday through Thursday, before they go on sale at the listed price on Friday morning. Fans paying with a MasterCard get a 5% "discount off the presale price" ([CHICAGO TRIBUNE, 2/16](#)).

GRIN & BEER IT: The Padres at their [FanFest event this weekend](#) announced that they are going to sell 14-ounce domestic draft beers for \$5 this season. In San Diego, Michael Stetz writes, "It appears the recession has driven Petco Park to become what it should have been in the first place: an affordable place to watch baseball, not a joint where you get gouged" ([SIGNONSANDIEGO.com, 2/16](#)).

27. FRANCHISE NOTES

In Minneapolis, Sid Hartman cited Metropolitan Sports Facilities Commission (MSFC) data as indicating that the Vikings "sold 679,874 tickets" for the team's 11 games at the Metrodome during the '09 season, a "slight increase compared to the total of 671,552 for the 11 games in 2008." The team's gross revenue from ticket sales was \$57.5M, up about \$2M from \$55.5M in '08. The Vikings' turnstile count of 649,478 during the '09 season represented 95.5% of tickets sold. Hartman noted the MSFC "reported a lower figure for concession sales in 2009 than '08, though that was because the figures from" last month's NFC Divisional game against the Cowboys "were unavailable" ([Minneapolis STAR TRIBUNE, 2/15](#)).

SHOOTING STAR: ESPN.com's Pierre LeBrun cited sources as indicating that the NHL is hoping Calgary businessman and WHL Portland Winter Hawks Owner Bill Gallacher "will get involved" in the Stars' ownership situation, but it "doesn't sound like a priority at this point" for Gallacher. Gallacher said that he had "spoke with NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman earlier this season about the league in general," but added

that there was "not a conversation about one team in particular." Gallacher: "I haven't pursued anything yet, I've been busy with my other business activities. I'm aware of the Dallas situation, but I haven't acted on that. Right now, I'm just swamped with what I have going here (in the oil industry)" (*ESPN.com, 2/13*).

STAYING PUT: Broncos Owner Pat Bowlen, when asked if he is "still committed to owning the Broncos until his dying day," said, "What the hell am I going to do? Retire and play golf everyday? That would drive me nuts" (*DENVERPOST.com, 2/13*).

Facilities & Venues

28. DAYTONA NOT LIKELY TO REPAVE TRACK DESPITE SUNDAY'S POTHOLE

Daytona Int'l Speedway track engineers yesterday began a week-long evaluation on the "weathered and abrasive asphalt, which hasn't been resurfaced" since '78, according to Nate Ryan of USA TODAY. DIS "still faces a quandary in fixing the surface" of the track, where a pothole "nearly derailed" Sunday's Daytona 500. But applying a "fresh coat of asphalt isn't a sure thing." Ryan notes a "rough track is more difficult to navigate." Driver Tony Stewart said he "would hate to see them repave because drivers (play) a huge part." Greg Biffle said repaving Daytona would be unfortunate "because the grip level is perfect" (*USA TODAY, 2/16*). DIS President Robin Braig said, "We don't think it's time to repave, unless we find out something different after we evaluate it this week. We've got engineers all over this" (*ORLANDO SENTINEL, 2/16*). More Braig: "2012 or 2013 or 2014 was when we were thinking of repaving. It may not need repaving" (*MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL, 2/16*). However, ESPN's Rusty Wallace said, "Can we afford to go to another Daytona 500 not knowing if we're going to get another pothole? ... I don't think they can take another chance and do nothing" ("*NASCAR Now*," *ESPN2, 2/15*).

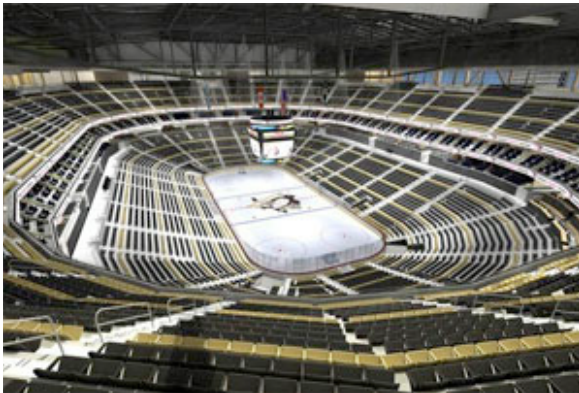
SPEED BUMP: Braig noted that the track was "thoroughly inspected in advance of the race and no problems were detected." Texas Motor Speedway President Eddie Gossage said, "What happened ... was one of those inexplicable things. It's not Daytona Speedway's fault, it's not NASCAR's fault. Daytona had unbelievable rains. I've been going for 30 years now, I've never seen conditions like that at Daytona. But I'm not making excuses for them because that was a blow for the entire sport" (*N.Y. TIMES, 2/16*). Driver Juan Pablo Montoya: "I think the track did an amazing job making sure we could get the track ready, and, for all the fans here, we got the race in. People think it only happens here, but it happens everywhere" (*MIAMI HERALD, 2/16*). ESPN's Ricky Craven: "As much as I sympathize for the fans because it is frustrating no question to sit for six hours, the fact is that there is a safety element to this and NASCAR applied to that. They reacted to it. ... NASCAR did the right thing" ("*NASCAR Now*," *ESPN, 2/15*).

