

STREET & SMITH'S  
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**Peacock Shuffle (#1)**

NBC still under pressure to explain tape-delayed coverage; L.A. TIMES editorial states network "may be flubbing a golden opportunity online."

**Skating Off The Shelves (#9)**

Olympic merchandise sales exceed expectations; Hudson's Bay Canadian team hoodie strong seller.

**Take Your Seat**

VANOC officials seek explanation for blocks of unused VIP seats at multiple venues. (#12)

**Demo Derby (#32)**

Scarborough Sports data indicates older U.S. demos are most interested in Olympic Games.

**Stay Tuned (#19)**

After "24/7" foray into NASCAR, HBO's Ross Greenburg predicts more deals, says he has fielded calls "from a lot of professional leagues."

**Coming Up Short (#20)**

NFLPA files claim that league violated CBA in its distribution of supplemental revenue funds.

**Marking Their Territory**

Mavs consider adding home games at Cowboys Stadium for strategic, economic benefits. (#26)

**When All Is Said And Done (#31)**

Does Chip Ganassi rank among the greatest motorsports owners of all time with Daytona win?



**Delays, Cancellations Mark First Days Of Games**

Five days into the Winter Olympics, VANOC is clearly on the defensive. The international media is ripping the organization, as critics claim the so-called "Glitch Games" are "veering off course." Even in Canada, reaction is mixed, as the GLOBE & MAIL notes the problems of the Games are "sadly becoming the overarching narrative." The Vancouver PROVINCE states much of the criticism is "brutally unfair" and "exaggerated," but VANOC is "not showing an ability to deal quickly with the sore points." Olympic officials are speaking up in defense -- Canadian IOC member Dick Pound calls VANOC a "well-oiled machine," the IOC's Mark Adams admonishes the global press, calling the Games "amazing," and VANOC's John Furlong highlights the enthusiasm at the venues, saying IOC officials are "quite stunned." Furlong seems to hit the right note -- the energetic atmosphere continues to draw rave reviews, but the execution and organization are dragging down these Games (#2).

## News At Deadline

Palace Sports & Entertainment President & CEO **Tom Wilson**, who had been with Pistons organization since '77, resigns (#29).

## Quote Of The Day

**"When you compare these Games to Torino or Lake Placid or anywhere else, VANOC is a pretty well-oiled machine."**

-- Canadian IOC member **Dick Pound**, on the criticism the Vancouver Games is receiving  
(*GLOBE & MAIL*, 2/17). (#2)

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## Olympics

### 1. NBC MAINTAINS RATINGS JUMP; NET DEFENDS TAPE-DELAYED COVERAGE

NBC is averaging a 15.1 final rating and 27.9 million viewers through Monday night's Vancouver Games primetime coverage, up 15% and 25%, respectively, from a 13.1 rating and 22.4 million viewers for the first four primetime telecasts from the '06 Turin Games. However, compared to the '02 Salt Lake City Games, the Vancouver ratings are down 22.9%. Monday night's telecast from 8:00-11:16pm ET earned a 14.2 final rating (25.2 million viewers), up 11% from the same night in '06, but down 28% from '02. Milwaukee continues to lead all U.S. markets, averaging a 23.7 local rating (*THE DAILY*).

#### WINTER OLYMPICS AVERAGE PRIMETIME RATINGS TREND

	'10 (Vancouver)	'06 (Turin)	'02 (Salt Lake)	'98 (Nagano)
Opening Ceremony	17.3	12.8	25.5	17.1
2nd Day (Saturday)	14.0	13.5	17.1	12.3
3rd Day (Sunday)	14.3	13.3	17.6	20.2
4th Day (Monday)	14.2	12.8	19.6	14.8
<b>Cumulative</b>	<b>15.1</b>	<b>13.1</b>	<b>20.1</b>	<b>16.1</b>

**A MATTER OF PERSPECTIVE:** USA TODAY's Michael Hiestand notes Vancouver ratings are "great compared with the last go-around" in Turin, but a "more telling comparison" is with Salt Lake City. Networks looking to bid on U.S. rights for the '14 Sochi and '16 Rio de Janeiro Games "might wonder whether their bids should be built on a different model from NBC's Olympic game plan, which again consists of holding the best action until prime time and slicing and dicing it -- and spicing it with features -- to convert sports into storylines" (*USA TODAY*, 2/17).

**PLAYING DEFENSE:** NBC Sports & Olympics VP/Communications Chris McCloskey yesterday defended the net's decision to "tape-delay certain marquee Olympic events" so they can air during primetime. He pointed out that NBCOlympics.com offers real-time results of all events, and said, "We're not trying to hide anything. ... Yet, we still can't make everybody happy." In Boston, Eric Wilbur noted that "certainly includes fans of Alpine racing, who won't see any of those events live on the network." Viewers watching NBC's "spliced and diced downhill coverage" on Monday night "actually saw more of Mary Carillo's polar bears than they did skiers." McCloskey: "Alpine skiing is probably the sexiest sport that we tape. No doubt about it." But he added, "We try to serve the greater good. ... It is the Olympic Games, it's not just one event" (*BOSTON.com*, 2/16).

**REWRITING HISTORY?** The WASHINGTON POST's Barry Svrluga noted NBC is the "filter that determines what happens" at the Games, "what America sees, and what's important -- whether we like it or not." Svrluga noted he watched NBC's coverage of the men's downhill Monday night on Seattle affiliate KING-TV, an event he "covered the very same day." NBC during its coverage "started jumping through the competition," showing Norway's Aksel Lund Svindal "almost immediately" after U.S. skier Bode Miller, though in actuality they were eight skiers apart. Then -- and "this is where it started to get egregious -- they showed Switzerland's Didier Defago, who laid down the eventual gold medal-winning run," who actually was two skiers behind Svindal. NBC skipped Austria's Michael Walchhofer, "officially the fastest guy in the pre-event training run." Svrluga wrote the "result of all this is that a significant portion of the drama is sapped from the event," and in a "tacit way, NBC is admitting that Alpine skiing, one of the flagship sports of the Winter Olympics, isn't interesting enough to hold its audience" (*WASHINGTONPOST.com*, 2/16).

**MISSING OUT ON THE GOLD:** An L.A. TIMES editorial addressed NBC's tape-delay tactics under the subhead, "In Trying To Guard Against The Erosion Of Its Prime-Time Audience, The Network May Be Flubbing A Golden Opportunity Online." NBC's cameras are "so ubiquitous on the Olympic grounds, and it could use the virtually unlimited capacity of the Net to provide blanket coverage." But NBC is "holding back largely because it doesn't want to cut into its prime-time audience." However, in "trying to guard against the erosion of their prime-time audience, networks may be doing themselves a disservice." The editorial notes programmers that have "been most aggressive online have seen their audience grow, not shrink, on TV" (*L.A. TIMES*, 2/17). Dallas Morning News columnist Tim Cowlshaw said NBC shows events tape-delayed because they "think or they suspect that the people watching don't really know who won, even though some of these events were an hour, two hours, three hours ago. If you watched other networks, if you've been on the Internet, you've already seen ... which team, which individual, won the Gold." Cowlshaw: "Showing everything on tape delay just doesn't work for me in this era." But ESPN's Gene Wojciechowski said, "NBC's really stuck because they have to tell the back stories of feature stories of these guys to make you even care about the people that you don't know about" ("*Around The Horn*," *ESPN*, 2/16). Meanwhile, DEADSPIN's A.J. Daulerio writes under the header "Still Angry About NBC's Olympic Coverage? Send An Email To Dick Ebersol." Daulerio: "Here's his email address: dick.ebersol@nbcuni.com Hurry! He changes it often" (*DEADSPIN.com*, 2/16).

**STILL FIGHTING THE WEST COAST DELAY:** In Seattle, Ron Judd writes about NBC's decision to show its primetime coverage on the West Coast at 8:00pm PT, a three-hour delay from the East Coast feed. He notes NBC officials "believe their own market research, which suggests people in every market in the United States would rather watch Olympic events three to 12 hours after the fact." Judd in an e-mail to

McCloskey said, "This isn't me creating an issue. It's a large, large number of people, who are doing everything from suggesting boycotts of NBC to urging the FCC to cancel its license." But McCloskey responded that "it's usually just the tiny, vocal minority that speaks out." Judd writes the net made it "clear that NBC isn't unwilling to discuss the issue, in general," but advised Judd to submit a complaint to NBC. Judd adds: "I'm telling them you're angry. They don't believe it. Clearly, it's time they heard directly from that tiny, vocal minority" (*SEATTLE TIMES*, 2/17). ESPN.com's J.A. Adande said, "Even when they do show stuff live in certain time zones ... we can't go on Twitter because (if) we go on Twitter, you see the outcome of the events out there. NBC must think that the Internet and Twitter doesn't exist. They need to act like it's 2010" ("*Around The Horn*," *ESPN*, 2/16). But Sacramento's KCRA-NBC News Dir Anzio Williams said that the delayed primetime coverage on the West Coast "is beneficial for people and is a model that has worked for decades." He added that an earlier broadcast, which would begin at 5:00pm PT to coincide with the East Coast start, "wouldn't help most people." Williams: "People would still be driving home. This gives us the most number of viewers, which is why we call it prime time -- it's the most valuable real estate" (*SACRAMENTO BEE*, 2/17).

**COVERAGE RECEIVING MIXED REVIEWS:** In Vancouver, Lowell Ullrich writes if there is "any reason to watch the American coverage -- and frankly, CTV's early work has been so superior there doesn't seem as if there's a need -- it's only because of our curious nature as Canadians to check out how we are being portrayed." So far, NBC has "more than gone out of its way to get it right." The net has been "hitting doubles and triples if not home runs the first few days" (*Vancouver PROVINCE*, 2/17). In DC, Lisa de Moraes lists the Winter Olympics among her "Winners" of the week. Like "manna from heaven, the Winter Games showered NBC with nearly 28 million viewers for four consecutive nights" (*WASHINGTON POST*, 2/17). But SBNATION.com's Spencer Hall wrote, "If you like sports and want to watch the Olympics as a sports fan, go find yourself a guerilla feed of CTV's coverage. It's been getting great reviews from people who actually like sports, even if you'll have to go with the blatant pro-Canadian slant" (*SBNATION.com*, 2/16). ESPN's Mike Greenberg said of NBC's coverage, "A lot of it has been very entertaining. Some of it, less so. You realize how it's difficult to watch some of them. It's not the fault of the coverage. The actual sports themselves just don't lend themselves to the coverage" ("*Mike & Mike in the Morning*," *ESPN2*, 2/17).

**COVERING A TRAGEDY:** In DC, Len Shapiro wrote in the "wake of the first Olympics luge fatality since 1964, we're not about to criticize NBC for scrapping its original opening and going right to the news of the deadly crash" prior to Friday's Opening Ceremony. Shapiro: "Still, was it really necessary to show the tape of the crash three different times in that opening? No. Did it add anything more to the story after it was aired the first time on the Olympic telecast? No. And could we also have done without the still photo of the resuscitation efforts? Yes." Showing video of late Georgia luger Nodar Kumaritashvili once "would have been enough to fulfill any journalistic responsibility on the Olympic telecast, especially considering NBC had aired the footage on its network news telecast earlier in the evening" (*WASHINGTONPOST.com*, 2/16).

**TALENT REVIEWS:** In Albany, Pete Dougherty reviewed NBC's announcing talent, and wrote Mike Emrick is the "best hockey play-by-play man in the business, and he did nothing to deter that opinion" during yesterday's U.S.-Switzerland men's game. Dougherty noted he is "surprised" by the "candidness of ... women's curling analyst" Colleen Jones. Other than her "annoying habit of calling the U.S. women by their first names, Jones has been refreshingly harsh on some decisions of the U.S. team" (*TIMESUNION.com*, 2/16). SPORTINGNEWS.com's Dan Levy wrote NBC's Dan Patrick

Sunday during coverage of the men's moguls did his "best winter-hat-and-puffy-vest-laden impersonation of a teenager trying to fit in at a ski resort" (*SPORTINGNEWS.com*, 2/16).

**LAUGHTER IS THE BEST MEDICINE:** Comedian Stephen Colbert is taping two episodes of Comedy Central's "The Colbert Report" this week in Vancouver. Colbert made an arrangement with NBC "to be allowed to film inside" Richmond Olympic Oval, and in exchange will join Costas "for a commentary on NBC" (*CP*, 2/16).

