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Wednesday
July 28, 2010
4:00pm ET

Print Closing Bell

Jul. 28, 2010

Morning Buzz

SportsBusiness Daily

Closing Bell

- **MLS Announces Sellout for All-Star Game At Reliant Stadium**
- **IMS' Belskus Plans To Lower Ticket Prices For Brickyard 400**
- **ESPN Pulls Online Story About LeBron James In Las Vegas**
- **Turner Sports To Present 3D Coverage Of PGA Championship**

HOUSTON'S RELIANT STADIUM SELLS OUT FOR AT&T MLS ALL-STAR GAME

The AT&T MLS All-Star Game tonight at Reliant Stadium has sold out, with more than 70,000 fans expected to attend. The MLS side will face EPL club Manchester United (MLS). The attendance will mark a "blowout record for a stand-alone MLS All-Star Game." This comes as int'l soccer clubs are "increasingly visiting the United States for preseason summer tours," a trend that has "helped open doors for the league to keep its all-star format thriving" (*SALT LAKE TRIBUNE, 7/27*).

A total of 13 partners plan to activate around the game. Title sponsor AT&T has done retail events with player appearances at more than four retail locations. Other activation includes Budweiser distributing 105 framed AT&T All-Star jerseys to Houston bars; Continental Tire hosting a group of 50 people as part of a customer and employee hospitality program; The Home Depot building a community playground in conjunction with MLS Works; and Volkswagen wrapping dealer vehicles on display at seven Houston dealerships. MLS is in sponsorship renewal negotiations with several partners, including Pepsi and Budweiser (*Tripp Mickle, SportsBusiness Journal*).

ESPN2 will cover the game live beginning at 8:30pm ET, and the matchup with ManU "should boost viewership" for the event. The WALL STREET JOURNAL runs a [breakdown of MLS All-Star Game viewership](#) since '00. ESPN.com's Jeff Carlisle lists [five reasons to watch the game](#).

Meanwhile, the Vancouver Whitecaps and Portland Timbers, both of whom will join MLS next year, will face each other in a coin toss at halftime. The winner "will decide if they want the first pick in the expansion draft of unprotected MLS players in November or the league SuperDraft of eligible college players in January" (*VANCOUVER SUN, 7/28*).

IMS PRESIDENT & CEO JEFF BELSKUS PLANS TO CUT PRICES FOR '11 BRICKYARD 400

Indianapolis Motor Speedway President & CEO **Jeff Belskus** today said that he "intends to cut ticket prices" for about 75% of fans at next year's NASCAR Sprint Cup Series Brickyard 400. The plan calls for tiered pricing, "which will cut prices up to \$20 for seats closer to the track." Belskus also plans to cut general admission prices, used for the first time this year, from \$40 to \$30 for advance purchase, and he will "retain the new policy of allowing fans 12-and-under into the infield for free."

Meanwhile, Belskus revised his previous estimate that '10 revenue at the track will be flat or above that of '09, saying that "revenue is now projected to be 'down a tick' from last year" (*AP, 7/28*).



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- [Current Issue](#)
- [July 27](#)
- [July 26](#)
- [July 23](#)
- [July 22](#)
- [July 21](#)
- [July 20](#)
- [July 19](#)
- [July 16](#)
- [July 15](#)
- [July 14](#)

ESPN SAYS DECISION TO PULL LEBRON JAMES STORY WAS STRICTLY EDITORIAL

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

ESPN said the decision to pull a [story off its website](#) about Heat F **LeBron James** shortly after posting it this morning was strictly an editorial move. ESPN teased the story by **Arash Markazi**, a revealing behind-the-scenes look at James' recent trip to Las Vegas, on its ESPNLA.com website even before posting it. As soon as it started to circulate, however, all references to it disappeared from ESPN.com and ESPNLA.com at around 11:30am ET, causing a whirlwind of criticism on Twitter and various blogs.

In a statement to **THE DAILY**, ESPN VP/PR **Josh Krulewitz** said "The story should have never been published. The draft was inadvertently put on the server before going through the usual editorial process. We are in the midst of looking into the matter." James' reps confirmed ESPN's statement that removing the article was an editorial decision, telling CNBC that they had no say in the matter. As of presstime, Markazi had not commented on the matter nor posted anything on his Twitter account in more than 24 hours.