BLACK EYE FOR NASCAR: In DC, Liz Clarke writes for "all the insistence about being major league, NASCAR officials looked like rank amateurs in having to halt what's billed as the Great American race twice." The delays also "put a major dent in TV ratings" (*WASHINGTON POST, 2/16*). ESPN's Tony Kornheiser: "This is unbelievably minor league for a sport that wants to tell everybody it's major league" ("*PTI*," *ESPN, 2/15*). In Nashville, Joe Biddle writes the incident is "all on NASCAR" because it "happened in the front yard of its headquarters." The pothole "caught speedway officials off guard," and many fans "left in disgust well before Jamie McMurray took the checkered flag." Biddle: "It was not NASCAR's finest moment" (*Nashville TENNESSEAN, 2/16*). In Toronto, Dean McNulty writes Sunday "has to be the most embarrassing moment in recent NASCAR history" (*TORONTO SUN, 2/16*). In Charlotte, Tom Sorensen writes Sunday's Daytona 500 "was not the Great American Race, the Good American Race or even the Fairly Decent American Race." More than "six hours after the 500 began, it ended," and

so did "NASCAR's effort to begin ... 2010 with momentum and credibility" (*CHARLOTTE OBSERVER*, 2/16). In Jacksonville, Don Coble notes while many fans "will remember Jamie McMurray's dramatic victory in the second overtime, the race forever will be remembered for a pothole" (*FLORIDA TIMES-UNION*, 2/16). ESPN Radio's Jason Smith said the "only thing that fans will remember was how NASCAR, once again, tripped and fell on its biggest stage" ("*Jim Rome Is Burning*," *ESPN*, 2/15). Chicago Tribune's Dan Pompei: "I don't see how you could stage the event that is supposed to be the centerpiece of your season and end up with two-and-a-half hours of delays. That is a killer" ("*Chicago Tribune*," *Comcast SportsNet Chicago*, 2/15).

IMPROVEMENT ON THE TRACK: ESPN.com's Jeff MacGregor wrote after "several consecutive years of waning public interest and sagging television ratings, chronic financial anemia and textbook overexposure, NASCAR desperately needed to bring some sexy back," which it did on Sunday by "making its restrictor plates less restrictive and by abandoning its rules for on-track engagement." The result was a "great deal of sideways excitement; a last lap charge by a re-energized (and thus remarketable) Dale Earnhardt Jr., a stirring win by affable matinee idol Jamie McMurray and a pretty good race from flag to flag, if you subtract the several hours of dead air it took to patch that pothole" (*ESPN.com*, 2/15). ESPN's Ray Evernham said the delays caused by the pothole were not that "big of a deal," and added NASCAR "did a great job with the rule changes, giving the control back to the drivers, the crew chiefs, making the racing better." Evernham: "It was a fantastic week of racing and that should not be a black spot on it. There is no way of controlling those kinds of things. It was great racing" ("*NASCAR Now*," *ESPN2*, 2/15).

29. NEW CONSOL ENERGY CENTER TO BE EQUIPPED WITH LATEST TECHNOLOGY



Penguins Expect To Spend Over \$10M On "Video Wizardry" At New Consol Energy Center