**VIEWERS TURNING IN THROUGHOUT CANADA:** In Toronto, Chris Zelkovich reported the Vancouver Games seem certain to be the "most-watched anything" in Canadian TV history. The Canadian Olympic Broadcast Media Consortium earned 7.1 million viewers for Monday's coverage of freestyle skier Alexandre Bilodeau receiving his gold medal, and primetime coverage for that night averaged 5.3 million viewers (*THESTAR.com*, 2/16). Meanwhile, Zelkovich writes CTV figure skating announcers Jamie Sale and David Pelletier are the net's "best by far." They have "done a little TV before, but are providing the kind of work expected from season veterans." Sale and Pelletier are "informative, engaging and witty -- the kind of thing you hope for in analysts but seldom get." They also "don't mince words," and when "something's wrong, they don't make excuses or gloss over errors" (*TORONTO STAR*, 2/17). The PROVINCE's Ullrich writes Pelletier had the "best line so far," as when describing the figure skating outfits he said, "There's just one word for this -- wrong. Or maybe two works -- wrong and wrong." But Ullrich notes the COBMC "isn't vast enough when it comes to finding an expert commentator who can point on the nuances of, say, biathlon, when it's not exactly a programming staple." The lack of expert opinion has "made for some amusing moments through the first few days" of the Games (*Vancouver PROVINCE*, 2/17).

**GOING DOWNHILL:** Sports media writer William Houston reviewed CTV's coverage of Monday's men's downhill, and wrote the network "needs to pay attention when it airs the competition live." Despite the "many opportunities it had to insert a commercial, it decided to air one immediately before Canadian Robbie Dixon was scheduled to ski," when the "better decision would have been to stay with the telecast to set up his run." However, the commercial break ran long, "forcing CTV to rush back to the live coverage, but not in time." It had to "wind back the tape to catch Dixon's start." The screen went blank for a moment and viewers "heard the tape rewind." Houston: "It was a mess, and it would have been easily avoided by not airing the commercial directly before a Canadian run." CTV's downhill coverage was "generally sloppy." Primetime host Brian Williams "failed to identify the men's downhill play by play team," and there also was a "technical glitch that sent the telecast back to the studio" (*TRUTHANDRUMOURS.net*, 2/15).

## 2. OLYMPIC OFFICIALS DISMISS EARLY CRITICISM OF VANCOUVER GAMES

Senior Olympic officials are "lining up to defend the 2010 Winter Games against a torrent of criticism, based on the Games' troubled first few days," according to Rod Mickleburgh of the *GLOBE & MAIL*. Canada IOC member Dick Pound said, "To say these Olympics are not well-organized, that they're not great, and people aren't having a wonderful time is, quite frankly, silly." VANOC CEO John Furlong pointed to the "tens of thousands of people thronging the streets of Vancouver, as the Games have progressed." He said, "I've never seen this before, and I've been going to Games for a long time. All the venues for the first day of hockey and curling are full. This has never happened before. I think IOC officials are quite stunned." Furlong also addressed problems in Vancouver including what he called "[this demon on Cypress Mountain](#)," indicating that the "measure of an organizing committee is how you fix them." Pound yesterday also "took a

shot at those criticizing" the Whistler Sliding Centre following the death of luger Nodar Kumaritashvili. Pound: "The outcome was rather extreme, and that's a shame. But people are calling into question the very existence of luge, saying the track was dangerously designed and so on. That's just silly. It's not." He also argued that "current critics have no idea of the many glitches experienced by previous Games." Pound: "When you compare these Games to Torino or Lake Placid or anywhere else, VANOC is a pretty well-oiled machine" (*GLOBE & MAIL*, 2/17).

**RING OF FIRE:** In DC, Tracee Hamilton writes after "just four days of competition, the Vancouver Games are veering off course like a skier who caught an edge." There have been "equipment malfunctions and weather issues and ticket cancellations and safety problems," none of which "compared to the death" of Kumaritashvili. That tragedy "can't be laid at the door of Canadian organizers," but the "percolating cauldron controversy can." VANOC officials yesterday "finally admitted that organizers perhaps had made a mistake" with placing the cauldron behind a chain-link fence. VANOC

VP/Communications Renee Smith-Valade: "Perhaps we underestimated the degree people would want to get close to it." Hamilton notes while VANOC "isn't responsible for controlling the weather," which has caused delays for numerous skiing events, Whistler Mountain "has long had a dicey reputation." Problems at Whistler "were inevitable," as were "problems at Cypress Mountain, site of freestyle skiing and snowboarding."

Hamilton: "None of these problems on its own is huge. But none is insignificant, either" (*WASHINGTON POST*, 2/17). NBC News' Brian Williams noted VANOC is "facing some criticism on a number of fronts, things both within and beyond their control." NBC News' Ron Mott: "There's still plenty of fun in these Games, but the good times are rolling to a hard stop for thousands of fans who've met disappointment of one variety or another. From broken-down ice resurfacing machines to cancelled event tickets ... the Vancouver Organizing Committee is starting to take some heat" ("*Nightly News*," *NBC*, 2/16).

CTVOLYMPICS.ca offers a "summary of what's gone wrong and what the plans are to fix it," including "the bus saga." Buses to Whistler "run smoothly, but many of the buses to Cypress prove no match for the steep road to the slopes overlooking Vancouver." Several dozen buses have broken down, "several dozen drivers quit, upset at onerous working conditions," while others "get lost" (*CTVOLYMPICS.ca*, 2/16).

**FALSE START:** The *GLOBE & MAIL*'s Gary Mason writes the "litany of problems with which the Games have been plagued is sadly becoming the overarching narrative of this 17-day sports festival." Delays happen "all the time at the Winter Olympics," but they "attract more attention when they become part of a snowball of criticism that grows and becomes more powerful as it rages down the mountain." Mason: "Fair or not, the epithet for these Games has already been written by many of those here covering them. The British media have almost unanimously declared them a disaster. And now organizers are getting heat for poor planning from quarters closer to home" (*GLOBE & MAIL*, 2/17).

In Vancouver, Michael Smyth writes much of the criticism is "brutally unfair, inaccurate and exaggerated," but VANOC is "not showing an ability to deal quickly with the sore points." Organizers cannot "control lousy weather," but with a "budget in the billions, and more than six years to prepare, are you really telling me we couldn't figure out a way for people to stand safely on the side of a hill?" (*Vancouver PROVINCE*, 2/17). The *GLOBE & MAIL*'s Stephen Brunt writes the criticism the Games are receiving from int'l media is "not merely a case of cynical, bored reporters willfully ignoring silver linings." Some of the problems "are the result of unforeseeable circumstances, of acts of God, some have been wildly overblown," but some are "absolutely real and simply inexcusable." The two most "significant venues built specifically for these games, the Whistler Sliding Centre and the Richmond Oval, have in their first week of Olympic

operation been the site of tragedy and massive embarrassment" (*GLOBE & MAIL*, 2/17).

**WINTER OF MY DISCONTENT:** In Portland, John Canzano wrote if the "remainder of this Olympics is as dicey as the first five full days what we will have here is a dismal failure." Sochi 2014 officials "must be giddy at the idea of attempting to top this fizzlefest" (*OREGONLIVE.com*, 2/16). The AP's Erin McClam writes, "Nothing seems to be going right in Vancouver, where the Glitch Games are officially under way" (*AP*, 2/17). ABC's Robin Roberts: "Some are calling them the 'Glitch Games' because of all the problems" ("*GMA*," *ABC*, 2/17). In Denver, Mark Kiszla writes Canada has "turned the Winter Games into a \$6[B] comedy of errors." From the Opening Ceremony, when Canadians "tossed a national treasure in the back of a pickup with the Olympic torch," VANOC officials have "come off looking like a bunch of hosers" (*DENVER POST*, 2/17). ESPN.com's J.A. Adande said of the ice-resurfacing issues at the speedskating venue, "It's one thing to have problems with Mother Nature outside ... but you would think an indoor, controlled environment should be able to have sufficient ice to hold a world-class skating event" ("*Around The Horn*," *ESPN*, 2/16).

**PUTTING ON A BRAVE FACE:** In Manchester, Lawrence Donegan writes under the header, "Shooting The Messenger Will Not Right The Wrongs At Vancouver 2010." IOC Dir of Communications Mark Adams yesterday said that he "did not recognise the Games as portrayed by the British press," who have been highly critical of Vancouver thus far. Adams said, "You wonder which city they're reporting from. What they're saying bears absolutely no relation to what I've seen at the competitions. It's been amazing. You wonder where these people have been." In addition, Smith-Valade said the Games "are a great success." Donegan writes it is "far easier to misrepresent the reporting of foreign journalists, and then criticise that instead." Donegan: "When the message is uncomfortable attack the messenger. ... The story becomes the media's reporting of the story and not the story itself" (*GUARDIAN.co.uk*, 2/17).

**STILL PLENTY OF TIME:** In Toronto, Dave Feschuk notes even the "sunniest Canadian propagandist would have a difficult time whitewashing the litany of problems that have plagued these five-ringed proceedings," and there has been "inexcusable incompetence here." Feschuk: "You can't bring Nodar Kumaritashvili back to life. You can't have a do-over on the black marks." But the "story of these Games, though the opening chapters aren't reading particularly flatteringly for the local honchos, isn't written yet" (*TORONTO STAR*, 2/17). The CP's Stephanie Levitz in a special to YAHOO SPORTS wrote under the header, "Olympic Organizers Have 12 Days To Show They're Better Than This." What started as "teething issues -- lost bus drivers, swamped concession stands and unbelievably long and slow lineups -- have gotten much worse" (*SPORTS.YAHOO.com*, 2/16). In Phoenix, Paola Boivin notes the "problems are numerous" in Vancouver, but the "good news is there is plenty of time to recover, and NBC's ratings have been strong." Many events already have had "spectacular endings, and plenty of the more-popular events, from the finals to ice dancing and free skating, have yet to happen" (*ARIZONA REPUBLIC*, 2/17).

**DON'T FORGET THE PAST:** In N.Y., Mike Vaccaro writes, "Some journalists, always quick to judge these things, have already declared these the Worst Games Ever, which is both premature and an unnecessary slap at Atlanta, which earned the title in 1996 and has held a vise-like grip on it ever since" (*N.Y. POST*, 2/17).

### 3. VANOC CANCELS 20,000 STANDING-ROOM TICKETS FOR CYPRESS MOUNTAIN

VANOC yesterday announced the "cancellation of 20,000 general admission standing-room tickets for the remaining events at Cypress Mountain" during the Vancouver Games, according to Scott Thurston of the BOSTON GLOBE. The canceled

tickets, valued at \$50-65, will mean "about \$1.5[M] in lost revenue." VANOC officials indicated that "almost a foot of snow has been washed away in the standing-room area, and with snowboard events taking place daily, there is insufficient snow to move and build the area back up." VANOC VP/Ticketing & Consumer Marketing Caley Denton: "Our senior management and venue team have spent significant time on site to try and find a way to accommodate spectators in the standing room areas for the events. We've exhausted all avenues but it just wasn't possible to make the area safe for spectators." VANOC CEO John Furlong: "It has not been a fun experience for us. We were not prepared to create a situation that in fact could clearly begin to encroach on our field of play." Thurston notes the events affected include the "men's and women's snowboard halfpipe, freestyle ski cross, and snowboard parallel giant slalom" (*BOSTON GLOBE*, 2/17). The announcement puts the total amount of tickets "cancelled during these Games" at 28,000, but IOC Dir of Communications Mark Adams noted that "around 60,000 tickets were canceled" at the '98 Nagano Games (*AROUNDTHERINGS.com*, 2/16). Denton said that organizers "considered options such as laying down plastic, wood and AstroTurf in the spectator section but couldn't make it work." Ticket holders "will have their money refunded automatically at the end of the Games" (*VANCOUVER SUN*, 2/17).