TURNER, PGA OF AMERICA PARTNER FOR 3D COVERAGE OF PGA CHAMPIONSHIP

Turner Sports and PGA of America today announced that they will present the first two rounds of the '10 PGA Championship in 3D. The Aug. 12-13 3D coverage will appear on PGA.com and TNT distributors Bright House Networks, Cablevision, Comcast, Cox Communications, DirecTV and Time Warner Cable. The coverage will focus on the par-3 12th and 17th holes at Whistling Straits from 3:00-7:00pm ET each day. **Vince Cellini** will host the coverage, with golfer **Rich Beem** as an analyst (*Turner Sports*).

NFLPA PLANS TO STAGE COLLEGE ALL-STAR GAME AT ALAMODOME ON FEB. 5

The NFLPA today informed agents that it has reached a deal with Overtime Sports Southeast to host the NFLPA College All-Star Game at the Alamodome on Feb. 5. A source said that he "believes the game will take the place of the Texas vs. The Nation All-Star Game that had grown in popularity with NFL teams." The game will be open to draft-eligible players for the '11 NFL Draft who are three years removed from their high school graduation class ([NATIONALFOOTBALLPOST.com, 7/28](#)).

UNIV. OF HAWAII WILL ACCEPT BIDS TO OUTSOURCE MARKETING RIGHTS

The Univ. of Hawaii athletic department said that it "plans to entertain bids to outsource" its marketing rights after eight years of keeping those rights in-house. The school brings in \$3.1M a year in cash and trade through its "Invest in Success" corporate partner program, plus another \$3M from TV, radio and PPV rights. UH officials said that Learfield Sports and CBS College Sports Properties "have approached the school about outsourcing its sponsorships and multimedia rights" ([HONOLULU STAR-ADVERTISER, 7/28](#)).

BOSH PLEDGES DONATIONS TO AFTER-SCHOOL ALL-STARS ON FLOOR OF NYSE

Heat F **Chris Bosh** appeared on the floor of the N.Y. Stock Exchange this morning to ring the opening bell alongside After-School All-Stars President & CEO **Ben Paul** and BOD member **Joe Schlater**. Bosh was recently named a national celebrity ambassador for After-School All-Stars, which offers after-school programs for children in 13 U.S. cities. Bosh said that he would donate \$20 to the organization for every rebound he gets this season ("*Squawk on the Street*," *CNBC, 7/28*).

COVER TO COVER....

Sporting News this week features Pro Football HOFer **Roger Staubach** and Cowboys QB **Tony Romo** on the cover with the header, "Stars Align ... Cowboys Present And Past Talk About Quarterbacking On The Game's Biggest Stage."

Sports Illustrated this week features an image of Baseball HOFer **Stan Musial** on the cover of the magazine's "Where Are They Now?" issue.



BUZZER BEATERS....

CBS today announced that DirecTV Chair **Mike White** and NASCAR CMO & Senior VP **Steve Phelps** will be two of the four executives featured in this season of "Undercover Boss" ([EW.com, 7/28](#)).

ANC Sports will produce the first event-side LED signage systems featured at ESPN X Games and Dew Tour events ([THE DAILY](#)).

The Philadelphia Soul and Front Row Marketing Services today announced that the Comcast-Spectacor subsidiary will handle sponsorship sales for the AFL team when it returns in '11. Front Row handled these duties for the Soul from '04-08 ([Front Row Marketing](#)).

adidas today announced that it will enter the U.S. outdoor market in '11 with new lines of footwear, apparel and accessories, including the Terrex concept, which debuted in Europe in '09 ([adidas](#)).

The European PGA Tour has added a tournament in Bahrain to its schedule, "bringing to five the number of events it will hold next year in the Middle East." The Volvo Tournament of Champions, a US\$2.2M event, will be held Jan. 27-30 at the Royal Golf Club ([AP, 7/28](#)).



European PGA Tour Adding Tournament In Bahrain For Next Season

The NAIA has agreed to a partnership with Rhycom Sports, which will assist the organization in revenue generation ([NAIA](#)).

QUICK HITS....