The Penguins' new Consol Energy Center "will be one very smart arena when it opens in the fall -- a 21st-century smorgasbord for tech-savvy fans," according to Mark Belko of the *PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE*. There will be "robotic cameras to follow action on the ice, an interactive players' hall of fame," and "touch-screen TVs that allow some fans to isolate cameras on favorite Penguins or call up replays on demand." The team "expects to spend 'easily over \$10 million' on video wizardry." There will be 700-800 TVs, "all HD, deployed throughout the arena and more than 40 camera positions for broadcast and internal purposes." There will be a "scoreboard so large that it will stretch from blue line to blue line." The arena will have four HD video screens, "one for each side." They will measure "25 feet wide and 15 feet tall, or as big as the entire scoreboard at Mellon Arena." The Mitsubishi screens will employ the company's "high-contrast 6 mm black package LED technology designed to produce crisp images and vibrant color." Penguins CEO Ken Sawyer: "The clarity will just blow everybody away." Belko noted "two smaller, 25-by-6-foot video boards will sit above the screens and provide the score and other game information." In addition, "two video rings, one above the scoreboard and one below it, will be used for entertainment and advertising." A robotic camera, "capable of rotating 360 degrees, will hang from the scoreboard, offering a unique bird's-eye-view of breakaways, shootouts and other game action." Robotic cameras also "will be built into a

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dasher board at center ice and in one of the corners." Fans in "higher-priced suites will have access to Yinz Cam, a technology developed in conjunction with Carnegie Mellon University." Using touch-screen TVs, fans will be able to "activate a camera trained, for example, on Sidney Crosby's every move or retrieve game action from angles not available in the standard broadcast." The new arena also "will host IPTV, a house cable system enabling the Penguins to deliver a dedicated feed to virtually any TV" in the facility (*PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE*, 2/14).

30. INSIGHT COMMUNICATIONS TO SPONSOR NEW LOUISVILLE ARENA

Louisville Arena Sports & Entertainment Properties (LASEP) yesterday announced a 10-year sponsorship agreement with Insight Communications that will make the company the official advanced communications partner for the new Louisville arena. As part of the deal, Insight's fiber optics network will provide televisions throughout the arena with HD video. Insight will receive advertising on internal and external video boards at the arena and on the main exterior electronic marquee on the arena's plaza. The company also will run a minimum of 10 PSAs each week promoting the arena. The deal brings the total value of arena sponsorships to date to more than \$24M (*LASEP*). Insight Communications Public Affairs Dir Jason Keller said that the company will "provide services valued at more than \$1.5[M] over 10 years, including about 300 high-definition televisions, but it won't pay any cash directly to the arena." In Louisville, Marcus Green notes Insight is the "ninth company affiliated with the arena." LASEP is a "subsidiary of Learfield Sports that negotiates sponsorships" for the Louisville Arena Authority (LAA), and Learfield has guaranteed \$15M in advertising and sponsorships "for the first seven years the arena is open" (*Louisville COURIER-JOURNAL*, 2/16). LASEP GM Lynn Saltzman said that the group is "in the process of finalizing other agreements, which will be announced" at next month's LAA meeting. Previously announced cornerstone sponsors include Norton Healthcare Inc., J.J.B. Hilliard, W.L. Lyons LLC, Stock Yards Bank & Trust Co. and Kentucky Employers' Mutual Insurance. Other sponsors include McDonald's Restaurants of Kentuckiana Co-op, Coca-Cola Enterprises Inc., the Galt House Hotel and The Homemade Ice Cream and Pie Kitchen" (*BIZJOURNALS.com*, 2/15).

Sports Industrialists

31. EXECUTIVE TRANSACTIONS

San Diego State Univ. yesterday announced that former Washington State Univ. AD **JIM STERK** has agreed to a five-year deal to serve as the school's AD. Sterk replaces **JEFF SCHEMMEL**, who resigned in November after "irregularities were reported in his travel reimbursement requests." Sterk is expected to "get an increase" from the \$300,000 annual salary he received at WSU (*SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE*, 2/16). SDSU President **STEPHEN WEBER** said that Sterk "was originally among a group of 12 candidates selected out of a pool of 60 for phone interviews by the school's hiring committee" (*NORTH COUNTY TIMES*, 2/16).

RING BEARER: The USOC has named **MARK JONES** to the newly created position of Communications Dir, reporting to Chief Communications Officer **PATRICK SANDUSKY**. Jones joins the USOC after four and a half years at Hill & Knowlton,



Jim Sterk Named San Diego State AD

where he worked with several sports clients, including Chicago 2016 and Jet Set Sports. He joined the USOC in Vancouver yesterday and began his work in the areas of international publicity and key partner relationships (*Tripp Mickle, SportsBusiness Journal*).