**JUST THE LATEST SETBACK:** In N.Y., Ian Austen notes the announcement was the "latest in a series of setbacks" for the Games, as it "continued to raise questions about the selection of Cypress for freestyle skiing and snowboarding events over more distant resorts that are more certain to have snow." The atmosphere at the Olympic competition now "will be different from that at most events ... with no swarm of fans at the base of the halfpipe, and none along the deck above the walls." Octagon Associate Dir of Action Sports Amen Teter, the brother and agent of U.S. snowboarder Hannah Teter, said, "Let's hope there's some energy to pump some life into it." Meanwhile, Austen notes some of Teter's relatives and friends "were left scrambling for tickets to her competition on Thursday" (*N.Y. TIMES*, 2/17). One fan wrote in an e-mail, "Cancelling everyone's general-admission tickets yet again proves that the Olympics truly are for the elite and not those of us who are counted as everyday people, who want more than anything to see their friend win a gold medal" (*Vancouver PROVINCE*, 2/17).

**SNOW BELOW STANDARDS:** In DC, Tracee Hamilton notes bad weather "continues to plague the Cypress Mountain venue," as the start of yesterday's women's snowboard cross event was "delayed for two hours by heavy rain and fog, which did the course no favors." U.S. snowboarder Lindsey Jacobellis compared the course to "mashed potatoes." Italy snowboarder Raffaella Brutto said, "When I start, I go very well, then stop, stop, stop. The snow is not very beautiful" (*WASHINGTON POST*, 2/17). Norway snowboarder Linn Haug, who will compete in the halfpipe, said of the snow, "Honestly, well, it's not the best -- put it that way. Seems like everybody is riding sketchy. No one's really happy. We're all like, 'Are you kidding me? This is the Olympics.'" Australia snowboarder Holly Crawford: "You know, you come to these competitions hoping to ride the best pipe in the world. And then you get slushed in the bottom of the run." U.S. snowboarder Shaun White: "I know it's not the best conditions ever, but it's never held us back before. We've ridden in much worse." In San Diego, Mark Zeigler notes Vancouver experienced its "warmest January on record" (*SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE*, 2/17).

**SKIING IN THE SUBURBS:** In Ft. Worth, Gil LeBreton writes it was "shortsighted" for VANOC to "plan a ski venue in what amounts to the Vancouver suburbs." LeBreton: "Let the record show that the snow is fine in Whistler, where the Alpine ski events are being held. The Cypress Mountain venue, however, is about two hours closer to downtown Vancouver." A volunteer yesterday said of the last time it

snowed on Cypress Mountain, "I don't know -- maybe Christmas?" (*FT. WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM*, 2/17). But in Toronto, Dave Feschuk writes while there has been "well-reasoned second-guessing about the decision to stage events at Cypress Mountain," it also has been "pointed out that a year ago, and in most every year in recent memory, there were heaps of snow where there's none today" (*TORONTO STAR*, 2/17). Meanwhile, in Seattle, Jack Broom noted the "problems at Cypress Mountain have been only partly due to weather." Broom: "Buses have broken down or gotten lost on the way up, with fans waiting for hours in the cold and darkness to return to Vancouver, and spectators, who are barred from bringing their own food and drink, waiting for more than an hour just for a warm beverage." While the \$1.5M loss in ticket revenue is a "tiny part" of VANOC's \$260M in ticket revenue, the "public-relations damage may be more significant" (*SEATTLE TIMES*, 2/17).

**CLEAR SKIES AHEAD:** In Vancouver, Darah Hansen reports meteorologists are "predicting sunshine and blue skies for the region over the coming days," but "whether that spells good news or bad for the Olympic Games will likely depend on whether you're a participant or a spectator." Global TV Meteorologist Mark Madryga said it is "not great news for outdoor events," as the system "could cause headaches for athletes and organizers with above-zero temperatures melting snow on Olympic courses during the day, then icing up dangerously overnight" (*VANCOUVER SUN*, 2/17). VANOC VP/Communications Renee Smith-Valade said that "many of the difficulties have been caused by the warmest winter weather on record, which VANOC could not have foreseen." Smith-Valade: "It's weather and it is what it is and we deal with it." The IOC's Adams "brushed aside a suggestion ... that the IOC may have erred in siting the Winter Olympics in an area with such a moderate climate" (*SEATTLE TIMES*, 2/17).

**LITTLE WIGGLE ROOM AT THIS POINT:** The women's combined is scheduled to be held tomorrow at Whistler after being postponed from Sunday, and YAHOO SPORTS' Charles Robinson reported with "nine major skiing events to complete in the next 12 days, the schedule is looking perilously tight." If the weather "prevents those races from happening in the allotted time, officials are going to be forced into emergency mode," which could mean "doubling up on events in a single day, or possibly even the doomsday scenario: simply canceling events that can't be completed." Events "have never extended beyond an Olympic Closing Ceremony at a modern-era Winter Games, and with Vancouver's effort already encountering a litany of problems, canceling events would be a crushing blow." It also would be an "embarrassment" to the IOC, which "knew significant weather problems could arise when it awarded these Games to this city" (*SPORTS.YAHOO.com*, 2/16).

#### 4. OLYMPIC CAULDRON TO BE MADE MORE ACCESSIBLE TO FANS TODAY

VANOC CEO John Furlong yesterday promised to make the "cauldron holding the Olympic flame in Jack Poole Plaza more accessible to the public," according to Ivens & Cooper of the Vancouver PROVINCE. Furlong in an interview on CTV said, "The reaction to the cauldron has been over the top -- tens of thousands of people have been to see it." The cauldron is located behind a chain-link fence, and Furlong said, "What we're going to try to do is put remedies into place that will allow people to take the magic photo of the Games from that site." He added VANOC should have the changes in place some time today. Furlong: "We're going to fix it ... but it takes a bit of time because it does require a bit of security and reorganizing." Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson yesterday said that the city has "taken a number of calls from residents that are disappointed the Olympic flame is blocked behind the fence" (*Vancouver PROVINCE*, 2/17). Robertson: "We want that flame to be more accessible to people. I've made a call to John Furlong (and) I

expressed my concern and the voices of the people." Robertson acknowledged that the cauldron is "getting unusual attention and criticism because it is down at street level," as opposed to previous Olympics where the cauldron has been "on tops of buildings or high up on hills" (*GLOBE & MAIL*, 2/17). NBC's Matt Lauer said, "People complain, things get done here in Vancouver" (*Today*, NBC, 2/17).

**FALSE STARTS:** In N.Y., Christopher Clarey writes a "problematic opening week" for the Vancouver Games continued yesterday when "errors by biathlon officials caused unprecedented mistakes to be made in the starting procedures at the men's and women's biathlon pursuit races." In the women's 10km pursuit yesterday, three competitors were "held back incorrectly and forced to leave late," and the officials "responsible for the gaffe were relieved of their starting responsibilities" for the men's 12.5km pursuit that followed. But there were "more mistakes," as Canada biathlete Jean-Philippe Leguellec and U.S. biathlete Jeremy Teela "were sent off too early." The U.S. Biathlon team "filed a protest after the men's race" (*N.Y. TIMES*, 2/17). Teela, who was penalized 22 seconds for starting early and finished 24th, said, "I was bib 9, and I passed nobody on the course. That's when I realized something was wrong" (*USA TODAY*, 2/17).

**WRONG KIND OF PR:** The *GLOBE & MAIL*'s Parkinson & Robertson write the Vancouver Games for Ontario-based Resurfiice Corp. were "supposed to be an opportunity to get its name out on the global stage," but instead have "turned into a very public embarrassment." After the company's Olympia ice-surfacing machines faced "malfunctions, long delays and mounting criticism" at the Richmond Olympic Oval Monday during the speedskating competition, VANOC decided to "bring in a Zamboni-built resurfacers" to take over the job. Olympia machines "will continue to handle ice resurfacing at the hockey, figure skating and short-track speed skating venues," but the replacement of the machines "with those of its biggest competition at the high-profile, long-track oval has brought negative international attention to Resurfiice." Mark Messer, who oversees the ice conditions at the venue, said, "It's been a couple of tough days. Different machines, different problems, it's electronics." Furlong said, "For some reason, the machines we are using are struggling. They were clearly unable to do the work we were asking them to do, and we're not going to take any more chances with them" (*GLOBE & MAIL*, 2/17).

**PARDON OUR FRENCH:** Opening and Closing Ceremony Exec Producer David Atkins said that there will be "more French in the closing festivities than there was in the opening -- and that that was the plan all along." Atkins said the "critics of the amount of French content" in the Opening Ceremony, "hopefully, will find the closing a little more palatable." Atkins added that there will be "more French spoken and more French performances" (*GLOBE & MAIL*, 2/17). Meanwhile, in Vancouver, Randy Shore notes some leaders of the city's ethnic communities said that Canada's "ethnic diversity and the role and history of visible minorities in Canadian culture were given short shrift" in the Opening Ceremony. Surrey, B.C. resident Sukhi Sandhu has written Furlong and VANOC Chair Rusty Goepel "[asking for a meeting to address their concerns](#)" (*VANCOUVER SUN*, 2/17).

**MEDIA-FRIENDLY GAMES:** In St. Louis, Vahe Gregorian wrote the Vancouver Games from a media perspective have been the "Olympics of least resistance among the eight I've been to." Gregorian: "Media buses are on time and not crowded, and since we've all had background checks, security screening is random. Nine times out of 10 I just get my credential zapped and am waved through without having to get equipment X-rayed." Gregorian wrote Canadian citizens "haven't seemed delirious about the Games but definitely are upbeat and pleased to welcome the world" (*STLTODAY.com*, 2/16). In Houston, David Barron wrote arriving at events "has been relatively easy" for media

members. Barron: "Upon arrival here, we're greeted by security officers with optical scanners who click on the barcode that is included on every Olympic credential badge. At that point, a picture of our credential pops up on the computer screen to attest we are who we say we are." Barron noted "nine times out of 10" officials will "scan us in, smile and wave us through the front entrance" (*CHRON.com*, 2/16).

## 5. WHY STEEP WHISTLER SITE WAS CHOSEN AS HOME FOR SLIDING CENTRE



**Whistler Sliding Centre Site Chosen In Part Due To Its Financial Viability After Games**

A reconstruction of the events leading up to the death of Georgia luger Nodar Kumaritashvili during a training run Friday at the Whistler Sliding Centre "shows that the track was the result of decisions that weren't entirely related to sport," according to a front-page piece by Crawford, Albergotti & Johnson of the *WALL STREET JOURNAL*. VANOC VP/Sport Tim Gayda in '02 said that the decision to construct the sliding center in Whistler "would make the track financially viable after" the Vancouver Games. He added the Int'l Luge Federation and the International

Bobsleigh & Tobogganing Federation (FIBT) were "pushing us to look at options at Whistler." FIBT President Bob Storey said the move was a "commercial decision." But FIBT Technical Delegate Terry Gudzowsky said that the "topography meant the course would be unusually difficult and fast." Crawford, Albergotti & Johnson note "soon after the track opened for testing in March 2008, it became apparent that it was faster than expected," and the course's "dangers became part of its marketing." Promotional materials on its Web site read, "Vivid, violent and rough -- the Whistler Sliding Centre is not for the faint of heart." But Storey said that it would be "jumping to conclusions to blame Mr. Kumaritashvili's crash on speed." Storey: "The Royal Canadian Mounted Police did not attribute it to design flaws and did not attribute it to speed" (*WALL STREET JOURNAL*, 2/17).

**CHANGES NECESSARY?** The *GLOBE & MAIL*'s Jeff Blair writes under the header, "What Will Become Of The Whistler Track?" The '13 World Luge Championships will be held at the C\$104M Whistler Sliding Centre, "yet nobody wants a repeat of what happened here, either the death of another slider ... or the unsatisfactory decision to make the men's racers start from the women's start, and the women's and doubles to start from the junior women's." Blair: "So what do they do? Reconfigure the track, which [FIBT] says is fine just as it is?" Canada luge coach Wolfgang Staudinger: "Well, if they do that, who pays for it?" (*GLOBE & MAIL*, 2/17).