"We're going to be kind of the guinea pig tournament on allowing this. We're just going to test it here" – PGA Tour Wyndham Championship Tournament Dir **Mark Brazil**, on the Aug. 19-22 tournament allowing fans to bring their cell phones onto the course ([AP, 7/28](#)).

"I'm in communication with (12-team Big Ten) commissioner **Jim Delany** now about a swap" – Big 12 Commissioner **Dan Beebe**, jokingly, on the conference losing Colorado and Nebraska to become a 10-team league ([AUSTIN AMERICAN-STATESMAN, 7/28](#)).

TWITTER ME THIS....

Mavericks Owner **Mark Cuban**: "Players are taking over! talk about collusion. How in the world could the NFL let TO and OchoCinco join forces ? Did they plan at DWTS ???"

SI's **Don Banks**: "Bengals with TO, Pacman, et al, now remind me of early in sub-prime mortgage era when there was no apparent thought of risks being taken."

Partnership Activation Founder **Brian Gainor**: "We are finally seeing some out-of-the-box thinking in college sports, courtesy of the Pac-10."



Chicago Tribune's **Paul Sullivan**: "Cubs Fantasy Camp fee drops from \$7,500 to \$3,000. Media types invited for free pub, since they overestimated the number of rich fans."

If you see a tweet we will not want to miss, send it to us at editorial@sportsbusinessdaily.com.

A LIGHTER BUZZ....

Video game players who win the Super Bowl in EA Sports' "Madden NFL 11" franchise mode will be rewarded with a "virtual celebration, which includes the awarding of the Super Bowl MVP and Lombardi trophies, a parade in your home city and the requisite White House meeting with **President Barack Obama**" (SPORTS.YAHOO.com, 7/27).

THE DAILY'S HOT READS....

The N.Y. TIMES' Jonathan Abrams writes, "A growing number of executives running NBA franchises incorporate knowledge about what happens on the basketball court and in the courtroom, while others bring advanced college degrees to their work. Together, they have created what the Portland Trail Blazers' owner, **Paul Allen**, termed 'the new generation of NBA executives'" (*N.Y. TIMES*).

ESPNLA.com's Brian Kamenetzky writes of [preparations at L.A. Memorial Coliseum for X Games 16](#), "The goal is to stage an event pushing the boundaries of the sports involved while at once getting back to their roots in Los Angeles" (*ESPNLA.com*).

Also:

- New study finds almost [no one willing to pay to use Twitter](#).
- [How did Ft. Worth land ESPN](#) to set up its Super Bowl coverage?
- Brazil gets ball rolling on '14 [FIFA World Cup preparations](#).
- WWE Chair **Vince McMahon** sits for wide-ranging interview.

See the [Hot Reads](#) section for more sports business-related links.

DAILY DOWNLOAD....

MLS Wizards F **Kei Kamara** and F **Teal Bunbury** appear in this [light-hearted ad](#) promoting the June '11 opening of the team's soccer-specific stadium.

CHANNEL SURF....

NFL Commissioner **Roger Goodell** will appear on NFL Network's "NFL Total Access" at 7:00pm ET.

HBO will air "Countdown To Hard Knocks," a 12-minute preview of the upcoming series featuring the Jets' training camp, at 11:00pm ET.

HEADLINERS....

Here are tonight's headline guests on the following talk shows:

"Late Show"	Michael Keaton
"Tonight Show"	Eva Mendes
"Late Late Show"	Carrie Fisher
"Late Night"	Luke Wilson
"Jimmy Kimmel Live"	ZacEfron

DAILY DIGIT....

200 – Number of collegiate athletic properties for which IMG College now serves as the licensing agency following its acquisition of ISP Sports, which was announced today. IMG College now will employ over 700 people in 75 offices throughout the U.S. with annual sales of more than \$400M (*IMG*).

NOTES & QUOTES FROM THIS DAY IN SBD HISTORY....

1999

In a [report issued by Northeastern Univ.'s Center for the Study of Sport in Society](#), the NBA receives an overall A- for the hiring of members of minority groups and B for its gender hiring. The NFL has the lowest grade for gender with a D+, but gets a B+ for hiring minority group. MLB receives a B for race. Colleges are "significantly behind the pros with C's for race and gender diversity in hiring."

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions, please let us know at:
pbounds@sportsbusinessdaily.com.

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