EXECS: The Bears have relieved Senior Dir of Pro Personnel **BOBBY DEPAUL** of his duties (*Bears*). Former Seahawks GM **TIM RUSKELL** is "believed to be a candidate to be hired" by the Bears (*CHICAGO TRIBUNE, 2/16*)....The Kentucky State Fair Board named former Churchill Downs Inc. exec **TED NICHOLSON** GM of Louisville Arena. Nicholson had worked for Louisville-based CDI since '02, most recently as interim President & GM of Calder Race Course in Miami (*Louisville Arena Authority*)....The St. Louis Sports Commission elected Edward Jones Partner **BOB CIAPCIAK** Chair of the voluntary board for a one-year term. Ciapciak succeeds Sun Security Bank President & CEO **SHAUN HAYES**, who served as Chair since '08 (*BIZJOURNALS.com, 2/15*)....The WNBA Minnesota Lynx named WNBA Detroit Shock Dir of Sales & Marketing **CARLEY KNOX** Manager of New Business Development (*Lynx*)....The column written by Pittsburgh Tribune-Review columnist **JOE STARKEY** has ended, "at least in its full-time form," as Starkey will appear twice a week in the paper and on its Web site. This March would have marked 15 years for Starkey at the paper. He will begin co-hosting an afternoon radio show with ESPN's **JOHN SEIBEL** on Pittsburgh's KDKA-FM (*Pittsburgh TRIBUNE-REVIEW, 2/14*).

Do you have an executive announcement? If so, please send to editorial@sportsbusinessdaily.com.

32. NAMES IN THE NEWS

In Chicago, Jim O'Donnell profiles former White House spokesperson **ARI FLEISCHER**'s foray into sports PR, most notably advising **MARK MCGWIRE** on his admission to using steroids. Fleischer said, "I reached out to some people I knew at the Cardinals and I said, 'He's got a barrier to entry.' He's going to have to talk to the press before he becomes hitting coach." He added, "The Cardinals knew that. Mark knew that, as well. Knowing what I did for a living, we reached an agreement that I would help" (*CHICAGO SUN-TIMES, 2/16*).

HOT EATS, COOL TREATS: Blackhawks RW **PATRICK KANE**, Hockey HOFer **BOBBY HULL**, Cubs 3B **ARAMIS RAMIREZ**, Pro Football HOFer **MARV LEVY** and AHL Chicago Wolves Chair **DON LEVIN** are among about 30 people investing in a new Harry Caray's Tavern location in Chicago (*CHICAGO TRIBUNE, 2/16*)....Univ. of Connecticut women's basketball coach **GENO AURIEMMA** has reached a deal with Project Service LLC to operate Geno's Fast Break restaurants at a handful of highway service plazas (*HARTFORD COURANT, 2/13*).

NAMES: Blackstone Group co-Founder, Chair & CEO **STEPHEN SCHWARZMAN** celebrated his 60th birthday on Sunday by hosting a celebrity tennis event to raise money for Haiti relief. **JOHN MCENROE** and **MATS WILANDER** each played in the event, held at Schwarzman's estate in Palm Beach, Florida (*N.Y. POST, 2/16*)....Basketball HOFer **MAGIC JOHNSON** is in "talks to purchase" Johnson Publishing Co., owner of Ebony and Jet magazines (*BLOOMBERG NEWS, 2/13*)....MLB Giants Managing General Partner **BILL NEUKOM** listed **BILL GATES** and **SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR** as his mentors (*S.F. BUSINESS TIMES, 2/12 issue*)....**SHAQUILLE O'NEAL** Friday at the Flag Art Foundation in Manhattan will open an art exhibit, which will run through May 27 and feature 66 works chosen by the Cavaliers C (*N.Y. POST, 2/16*)....Indians third base coach **STEVE SMITH** is participating in this season of CBS' "Amazing Race," which premiered Sunday (*PHILADELPHIA DAILY NEWS, 2/16*)....In N.Y., Jack Bell noted soccer film "**PELADA**" will debut next month at the South by Southwest film festival in Austin, Texas, and it "might qualify as the soccer world's answer" to "Endless Summer."

In the movie, "four young Americans embark on a six-month odyssey to 25 different countries, playing pickup games in locales that most American tourists avoid" (*NYTIMES.com*, 2/15).

Classified Advertisements

33. CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

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The RFP contemplates that proposals may be submitted for the scope within the primary market, the secondary market, or for a combination of both markets. A joint selection committee made up of members from the CITY and TEAM will conduct the selection procedure. The selection for the Amway Center will be assigned to contract with the TEAM. The TEAM intends to issue the RFP on Monday, 15-February 2010. Proposing firms will be evaluated on brand integration, compensation and cost proposal, emerging technologies, customer service and support, equipment, training and education, data ownership / management, MBE/WBE participation and firm's general ability to perform the work.

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34. 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

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