## 6. SETH WESCOTT RE-UPS WITH VISA AFTER CONFIRMING SOCHI PLANS

By Tripp Mickle, Staff Writer, SportsBusiness Journal

Visa has agreed to extend its partnership with Seth Wescott following the snowboard cross Gold Medalist's announcement that he plans to compete in the '14 Sochi Games. Visa Head of Global Sponsorship Management Michael Lynch said, "You couldn't ask for a better ambassador for the sport, the Olympic movement and Visa." He added, "As soon

as he said he planned to be in Sochi, we knew we wanted to renew him. Once we commit to an athlete, we like to stay with them as long as we can." Wescott, who is represented by Octagon, has been with Visa since the '06 Turin Games. Terms of a new deal still have to be negotiated. Lynch will work with Octagon Managing Dir of Olympics & Action Sports Peter Carlisle on the new deal. One of the things the two will discuss is whether or not Visa will support another "Visa Seth Wescott Ride With Me SBX Tour." The two partnered on a similar program after Wescott won gold in '06, which allowed Wescott to conduct a series of snowboard cross instructional clinics for kids across the U.S. to help grow the popularity and exposure of snowboard cross. Meanwhile, Wescott visited the Omega Boutique in the Hotel Vancouver Fairmont yesterday, where Omega USA Brand President Gregory Swift presented him with an Omega Seamaster Planet Ocean watch in honor of his snowboard cross gold medal.

**SAYING CONGRATULATIONS:** Wescott missed the snowboard cross medal ceremony because of media interviews, but when he arrived back at a Vancouver apartment in time to see NBC's tape-delayed coverage of his race, he was surprised to see a Visa ad appear immediately afterward. As images of Wescott flashed on the screen, actor Morgan Freeman said, "When it comes to the sport of snowboard cross, you deserve a certain amount of recognition for just finishing, let alone winning two medals. Congratulations Seth." Wescott, who did not know Visa had planned the commercial, afterward said, "To come to the house (Monday) night, sit down and see that come on was a powerful experience." Lynch said, "We know the opportunity in the moment when we're sharing with Seth his accomplishments is special and it's worked extremely well for us."

#### 7. CONSULTANTS WEIGH IN ON SHAUN WHITE'S MARKETABILITY, POTENTIAL

U.S. snowboarder Shaun White this afternoon at Cypress Mountain begins his pursuit of his second career Olympic Gold Medal in the men's halfpipe, an accomplishment that would further entrench him as the most successful and marketable star in the sport. The Flying Tomato already has parlayed his immense X Games and Dew Tour success into an impressive sponsorship portfolio featuring Target, Red Bull, Oakley, Burton, Ubisoft, AT&T and Park City Mountain Resort. White is one of the few athletes to have successfully transcended his niche sport, appearing on a [Times Square billboard](#) for Target and helping create a line of self-titled videogames for Ubisoft, and another Olympic Gold Medal can only benefit his mainstream marketability. Even NBC's Bob Costas during last night's primetime coverage said of White, "His stylish Gold Medal run in 2006 made him the undisputed king of action sports and today, you can wear his clothing line or play his videogame." Earlier this week, Staff Writer Erik Swanson reached out to Aquarius Sports & Entertainment President Marc Bluestein and Relay Worldwide Dir of Strategic Consulting Jonathan Jensen for their thoughts on White's pre-Games marketability and what kind of bounce the snowboarder can expect from another Gold Medal. THE DAILY attempted to speak to White's agent at IMG to discuss the marketing strategy, but Mark Ervin declined to comment.

**Q:** Assess Shaun White's marketing portfolio entering the Games. Would you say he has maximized his marketing potential or is there still room for improvement?

**Jensen:** It sounds as if Shaun is heavily involved in a lot of his commercial ventures, whether it's helping design the clothing line for Target, equipment for Burton or eyewear for Oakley. If he's going to continue in that vein he's probably limited only by time commitments. I'm sure he's turned down a lot of opportunities for that reason. There are only so many hours in the day when you're still competing in the athletic arena.

**Bluestein:** His current marketing portfolio is strong with blue chip brands. I don't believe he's maximized his marketing potential; his room for improvement will depend upon his success at this year's Games.

**Q:** What are the challenges in marketing an athlete from an "extreme" sport like snowboarding to the mainstream public?

**Bluestein:** Transitioning the audience and the following of a niche sport to an audience that follows sports that deliver broad-based audience appeal such as the NFL or MLB.

**Jensen:** Once you have appeared in multiple Olympic Games and have had the type of success Shaun has had, I'm not sure you can argue that he isn't mainstream, even if the sports he participates in may be considered niche by some people.

**Q:** Has White already successfully transcended his sport to become a mainstream star, or does he need a strong showing in Vancouver?

**Jensen:** I would think that anything he does during the 2010 Olympics is simply icing on the cake. With what he has accomplished in multiple sports it does not look to me as if he has anything to prove. Plus, he's still so young he will have many more chances to excel athletically.

**Bluestein:** Yes, he's transcended his sport to become somewhat of a mainstream star. However, a strong showing in Vancouver is important for him to stay relevant once the Games are over.

**Q:** White has contributed designs for his Shaun White 4 Target line, which is currently featured on Times Square billboards, and he also has dabbled in videogame design for Ubisoft. Assess the impact of these ventures on his marketability.

**Bluestein:** With regards to video games, I think that is a smart alignment on his marketability. The age group playing the video games is closely aligned with the demographic participating in and following extreme sports.

**Jensen:** It goes without saying that any time you can infuse your own unique personality and touch in your "off-the-field" projects it usually is that much more impactful for the brand and also adds to the athlete's bottom line. The larger the personal and time commitments, the larger and more expansive the partnership between the company and athlete. I assume he's done really well with these venues from a financial perspective.

**Q:** What kind of post-Olympics bounce can he expect from a strong performance? Can Olympic athletes really expect big deals from advertisers in a down sponsorship market?

**Bluestein:** I think the bounce will be based on what he and his representatives align him with to stay relevant since he won't be back on the global stage until 2014. Finding opportunities which keep him relevant with programming such as "Dancing With the Stars," etc. (see Apolo Ohno) which will deliver a mass media audience. The right athlete, connected to the right brand, with the right audience would benefit regardless of the state of the market.

**Jensen:** It does not look to me as if Shaun and the folks from IMG have employed a



**White's Involvement With Video Games Seen As Smart**

strategy that is contingent upon post-Olympic partnerships. It looks to me as if they have been very careful and strategic in constructing his sponsorship portfolio. I'm sure they will also be very selective with any additional corporate partnerships or projects moving forward.

## 8. OLYMPIC NAMES & FACES: GOLD COULD PUT VONN IN PHELPS TERRITORY

In N.Y., Corky Siemaszko notes U.S. skier Lindsey Vonn "begins her much-anticipated run today for five Olympic gold medals -- a downhill drama that's likely to net her millions in green." Marketing experts said that "even one gold medal could turn Vonn, who made \$2.5[M] in endorsements last year, into a money machine on par" with U.S. swimmer Michael Phelps. GroupM Entertainment Sports & Partnerships Exec VP & President Greg Luckman: "Lindsey is the total package from a marketability standpoint. If at the end of this week she is wearing gold around her neck, she will undeniably propel to another level." Luckman added Vonn "has the unique ability to perform on the slopes while also transcending her sport into popular culture" (*N.Y. DAILY NEWS*, 2/17). Meanwhile, in N.Y., Bill Pennington writes Vonn and U.S. skier Julia Mancuso "have long been the yin and yang of American ski racing." Vonn is "trying to win multiple gold medals to validate her last two years of international domination," while Mancuso "has been nearly an afterthought after two consecutive years of subpar results." Mancuso was "hoping to use the pre-Olympic period to distribute free samples of her self-designed underwear line, called Kiss My Tiara," while Vonn last week sparked an "international news media frenzy" when she announced she had a serious shin injury (*N.Y. TIMES*, 2/17).

**BIG PERSONALITY:** In St. Louis, Vahe Gregorian wrote U.S. figure skater Johnny Weir's dream "isn't just to be known for his skating," but also for his "witty, whimsical and frequently outlandish personality, which tends to muddle, if not muzzle, his hopes of also being seen as a no-nonsense worker." Weir: "I want people to remember that I was able to speak my mind, I was able to voice my opinions about things and have no shame and no problems about it." Gregorian notes PETA "has protested Weir's use of fox fur on one of his costumes." While Weir "grudgingly acquiesced after U.S. nationals" last month, he said that he "has continued to be threatened by anti-fur activists." Weir added that due to "threats of bodily harm and death," he chose to "stay in the Olympic Village instead of a hotel as he would have preferred" (*ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH*, 2/16).

**CALL TO THE 'PEN:** In Boston, gossip columnists Shanahan & Goldstein report U.S. moguls skier Hannah Kearney, who won the first U.S. Gold Medal of the Vancouver Games, recently received a call from Red Sox Chair Tom Werner "to ask if she might like to throw out the first pitch" at a Yankees-Red Sox game in April. Kearney, a "big Sox fan," said that she "absolutely" would do it. Kearney reportedly "wore a Jacoby Ellsbury jersey under her jacket during the Opening Ceremony" (*BOSTON GLOBE*, 2/17).

**TRIBUTE ALLOWED TO STAY:** USA Hockey Senior Dir of Communications Dave Fischer said that the IOC allowed U.S. hockey G Ryan Miller to "keep on his helmet a tribute to a cousin who died due to complications from leukemia." Fischer: "It wasn't a violation of the IOC rules" (*SPORTS.YAHOO.com*, 2/16). Meanwhile, Miller "covered up the words 'Miller Time' that are inscribed on the back of his helmet" with some stickers. Miller: "I respect the rules here" (*BOSTON GLOBE*, 2/17).

**DO YOU REMEMBER THE TIME?** Former U.S. speedskater Bonnie Blair yesterday "stopped by the USA House to unveil and autograph her likeness on a chalk mural honoring 19 winter athletes" in the U.S. Olympic HOF. Blair is among the 19 athletes honored on the mural, in addition to hockey players Billy Cleary and Jim Craig, figure skaters Dorothy Hamill, Kristi Yamaguchi and Scott Hamilton, and speedskater

Dan Jansen (*BOSTON GLOBE*, 2/17). Meanwhile, former U.S. skier Tommy Moe said of leveraging a Gold Medal into a lasting career, "I think for a lot of the Olympic athletes out there ... you come across as a real person and that'll take you down the road to a lot of opportunities as far as endorsement deals and different contractual agreements with companies." Moe added, "The biggest thing is going out and promoting yourself, maybe having a great agent is very important also" ("*Squawk Box*," *CNBC*, 2/16).

**BOOK WORM:** U.S. figure skater Rachel Flatt has partnered with Reading Is Fundamental. Flatt has taped a PSA for the organization and will continue to support its activities to support literacy throughout this year (*RIF*).

## 9. SALES OF OLYMPIC MERCHANDISE ALREADY EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

By Terry Lefton, Editor-At-Large

Olympic merchandise sales are surpassing expectations in the early going, even before the men's hockey tourney is in full swing. Going into the Games, VANOC officials projected retail licensing sales of \$500M and \$54M in royalties. "We're tracking slightly ahead of budget so far, and since we haven't played a [men's Canadian] hockey game yet, that's making us feel pretty good," said VANOC Dir of Licensing & Merchandising Dennis Kim late yesterday afternoon. He noted that for the first time a name and number T-shirt is being sold for every player on the Canadian hockey team. Not yet launched is a program from Gameday Auction, which will sell game-used items, including pieces of the net from the men's Gold Medal hockey game. VANOC has 49 licensees making products, many in the red of the Canadian Olympic team. As has been

widely documented, Hudson's Bay Co.'s red mittens have become the it item, with around 2.6 million pairs sold to date and perhaps as many as 3.4 million to be sold in total, Kim said. However, HBC's red Olympic team hoody is a scarce enough item that Kim is getting calls from friends and associates asking where they can buy one. For all the emphasis on cool, however, products bearing representations of the VANOC mascots, including apparel and plush, account for slightly more than a quarter of overall sales. There are more than 60 dedicated retail locations selling Olympic licensed goods in and around Vancouver. "Some venues have already surpassed what we thought they would do for the whole Olympics," said Gameday Merchandising President Alan Fey, whose company is directing retail operations at 60 locations within 15 Olympic venues. "The success we have seen so far is the result of a lot of loyal countrymen buying Canadian," Fey said. There is one licensed item that perhaps Fey wishes had not sold so well. "We've had a run on umbrellas because of the rain," he said. "But it's sunny today, so hopefully that will stop."



**T-Shirts Are Being Sold For Every Player On Canadian Hockey Team**

## 10. OLYMPIC MARKETING NOTES: NORWAY CURLING UNIFORMS MAKE A SPLASH

USA TODAY's Steve Wieberg reports the Norway curling team has "raised eyebrows" at the Vancouver Olympic Centre for their "red-white-and-blue, diamond-patterned pants" from Loudmouth Golf. The "loud trousers are part of the team uniform." Norway curler Chris Svae said the pants are "good" because they are "bringing attention to curling

back home in Norway more than usual" (*USA TODAY*, 2/17). Svae said, "They're Norwegian colours, and our (uniforms) weren't that bright, so we just figured we could spice them up a bit with some colours. ... They're comfortable to play in, and that's the most important thing. And if it can draw a little attention to curling in our country, that would be good, too" (*VANCOUVER SUN*, 2/15).

**THE HORSE WHISPERERS:** The N.Y. POST's Page Six reports Ralph Lauren is "being criticized for putting his oversize Polo logo on the chests of the US Olympic athletes instead of the stars and stripes." Some Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) members, who control "some of the most exclusive country clubs in the nation," have talked about "organizing a ban on Polo merchandise in the pro shops in those clubs." But DAR spokesperson Bren Landon said, "No such boycott is planned, nor has it been discussed." Ralph Lauren was "criticized in 1998 for putting the US flag on sweaters, essentially commercializing Old Glory" (*N.Y. POST*, 2/17).

**FASHION FAUX PAS:** In Philadelphia, John Gonzalez wrote, "What is it about the Olympics that inspires sundry nations and TV networks to dress their people in ridiculous, gaudy getups?" Japan speedskaters were "folded into gold-and-black numbers that didn't reflect their country's flag whatsoever and made them look like villains in a bad Tron remake." Ukraine pairs figure skater Tatiana Volosozhar was "squeezed into a blue Lycra/rubber superhero outfit with huge slits across the back and enough cleavage to make Pam Anderson pause." Meanwhile, NBC's Bob Costas "opened the evening coverage the other night sporting a copper-colored plaid suit jacket that I'm pretty sure was made from an old couch my mother used to have in the basement" (*PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER*, 2/16).

**MAKING A CHARGE:** Visa Canada indicated that Chinese tourists and Olympians "used their Visa credit, debit and prepaid cards to the tune" of \$395,000 across B.C. last Friday, which puts them "behind top-ranked U.S. visitors, who collectively shelled out \$2.3[M] that day." Visa reported that "Olympics-fuelled spending by international visitors in the Games' early days has vaulted Visa card spending across B.C." by more than 50% from a year ago. Int'l visitors "spent \$16.6[M] in B.C. during the Games' first three days, up from \$10.8[M] during that period a year ago" (*Vancouver PROVINCE*, 2/17).

**SMALL PRICE TO PAY:** In Chicago, Melissa Harris profiles Illinois-based IT consulting company Black Diamond Technologies' sponsorship of USA Luge. Black Diamond CEO Mike Kupfer said the sponsorship started "about two years ago." Kupfer added the commitment is "small, in the tens of thousands of dollars," and in return, Black Diamond's logo "appears on newsletters, on the luge association's Web site and in its media guide." Kupfer said that he "plans to renew the sponsorship next year" (*CHICAGO TRIBUNE*, 2/17).

## 11. SNOWBOARDING FINDS ITSELF IN MEDIA SPOTLIGHT DURING OLYMPICS

Snowboarding, in its 12th year as an Olympic sport, "continues to grow in ways we never imagined," and it is "now officially a bratty kid who is convinced we will never understand it," according to Bill Plaschke of the L.A. TIMES. U.S. snowboarder Lindsey Jacobellis, "unlike virtually every other Olympian in the world who has just competed" in a medal event, "walked past several dozen media members waiting and shouting for her" after her elimination from the snowboard cross competition yesterday. USOC officials, who "refreshingly demand accountability from their athletes, coaxed her back into a news conference." Plaschke writes snowboarding once every four years is "put under a national spotlight and judged like all other American sports, by standings and a scoreboard," and while snowboarders "may not like that harsher glare ... they certainly don't have any

trouble cashing checks from sponsors who do" (*L.A. TIMES*, 2/17).

**PUSHING THE ENVELOPE:** FOXSPORTS.com's Mark Kriegel wrote short-track speedskating, freestyle skiing, snowboarding and skeleton, all of which have been added to the Olympics since '92, are "all extreme sports" and "all require helmets, for good reason." Kriegel wrote "death-defying stunts are now expected, whether they end happily, like Shaun White's, or tragically," like the death of Georgia luger Nodar Kumaritashvili on Friday. Former NBC Olympic anchor Jim Lampley: "Virtually all of the additions to the Winter Games, at least since I've been covering the Olympics, have been to provide revenue and cheap thrills -- transitory moments of extreme fear and danger" (*FOXSPORTS.com*, 2/16).

**TALE OF TWO COUNTRIES:** In Ft. Worth, Charean Williams writes 12 years after women's hockey's introduction at the '98 Nagano Games, the sport "still is dominated by only two countries," the U.S. and Canada. But U.S. women's hockey coach Mark Johnson said that he has "no concerns of women's hockey going the way of softball, which has been eliminated from the Olympic program for 2012." U.S. G Jessie Vetter: "Obviously, there are those teams that need more funding and need a lot more hockey players starting at a young age playing. But hockey is a special sport, and hopefully we'll be around for a while" (*FT. WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM*, 2/17). Johnson, whose team beat Russia 13-0 yesterday, "continues to walk a tightrope," as he "wants his team to win and to play its best yet he also doesn't want to give the IOC any ideas." In St. Paul, Tom Powers writes the "best solution would be for the rest of the world to hurry up and get better" (*ST. PAUL PIONEER PRESS*, 2/17).

**OLYMPICS GOOD FOR NHL?** Blackhawks Senior VP/Business Operations Jay Blunk said having NHL players participate in the Olympics is "one of the best opportunities we'll ever have to showcase our game to the world." Blunk: "It's unmatched in all of sports." Blunk "thinks the Hawks will receive a big boost by having players like" U.S. RW Patrick Kane and Canada C Jonathan Toews participate in the Olympics (*CHICAGOBUSINESS.com*, 2/17). In Philadelphia, Frank Fitzpatrick writes hockey fans "instead of whining" about the NHL season being stopped for two weeks during the Olympics "ought to be rejoicing to see their sport being played in a setting where, as is rarely the case in the NHL regular season, people might actually pay attention and care." The PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER's Phil Sheridan writes the NHL is "between a puck and a hard place." Sheridan: "To be a truly international sport, you have to accommodate international competition. The timing of the Summer Games fits the NBA calendar. Baseball is trying the WBC. Hockey has to live with this" (*PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER*, 2/17). In Sacramento, Bill Bradley writes the NHL's involvement is "not like the NBA's Olympic involvement, since the Summer Games don't clash with its season." The Olympics are "bad business for the NHL," and NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman "would be right to pull the plug" (*SACRAMENTO BEE*, 2/17).

## 12. OLYMPIC NOTES: VANOC EXAMINING WHY SOME VIP SEATS GOING UNUSED

VANOC officials yesterday said that they are "examining the reasons for why blocks of VIP seating have been going unused at a number of venues." VANOC VP/Ticketing & Consumer Marketing Caley Denton said that there is "no reason why there should be empty seats." But in Vancouver, Jeff Lee reports at a "number of competitions this weekend there was conspicuous blocks of empty seats, irritating spectators and prompting a few to complain to the media." Getting fans "into as many seats as possible was one of the major promises VANOC made after the 2006 Turin Games, which suffered from a high degree of absenteeism." VANOC has "carefully controlled access" to seating for sponsors and IOC guests, "whittling down numbers and telling sponsors and IOC

groups that they have to make sure they use the seats allocated for them." But the problem is "far from resolved, and it has also created a situation where VANOC, in an effort to maximize its revenue, sold a number of seats with partially obstructed views" (*VANCOUVER SUN*, 2/17).

**YOU NEED TICKETS?** In Vancouver, John Colebourn writes under the header, "Good Seats, No Takers." Dozens of scalpers since the start of the Games "have been hovering around the Robson Square area of downtown Vancouver, trying to sell tickets" to events. Pittsburgh native Karen Foertsch yesterday was trying to sell her tickets to the men's figure skating short program but "there were no takers." She said, "This is frustrating. I thought it would be easy to sell these tickets. They are good seats." Meanwhile, Colebourn notes tickets for the men's Gold-medal hockey game are going for C\$5,000 "or more -- if they can be found" (*Vancouver PROVINCE*, 2/17).

**ALL A TWITTER:** In Albany, Nick Zaccardi notes the Vancouver Games are "becoming a forum for all things Twitter." The "biggest stars of the Olympics are on Twitter" including U.S. speedskater Apolo Anton Ohno (85,000 followers), skier Lindsey Vonn (46,000 followers) and speedskater Shani Davis (2,000 followers). Twitter has become "so popular that the term 'Twitter Olympics' is being thrown about in Vancouver." Once athletes arrived in Vancouver earlier this month, the USOC "held a session at the team processing hotel to lay out the guidelines for social media at the Olympics" (*Albany TIMES UNION*, 2/17).



**NOT GOING GREEN:** Activist group World Wildlife Fund (WWF) said that "environmental concerns are going unheeded in the push to prepare" Sochi to host the '14 Winter Games. WWF's Russian branch indicated that "borders of nature reserves had been altered to suit the Olympic site construction, access for non-governmental organisations had been restricted, and its calls for closer monitoring of the environmental impact had gone unheeded." WWF Russia Dir Igor Chestin: "The losses to the environment are already significant. Whatever is done, these will not be 'green games,' but we can at least minimise further damage" (*REUTERS*, 2/16).

### 13. OLYMPIC MEDIA MONITOR

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

NETWORK	MORNING SHOW	FIRST REPORT	TOTAL COVERAGE
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Today

**7:00-7:30am** -- Results; medal count; tickets to some events being cancelled; weather conditions delaying events; fans unable to get close to Olympic cauldron; upcoming events today; snowboarder Seth Wescott's medal ceremony; weather update; snowboarder Lindsey Jacobellis losing in snowboard cross; live interview with Universal Sports' Alan Abrahamson

**7:30-8:00am** -- Men's figure skating results; live interview with figure skating analysts Kristi Yamaguchi and Paul Wylie; taped profile of snowboarder Shaun White.

**8:00-8:30am** -- Men's figure skating results; Jacobellis losing in snowboard cross; today's upcoming events; U.S. skier Lindsey Vonn to begin competing; tour of Vancouver with singer Michael Buble; taped profile of U.S. skier Julia Mancuso; live interview with skiing analyst Picabo Street.

**8:30-9:00am** -- Live interview with mothers and spouse of U.S. pairs figure skaters; taped segment on designer Vera Wang designing the costumes for figure skater Evan Lysacek; live interviews with Vera Wang, U.S. pairs figure skaters Jeremy Barrett, Caydee Denney, Amanda Evora and Mark Ladwig.

**9:00-9:30am** -- Men's figure skating results; Jacobellis losing in snowboard cross; weather conditions delaying events; fans unable to get close to Olympic cauldron; Norwegian curling team's pants; upcoming events today; weather update; live interviews with Canada snowboarder Maelle Ricker and Abrahamson.

**9:30-10:00am** -- Profile of small Canadian town; viewing polar bears in northern Manitoba; cooking demonstration with local Vancouver chefs; taped segment of Olympic athletes telling their "go-to" karaoke song.



The Early Show

13:08

2:16

Fans injured at Olympic concert; medal count; men's figure skating results; weather conditions delaying events; results; Vonn to begin competing; tickets to some events being cancelled.



GMA

17:55

2:20

Men's figure skating results; weather conditions; injury update on Vonn; results.

NETWORK	EVENING SHOW	FIRST REPORT	TOTAL COVERAGE
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Nightly News

9:18

6:16

Medal count; profile of Lysacek.



Evening News

n/a

n/a

No Olympic coverage



World News

9:49

2:28

Older Olympic athletes defeating their younger competitors at the Vancouver Games.

SportsCenter  
(11:00pm ET)

35:10

2:04

The problems and glitches the Vancouver Games have faced; Vonn practicing and likely to compete in five events; weather update; results.

11 MEDAL STAND: EXCITEMENT ABOUNDS WITH START OF MEN'S HOCKEY

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: HOCKEY** -- The Olympics may have officially started Tuesday, as the men's hockey tournament began. In the U.S., viewers will continue to enjoy diverse coverage on NBC, but in Vancouver everyone's focus has shifted to Team Canada's quest for gold. It might be the most important event in the history of Canadian sport.



**SILVER: US SKI & SNOWBOARD ASSOCIATION** -- Did the NGB come to play or what? Seth Wescott, Shannon Bahrke, Bode Miller, Hannah Kearney, Bryon Wilson and Johnny Spillane account for six of Team USA's eight medals in Vancouver -- and that is even before Gold Medal favorite Lindsey Vonn competes for the first time. The effort has put Team USA near the top of the medal stand five days into the Games.



**BRONZE: CANADA'S "OWN THE PODIUM" PROGRAM** -- Team Canada's success on the field of play has been mixed -- just five medals to date -- but it has boosted the enthusiasm of Canadian spectators, making competition venues lively and exciting.



**TIN: VANOC** -- The organizing committee faces a PR nightmare after canceling roughly 20,000 standing-room tickets for all events on Cypress Mountain because of poor weather. The group also comes under fire -- no pun intended -- for restricting public access to the Olympic cauldron.

#### 15. 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:

- \*Congratulatory Ads Strike A Chord For Visa, Athletes
- \*Figuring Out The Future King Of Sports Media
- \*Catching Up With Former NFL Commish Paul Tagliabue
- \*Catching Up With Nike Marketer Graham Curtis

\*Sponsors Comfortable With Sport, U.S. Luge Officials Say  
 \*TeamUSA.org Traffic Soaring Compared To Beijing Games  
 Go to [www.sportsbusinessdaily.com/wintergames](http://www.sportsbusinessdaily.com/wintergames)

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

## Sponsorships, Advertising & Marketing

### 16. MARBURY'S STARBURY LINE FACING SATURATED MARKET IN CHINA

Former NBAer Stephon Marbury's Starbury line of shoes in China has "entered a market saturated with not just Nike, adidas and Puma on the high end, but a long list of local brands such as Li-Ning, Anta and Peak, all supplying a wide range of affordable sportswear," according to Jiang Yi of SI.com. Marbury last month signed a contract to play with the Shanxi Zhongyu Brave Dragons of the Chinese Basketball Association, and before he left for China, his business manager



**Marbury Recently Signed, Sold 500 Starbury's In Less Than Two Hours For Chinese Fans**

"had discussions with Peak about incorporating Starbury into their product lineup." But Peak "held back on the idea because it couldn't be assured how long Marbury would be playing in China or how deeply he is committed to growing his brand there." A source said Marbury's business team is "looking for partners in China to brand and distribute" the Starbury line, but "so far nothing's been ironed out." Marbury's China online store has "sold fewer than 20 pairs of sneakers so far," and a store employee was quoted in a Chinese newspaper as saying the reason for the low sales is "limited style choices." Meanwhile, Marbury has "picked up nearly 35,000 Twitter followers" in the three weeks he has been in China. The day after defeating the Beijing Ducks, he had an autograph-signing session in Taiyuan, "attracting fans from age 6 to 80," and "countless pictures were taken; 500 pairs of Starbury were signed and sold in less than two hours." A source said, "It is a bit of a test on the market and it's very successful" ([SI.com](http://SI.com), 2/16).

### 17. MARKETPLACE ROUNDUP

USA TODAY's Bob Nightengale in a sports-section cover story writes Twins C Joe Mauer's "popularity is soaring." Mauer signed with IMG in November to "handle his endorsements," and IMG Dir Of Talent Marketing Alan Zucker noted that Mauer currently represents Sony, Anytime Fitness and Rawlings and is "negotiating with five other companies." Mauer also is the "cover boy" for Sony's "MLB 10 The Show" videogame. Zucker: "We feel he is the next big baseball superstar off the field" ([USA TODAY](http://USA TODAY), 2/17).



#### U.S. Census Bureau Spot During Super Bowl On CBS Seen By 113 Million Viewers

Zinser said that the advertising was "consistent with goals of boosting participation" (*AP*, 2/16). According to data from Nielsen Media, the Census Bureau Super Bowl spot, which aired at 8:49pm ET, was seen by an estimated 113 million viewers, making it the telecast's ninth most-viewed ad (*THE DAILY*).

**JUST FOR KICKS:** Sports media rights agency Kentaro has finalized a sponsorship deal with Nike for the latest leg of its Brazil World Tour. Brazil's national men's soccer team will play The Republic of Ireland at Emirates Stadium on March 2, and the match will be broadcast live in more than 100 countries worldwide. Kentaro has brokered the deal for Nike to have broadcast sponsorship on ITV1 in the U.K. and RTE in Ireland, as well as having a majority of the LED inventory and a range of other rights, including the use of a red ball and red goal nets. Other Brazil World Tour sponsors for the match include ITAU Bank, Ambev and Embratel (*Kentaro*).

**CHECKS & BALANCES:** Federal investigators said that it was "appropriate for the Census Bureau to spend" \$133M on its ad campaign, including \$2.5M for an ad that ran during NBC's coverage of Super Bowl XLIV. The AP's Hope Yen noted the Super Bowl advertising was "panned by media critics as ineffective, and it was criticized as wasteful by Republicans including" Sen. John McCain (R-AZ). But the report by U.S. Commerce

Department Inspector General Todd

## Sports Media

### 18. TNT, ESPN HOPING FOR NBA RATINGS GAINS DURING SECOND HALF

TNT and ESPN are "banking on a big ratings score from their coverage" of the NBA's playoff stretch run after "posting a relatively flat first-half regular-season performance," according to R. Thomas Umstead of MULTICHANNEL NEWS. TNT officials indicated that heading into Sunday's All-Star Game the net was averaging 1.75 million viewers for its Thursday night NBA telecasts, "slightly up from 1.74 million over the same period last year." Turner Broadcasting System President of Sales, Distribution & Sports David Levy noted that TNT's NBA coverage has "posted first-half regular-season increases for three years straight," and he indicated that he is "bullish about TNT's performance throughout the rest of the NBA regular season." Levy: "From a sales perspective, we're up big year over year -- probably in the high double-digits in just revenue, and we see that continuing. The matchups are going to get stronger -- we just see that momentum



#### TNT, ESPN Look For NBA Ratings To Improve During Second Half Of Season

continuing." Meanwhile, viewership for ESPN's Wednesday and Friday NBA telecasts is "slightly down -- 1.67 million viewers versus 1.68 million -- compared to the same period last year." ESPN Senior Dir of Programming & Acquisitions Doug White said that the net "jumped out to a slow start due to a head-to-head competition" with the World Series, but has "turned the corner of late." Umstead notes ESPN and ABC are "planning in mid-March to showcase some new technological innovations within" their NBA telecasts, though White "would not offer specifics" (*MULTICHANNEL NEWS, 2/15 issue*).

#### 19. GETTING THE LOWE'S DOWN: ROSS GREENBURG DISCUSSES JOHNSON "24/7"



The final installment of HBO's "24/7 Jimmie Johnson: The Road to Daytona" aired last night. HBO Sports President Ross Greenburg shared his thoughts on the series with SportsBusiness Journal Staff Writer Michael Smith.

**Q:** What kind of feedback have you gotten on the series?

**Greenburg:** It definitely struck a chord with the NASCAR fan. In Daytona, I was besieged by well-wishers who told me they had never seen the sport covered this way. That was music to my ears. We definitely produced a show we're real proud of. We got unbelievable access from Jimmie and Chandra (Johnson), Chad (Knaus), Rick (Hendrick), everybody.

**Greenburg Says HBO Definitely Proud Of Johnson's "24/7" Series** We were everywhere we wanted to be right through the Daytona 500, and we told some gripping stories behind the scenes. The other curious phenomenon was that I got a lot of e-mails from friends who watched the series and for the first time were going to watch the Daytona 500. That was Jimmie's dream, to hook the non-NASCAR fans to the sport.

**Q:** How do you measure success with a project like this?

**Greenburg:** You measure success with industry buzz, the (media reports) that highlight Jimmie and HBO. We saw some very positive ratings come in; they were on par with some of our boxing "24/7" series, which I thought was a real plus. When you went deeper into NASCAR markets, we saw the ratings spike, so you know a lot of people might have signed up for HBO because of the NASCAR series. Also, we were successful in taking "24/7" into another sport. Now we have a thirst for more and we'll see where we can wander.

**Q:** Who was the most compelling figure to emerge?

**Greenburg:** There's nothing like the glamour of the driver. Jimmie was the obvious star. The best supporting actor was definitely Chad, the same way Freddie Roach is a great supporting character to Manny Pacquiao. That happens in these series.

**Q:** Does the public's take on Jimmie Johnson change after this?

**Greenburg:** I think it will. I predicted it would. Having met Jimmie, and after having read about him being vanilla, I was dumbstruck. The time I spent with him, he was anything but. Nonstop chatter, very affable. It's clear he's one of those athletes on the edge. This series portrayed him the way he is. If you polled NASCAR fans, I would imagine that their perspective of Jimmie has changed a bit.

**Q:** What surprised you about the series?

**Greenburg:** I didn't know there would ever be potholes in the Daytona 500. That was the most shocking revelation for me. It was striking to see Jimmie's schedule, even the week of the race, taking planes back and forth to Charlotte. The extent to which they go to put those cars in working order is startling.

**Q:** The boxing-focused "24/7" series are a great marketing arm for fights that appear on your network, but what about this kind of series that leads up to an event on another network?

**Greenburg:** I think you'll see more of it. We've already fielded calls from a lot of professional leagues. ... As an arc to telling a story, an event at the end is a good way to tell a story. "Hard Knocks" is a hybrid of "24/7." It leads up to the regular season, and you can tell a story in that time frame as well. We'll just have to look and see what feels right within the schedules of these leagues. It's obvious through the success of this "24/7" that the actual event doesn't have to happen on HBO. ... Sports fans are going places they've never been before and they are being taken there in an artistic way. That's what sets this series apart.

## Leagues & Governing Bodies

### 20. NFLPA CLAIMS NFL DID NOT DISTRIBUTE ALL SRS CASH TO LOW-REV TEAMS

The NFLPA filed a new Special Master proceeding against the NFL yesterday, alleging that the league did not distribute all the supplemental revenue-sharing (SRS) money it was required to give to low-revenue NFL clubs under the CBA in recent years. The new complaint against the NFL is based on a recent discovery by the union that the NFL did not distribute all the SRS funds they were required to give to low-revenue NFL clubs in '07 and '08, said NFLPA outside counsel Jeffrey Kessler. "We believe they violated both the terms of the CBA and the formula specified in their own resolution (which sets out the supplemental revenue-sharing plan)," he said. "We don't know the precise amount of the shortfall, but we know it will be tens of millions of dollars short." Yesterday's filing is a new proceeding over the SRS plan, which began in the '06 NFL CBA. The union won a decision earlier this month from Special Master Stephen Burbank, who ruled the NFL must continue the plan in '10. The NFL has not yet filed an appeal of that decision. Kessler would not say how the union discovered this information, but said, "I would assume the low-revenue clubs are not happy with this." The NFL did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The filing comes on the eve of NFL free agency in which it is expected the NFL will operate without a salary cap or salary floor for the first time since '93. Additionally, there are new restrictions on signing players, including that NFL players must have played six seasons instead of four to be unrestricted free agents. The NFL and NFLPA could avoid an uncapped year if they agree to terms on a new CBA by March 5, but the two sides are far apart in negotiations and it is widely expected there will be no settlement by then (*Liz Mullen, SportsBusiness Journal*). In DC, Mark Maske noted the NFLPA in the proceeding claimed that while there was to be \$100M "transferred in 2006 under the supplemental revenue-sharing program," \$105M in '07 and \$120M in '08, there actually was \$68.4M transferred in '06, \$90.2M in '07 and \$94.7M in '08. The union in the proceeding called that "a blatant violation" (*WASHINGTONPOST.com, 2/16*).

**DISCOVERY REQUEST FILED:** In addition to the complaint, the NFLPA has filed a discovery request with the league to determine "how much is missing and (which clubs)

should get it," Kessler said, adding that the union wants the money distributed to low-revenue clubs that should have received it as soon as possible. "What we are trying to do here is to ensure the CBA gets followed so low-revenue clubs can compete for players to keep their teams competitive and not suppress salaries," Kessler said. The NFL, however, denies that it has violated the CBA or the SRS plan the league created because of qualifiers in the plan. "Qualifiers have been part of the supplemental revenue-sharing system since its inception," said NFL Senior VP/PR Greg Aiello. "The union approved the use of qualifiers in the CBA. The operation of the qualifiers has been consistent with the resolution adopted when the extension was approved and has not disadvantaged any low-revenue club. We are confident that the operation of the system will be upheld by the Special Master." Kessler noted the union disagrees, saying, "We discovered that the league's position is that because it was setting standards for which teams qualified to get the money each year, if it decided a smaller number of teams were deserving the revenue sharing it could simply reduce the amount" (*Mullen*). ESPN.com's Chris Mortensen wrote the NFLPA in the proceeding "wants low-revenue clubs to have enough cash flow as incentive to spend money on free agents and re-signing their own players to new contracts" (*ESPN.com, 2/16*).

## **21. UNCAPPED YEAR COULD RESULT IN DECREASED SPENDING ON NFL PLAYERS**

The perception of an uncapped NFL season in '10 is that it "will bring free spending," but instead it would be the NFL's "version of a department store rolling back prices," according to John Clayton of ESPN.com. Do not "expect free spending." Instead, "expect a tightening of the belts for players' salaries if the NFL and the players don't get a collective bargaining agreement by March 5." The "reality of uncapped free agency in 2010 is that there aren't many marquee players to sign." Because free agency in an uncapped season "requires six seasons of service (as opposed to four in a normal year) before a player can hit the unrestricted market, there are fewer than 20 starters younger than 30 on the unrestricted list." Clayton wrote what is "so fascinating -- and potentially damaging -- about this version of free agency is that it gives teams the ability to essentially franchise more than 200 players without serious commitments" through tendering restricted free agents (*ESPN.com, 2/15*).

**SHOW OF FAITH:** NATIONAL FOOTBALL POST's Andrew Brandt wrote the question to ask about the NFL's decision to extend Commissioner Roger Goodell's contract is "not 'Why?' as Goodell is an excellent fit for the job, guiding the league through a challenging business environment with poise and confidence." The question is "Why now?" Brandt wrote his guess is that the extension is "directly related to that other important contract negotiation," the CBA negotiations with the NFLPA. NFL owners have "made a stand of solidarity with this extension." Brandt: "The message from the league heading into this all-important contract negotiation is: We need a different system with the players. We need a voice leading that charge, and Roger's our guy" (*NATIONALFOOTBALLPOST.com, 2/15*).

**TAKING DEBATE TO THE WEB:** The NFL last week established the Web site NFLlabor.com to provide media, agents and fans with information on the current labor situation. There is a link to the site on NFL.com, and the league recommended to its teams that they provide a link on their Web sites as well (*THE DAILY*). The Chicago Tribune's Brad Biggs wrote, "The NFL has launched nfllabor.com, a Web site to give its spin on the battle over, oh, \$8 billion with the players." NFLPA Assistant Exec Dir of External Affairs George Attalah wrote, "Think this will make it to nfllabor.com? RT

@RedskinsInsider RT @MarkMaske NFL Players Association files its second challenge of owners' SRS" (*TWITTER.com*, 2/17).

## 22. LEAGUE NOTES

In Indianapolis, Anthony Schoettle wrote it is clear the IRL BOD "didn't consult" IRL Commercial Division President Terry Angstadt before hiring new CEO Randy Bernard, and now there are "questions about his future with the operation." If Angstadt departs, one would "have to wonder about the future of his top lieutenants" -- IRL VP/Development & Marketing John Lewis and VP/Sales Greg Gruning. Angstadt has been "on the front line of several battles won in the last two years," including signing Izod to a series title sponsorship and "landing new sponsorships and promotional deals." The IRL still "is not profitable, but that bit of wrangling helped close the red gap by about" \$20M (*IBJ.com*, 2/12).

**ATTENDANCE FIGURES:** The NHL said that teams are playing to 91.9% capacity this season and "more than half of the 30 clubs have seen increased or even attendance." The GLOBE & MAIL's James Mirtle noted the capacity figure is "accurate, but it's down from" 95% last season, the "equivalent of an average of almost 600 fewer fans a game." Ten teams are "down 913 or more fans per game from their full-season average last season." Mirtle: "Almost as disturbing is the fact that essentially no teams have made significant gains" (*GLOBESPORTS.com*, 2/14).

**ON A BUDGET:** In London, Oliver Kay noted EPL club Wigan Athletic Chair Dave Whelan has "urged the Premier League to implement tighter financial regulations in the light of Portsmouth's desperate battle to avoid going into administration." In a letter to EPL CEO Richard Scudamore last week, Whelan "proposed that clubs should not be allowed to borrow sums that represent more than" 25% of their annual revenue. Kay noted Whelan's recommendation is "certain to fuel the debate about debt among" EPL teams. The league has "strongly resisted proposals from" UEFA President Michel Platini to "curb spending and debt, but the discussion is now coming from the member clubs" (*LONDON TIMES*, 2/15).

**CROSSING THE POND:** YAHOO SPORTS' Steve Cofield noted the UFC is "slated to hit Sydney, Abu Dhabi, Montreal and Vancouver in the next 15 weeks." The MMA league's "first step to international expansion was putting an office in the U.K. and holding six events there in 2008 and 2009." The UFC has also added "three television partners in the U.K.," which has been a "huge success story." But Cofield wonders where the '10 events for "places like London, Dublin and Manchester" are. UFC U.K. President Marshall Zelaznik said that the "Brits, Welsh, Scottish and Irish may not get an event until the close of 2010" (*SPORTS.YAHOO.com*, 2/15).

## Franchises

### 23. NBA KINGS REDUCING SOME SEASON-TICKET PRICES FOR '10-11 CAMPAIGN

NBA Kings season-ticket prices for the '10-11 season "were reduced" 6% in Arco Arena's lower bowl, while upper-bowl prices that were reduced last season "remained the same," according to Sam Amick of the SACRAMENTO BEE. The team announced the reduced prices yesterday during an event for select season-ticket holders and the "crowd was clearly most excited about some of the perks that come for fans who renew before April 23, with the announcement of VIP lines at concession stands sparking the loudest reaction of all." Kings co-Owner Gavin Maloof said that he is "encouraged by the direction of the ticket sales at present, as attendance is 8[%] higher than where it was at

this point last season" (*SACRAMENTO BEE*, 2/17).

**GAME CHANGER:** USA TODAY's Jon Swartz noted Oracle CEO Larry Ellison has "expressed an interest in buying" the Warriors, but Owner Chris Cohan thus far has "ignored his overtures." Ellison yesterday said, "We have floated a few offers the last several years and been rejected each time. We might pursue another (pro basketball) team and could bring it to San Jose. It's up to the NBA." For now, Ellison has "no plans to get into the NFL." He said there is "nothing active with the NFL" (*USATODAY.com*, 2/16). In San Jose, Tim Kawakami wrote Ellison's suggestion of pursuing another NBA team and moving it to San Jose is a "classic flanking move." If Ellison brought another team to northern California, the Warriors "wouldn't be worth \$310M, but maybe \$200M, just like that, competing against the Ellison Machine." Ellison noted that "any such two-team concept would have to pass NBA muster, but Ellison almost certainly wouldn't be bringing it up now unless he knew, tacitly or not, that the NBA looks kindly upon him owning a Bay Area franchise" (*MERCURYNEWS.com*, 2/16).

**SPECIAL DELIVERY:** In N.Y., Julian Garcia reported the Nets are "teaming with Domino's Pizza" for a marketing campaign in which one fan "will get a chance to have a pizza delivered to them by a Nets player sometime in March." Fans can enter the contest on the team's Web site until March 1. The Nets "will decide which player delivers the food" (*NYDAILYNEWS.com*, 2/16).

#### 24. WOULD MICHAEL JORDAN BE A GOOD FIT AS BOBCATS MAJORITY OWNER?



**Wilbon Says He Has Spoken To Jordan And He Does Want To Buy The Bobcats**

With news that Bobcats Managing Member of Basketball Operations Michael Jordan is making a strong push to buy the NBA club, several TV personalities weighed in on the possibility of him owning the franchise. ESPN.com's J.A. Adande noted, "The question is, will he be able to put together enough money to make the sales price that (Owner) Bob Johnson would like to see." A group headed by The Postolos Group Owner George Postolos also is reported to be interested in the club, and Adande said, "They'd like to probably pay more than Jordan is willing to, but I think

Bob Johnson is going to give ... his friend and partner, Michael Jordan, a shot at it." Dallas Morning News columnist Tim Cowlshaw said, "I don't think it's a big deal either way. ... Michael Jordan hasn't really been involved since he hired (coach) Larry Brown." But ESPN's Gene Wojciechowski replied, "Of course it's a big deal. It's a huge deal. There's only two minority owners in professional sports. One of them wants to get out of it and try to sell to Michael Jordan" ("*Around The Horn*," *ESPN*, 2/16). ESPN's Tony Kornheiser said, "I'm sure he would love to own the team if he could get someone else's money to own the team because nobody wants to put up their own money. He's very important to the state of North Carolina, obviously. He'd make a great figurehead. I've always thought he has to get more involved." ESPN's Michael Wilbon: "I talked to Michael Jordan today and he does want to buy the team. It might have to be some of his own money and yes, other people's money" ("*PTI*," *ESPN*, 2/16).

**READY TO TAKE OVER?** ESPN's Michelle Beadle said Jordan "has admitted his

time with the Wizards (as President of Basketball Operations) was perhaps not what he anticipated. He knew he wasn't the greatest thing ever. ... I think he has learned from mistakes and is ready to do this." However, ESPN's Colin Cowherd said Jordan would "not (be) a good owner." Cowherd: "I think his greatness as a player has hurt him in other areas" ("*SportsNation*," *ESPN2*, 2/16).

## 25. UFL TEAM RELOCATES TO HARTFORD, WILL PLAY AT RENTSCHLER FIELD

The UFL yesterday announced that the N.Y. Sentinels will relocate to Hartford, Connecticut, and play their home games at Rentschler Field, according to Paul Doyle of the *HARTFORD COURANT*. The team "will begin play in September" and training camp, "which will be held in the state, will start in August." Former Browns head coach Chris Palmer will serve as the team's coach & GM. UFL offices "will be based in Greater Hartford and tickets will be on sale beginning in April." The team "will play five of its 10 games" at the 38,066-seat



**UFL Commissioner Says League "Plans To Aggressively Market" Team**

Rentschler -- all on Friday and Saturday nights -- and the "average ticket price will be \$20." The league "will hold a name-the-team contest on its Web site." UFL Commissioner Michael Huyghue said that the league "plans to aggressively market" the franchise. Huyghue: "My expectation is not that we'll get 5,000, 10,000, or 15,000, but that we'll fill the stadium." The UFL is "working closely with UConn, Rentschler's primary tenant." The grass surface "will remain for this season, with the UFL helping to pay for maintenance costs." The long-term goal is to "install field turf and the league will assist in installation costs" (*HARTFORD COURANT*, 2/17).

**LEAGUE BUSINESS:** Huyghue and Sentinels Owner Bill Mayer yesterday reiterated that the UFL has "no ambition to compete directly with the NFL -- which is one reason why" the franchise is relocating. After one season, the league has "determined that franchises can't survive in NFL markets." In addition to the N.Y. Sentinels relocating to Hartford, the S.F.-based California Redwoods will relocate to Sacramento. The UFL also has franchises in Orlando and Las Vegas, and there are "plans to add two expansion teams in the coming months." The *HARTFORD COURANT*'s Doyle writes the "retreat from NFL markets is telling." While the UFL "never billed itself as competition or as an alternative to the NFL, it quickly found that fans in NFL markets have little interest in sub-NFL football." Therefore, the league is "concentrating on its niche as a minor league product." Huyghue said that the UFL "will be close to breaking even by the third year" (*HARTFORD COURANT*, 2/17).

## Facilities & Venues

### 26. MAVERICKS CONSIDERING OCCASIONAL HOME GAME AT COWBOYS STADIUM

Mavericks Owner Mark Cuban yesterday said that he is "considering the idea of playing an occasional home game" at Cowboys Stadium, according to Tim MacMahon of *ESPNDALLAS.com*. Cuban: "There would be a lot of strategic reasons, in addition to

potentially economic reasons, to play a game over there. You could bring in twice as many fans, so economically it'd probably work out, and it'd be a unique attraction for people who wanted to come play for the Mavs." Cuban added that he "doesn't believe playing the occasional game in a different venue would sacrifice homecourt advantage." Cuban said the idea "wasn't something even to consider" prior to holding the NBA All-Star Game at Cowboys Stadium. He "has yet to discuss the idea" with NBA Commissioner David Stern or Cowboys Owner Jerry Jones (*ESPNDALLAS.com, 2/16*). Cuban: "You could do it as a fun game, for the spectacle. Instead of bobbleheads, have a Cowboys Stadium day" (*DALLAS MORNING NEWS, 2/17*). ESPN.com's Scoop Jackson said, "They'll do this for one year as a test run, and then if it doesn't work out, they'll scrap it" (*ESPN First Take, ESPN2, 2/17*).

**EXCEPTION TO THE RULE:** NBA Exec VP/Events & Attractions Ski Austin said that the league "has no interest in regularly playing its All-Star games in football stadiums," but Cowboys Stadium "might be the exception." Austin: "When you talk specifically about Cowboys Stadium, it's an intriguing idea. Things went so well for us, I think it has to be on the short list of cities and markets that we would put into a rotation." In Dallas, Jeff Mosier noted Sunday's All-Star Game drew 108,713 fans at Cowboys Stadium, which included "NBA staff and more than 1,500 media members," but "didn't take into account stadium employees." The total attendance was "more than the six previous NBA All-Star games combined." Still, Cuban "scoffed at the idea that this record is unbreakable." Cuban: "Don't put it past us" (*DALLAS MORNING NEWS, 2/16*).

## **27. BOB ARUM IN TALKS TO MOVE FOREMAN-COTTO BOUT TO YANKEE STADIUM**

Top Rank Chair Bob Arum is "in discussions with the Yankees to hold the first fight at the new Yankee Stadium this summer," according to Ken Belson of the N.Y. TIMES. The bout, which "could be held June 5," would feature WBA middleweight champion Yuri Foreman making his first title defense against Miguel Cotto. The bout is scheduled to be fought at MSG on June 12, but Arum said that he "wants to move the fight to Yankee Stadium, which could accommodate more fans." Top Rank VP Carl Moretti said, "I'd like to think you could draw 30,000 or upwards because it would be the first fight in the new Yankee Stadium, with all that history." Belson notes a fight between Foreman, who is Jewish, and Cotto, who is Puerto Rican, would have "obvious appeal because of the large Jewish and Puerto Rican communities" in N.Y. Moretti said that Arum "should hear back from the Yankees about the event in the next day or two" (*N.Y. TIMES, 2/17*). Arum said, "The Yankees want to make a deal, we know we can make a deal, they're just working through a problem at Yankee Stadium." Arum: "They've leased out some lounges for this bar mitzvah and part of the deal was for a half hour or so, they could use the big screen in center field to show pictures and all that sort of stuff. Obviously you can't do that if there's fights going on." Arum said that he is "hopeful that something can be worked out, perhaps by giving the families holding the bar mitzvah credentials for the fight" (*AP, 2/16*).

## **28. AEG SELLS ALL 150 STAPLES CENTER LUXURY SUITES FOR CURRENT SEASON**

AEG yesterday announced that all of Staples Center's 150 luxury suites are fully leased for the current season. Staples Center suite owners receive tickets for every public event held at the venue during their multi-year lease, including Lakers, Clippers, NHL Kings and WNBA Sparks games; concerts; the X Games; and the Pac-10 men's basketball tournament. AEG Global Partnerships handles sales of the arena's suites and 2,600 club seats (*THE DAILY*). In L.A., Roger Vincent noted the prices of the boxes range from \$250,000 to \$475,000 a year "depending on their location." The suites "don't include

food or drinks, which cost extra." They do include a "couple of VIP parking passes and entitle ticket holders to use a special entrance to the arena." AEG VP/Communications Michael Roth said that the boxes "didn't sell out in 2009" (*LATIMES.com, 2/16*).

## Sports Industrialists

### 29. TOM WILSON RESIGNS FROM PISTONS; COO ALAN OSTFIELD PROMOTED

By John Lombardo, Staff Writer, SportsBusiness Journal

Palace Sports & Entertainment President & CEO **TOM WILSON**, who worked for the Pistons for more than 32 years, suddenly resigned today. A source said that Wilson, who joined the team in '77, had been growing increasingly frustrated in running the franchise following the death of longtime Pistons Owner **BILL DAVIDSON** last March. After Davidson's death, Wilson was part of a board that included **KAREN DAVIDSON**, the wife of Bill Davidson. Karen Davidson is currently considering selling the franchise. "I have had the honor to be a part of the Pistons family for the last 32 years, 31 of them working along side Bill Davidson," Wilson said in a statement. "He was a dear friend and partner. I believe that, with Mr. Davidson's unfortunate passing, however, the time is now right for me and my family to explore many exciting opportunities that have come my way recently." **ALAN OSTFIELD**, currently COO of the Palace and Pistons, is replacing Wilson. "Mr. Davidson and I built an organization of talented people and planned for an orderly leadership transition," Wilson said. "Alan Ostfield has been involved in every aspect of our business and helped to make every important decision we've made over the last 10 years. Alan has outstanding experience in all areas of sports franchise management and operations, including strategic planning."

### 30. EXECUTIVE TRANSACTIONS

**LESLIE GITTESS**, MLBAM VP/Business Development for the past four years, is leaving baseball's digital arm at the end of the month to launch her own N.Y.-based consultancy, Blue Sky Media NYC. The operation will be a boutique advisory firm specializing in digital strategy, content licensing and syndication, venture capital, and site design and production. Prior to joining MLBAM in '06, Gittess worked for 12 years at the NHL (*Eric Fisher, SportsBusiness Journal*).

**JOINING THE TEAM:** MLS has hired **GREG LALAS** as Editor-In-Chief and **JONAH FREEDMAN** as Managing Editor to lead a new Web site editorial team for a new league Web site set to launch early next month. Lalas previously was Site Director for Goal.com USA and Editor of Goal.com Magazine, while Freedman oversaw SI.com's soccer coverage. Lalas will be based in N.Y., and Freedman primarily will be based in the S.F. area (*THE DAILY*).

**EXECS:** NESN has promoted Exec VP & CFO **RAY GUILBAULT** to COO & CFO, and Dir of Human Resources **VANESSA BROWN** to VP/Human Resources & Organizational Development (*NESN*)....Rawlings has named **DAVID HILL** to the newly created position of Senior Dir of Fall Products. Hill previously worked for Nike and Wilson Sporting Goods (*Rawlings*)....The 49ers promoted VP/Football Operations **PARAAG MARATHE** to Exec VP/Football & Business Operations (*49ers*)....The Orioles have hired **RAY TRIFARI** as Dir of Stadium Operations. Trifari most recently worked in team administration with MLS Real Salt Lake (*Orioles*)....The MLS Revolution have promoted Kraft Sports Group Web Content Master **JASON DALRYMPLE** to

Digital Content Manager, Communications Coordinator **JEFF LEMIEUX** to Staff Writer & Online Host, and Inside Sales Manager **CATHAL CONLON** to Dir of Marketing. The team also hired **JENNIFER HARVEY** as Marketing Manager and **MICHAEL JUROVATY** as Communications Coordinator (*Revolution*).

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

### 31. NAMES IN THE NEWS

In a cover story for GQ magazine, J.R. Moehringer profiles Lakers G **KOBE BRYANT**, and writes Bryant's "reticence, his desire for privacy, extends to the good stuff about himself as well as the bad." Bryant's reps "urge him to speak more about his charitable works, like his fund to help victims of natural disasters in China or his partnership with After-School All-Stars, a program that tutors and mentors schoolchildren." Moehringer writes it is "hard not to think of Bryant," who in '03 faced a sexual assault charge, "when people talk about **TIGER WOODS**." It also is "hard not to think of Bryant when people wonder if Woods is done, if he'll forever wander in the wilderness, hemorrhaging sponsors and fans." Moehringer: "Once upon a time, they were asking the same thing about Bryant. Now Bryant's back, all the way back, the wilderness like a bad dream" (*GQ*, 3/ '10 issue).

#### **CHANGE IN FOCUS:** The FINANCIAL TIMES'

Henny Sender reports the financial crisis is causing Related Cos. Chair & CEO and Dolphins Owner **STEPHEN ROSS** to "shift his focus." Ross, "having made his name as a US developer," is "looking to take advantage of the turmoil in global property markets by seeking overseas projects, investments in distressed properties and even banking." Ross, Related President **JEFF BLAU** and Exec VP **BRUCE BEAL JR.** this week are "close to raising \$1.1[B] capital that they, in a personal capacity, will use to buy a bank" (*FINANCIAL TIMES*, 2/17).

**OVERDUE PRAISE:** ESPN.com's David Newton wrote Earnhardt Ganassi Racing (EGR) co-Owner **CHIP GANASSI** "deserves his due" after EGR driver **JAMIE MCMURRAY** won the Daytona 500 Sunday. Newton wrote of Ganassi, "One could argue he ranks with the greatest motorsports owners of all time." Hendrick Motorsports Owner **RICK HENDRICK** "may have won four straight Cup championships with **JIMMIE JOHNSON** and nine of the past 15, but he hasn't won the Daytona 500, Indianapolis 500 and Rolex 24," as Ganassi has. Ganassi: "I get to think sometimes you guys in the media don't think those teams (outside four-car teams of Hendrick Motorsports and Roush Fenway) are capable, and that's not true. There are lots of teams that are capable. Maybe the model isn't a massive team." Meanwhile, EGR co-Owner **FELIX SABATES** said he and Ganassi have been "together almost 10 years and had one argument" (*ESPN.com*, 2/16).

**HONORS & RECOGNITIONS:** ESPN.com NBA writer **MARK STEIN** was honored in the categories of features and game story Sunday when the Professional Basketball Writers Association announced the winners of its annual writing contest (*ESPN*)....N.Y. Times writer **ALAN SCHWARZ** will be honored with Long Island Univ.'s (LIU) George Polk Award for Sports Reporting for his reporting on the long-term dangers of concussions and the NFL's handling of brain injuries (*LIU*).



**Kobe Bryant Profiled In March Issue Of GQ**

**NAMES:** San Diego State Univ. said that it will "investigate the phone records of the search committee that was commissioned to find a new athletic director in an effort to identify who 'leaked' candidates' names to The San Diego Union-Tribune during the interview process" (*SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE*, 2/17)....Animal Planet will not renew its TV series "**JOCKEYS**" for a third season. Co-Producer **LIZ BRONSTEIN** said that there are "no plans to re-package the show for the future or to pitch it to another network" (*BLOODHORSE.com*, 2/12)....Fox NFL analyst **BRIAN BILLICK** last month sold his 30-acre Reisterstown, Maryland, estate for \$2.2M. He paid \$450,000 for the land in '06 (*BALTIMORE BUSINESS JOURNAL*, 2/12 issue)....MLB Giants President & COO **LARRY BAER** last week attended the fifth annual Heroes & Hearts Luncheon at Union Square Park in support of the S.F. General Hospital Foundation (*SFGATE.com*, 2/15).

## The Back Of The Book

### 32. SCARBOROUGH SPORTS MARKETING EXAMINES WINTER OLYMPIC FAN DEMOS

Interest in the Winter Olympics is split 50/50 between males and females, according to data from Scarborough Sports Marketing. Interest in the Winter Games also seems to be fairly evenly divided among different age groups and household incomes. Below are other demographics related to respondents who said they were very, somewhat or a little bit interested in the Winter Olympics. Data was gathered from February '08 through March '09 (*Scarborough Sports Marketing*).

#### % Of Respondents Who Are Very, Somewhat Or A Little Bit Interested In The Winter Olympics

#### Demographic

#### GENDER

Men	50%
Women	50%

#### AGE

18-24	11%
25-34	17%
35-44	19%
45-54	20%
55-64	16%
65+	17%

#### LEVEL OF EDUCATION

8th grade or less	2%
Some high school (no graduation)	5%
High school graduate	32%
Some college (1-3 years)	31%
College graduate (four-year university)	17%

Some post-graduate school (no advanced degree)	3%
Post-graduate degree	11%

**RACE/ETHNICITY**

White	85%
Black/African-American	10%
Asian	3%
Other	3%
Spanish/Hispanic origin	10%

**HOUSEHOLD INCOME**

Less than \$25,000	10%
\$25,000 - \$39,999	17%
\$40,000 - \$49,999	11%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	19%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	18%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	15%
\$150,000+	11%

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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.

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