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01/25/17: FOX Sports maps Super Bowl plans; CBS sows seeds; Hockey goes Hollywood

CYNOPSISSPORTS

Good morning. It's **Wednesday January 25, 2017** and this is your first early morning **Sports**briefing.

FOX Sports is tackling **Super Bowl LI** with a layout that is set to serve up more than 20 hours of programming per day during Super Bowl Week, spanning multiple network include FS1 and FOX Deportes while FOX Sports produces 51 hours of studio programming, including pregame and postgame coverage, live from Discovery Green for a markup of 79% programming efforts originating from the FOX Sports' Times Square set during Super Bowl XLVIII. Meanwhile, game day will see the company leverage 70 total FOX Sports cameras for Super Bowl LI, including: two high-speed 4K high-resolution cameras, four normal-speed 4K cameras, four 3X Super Motion cameras; two 6X Super Motion cameras, three 8X cameras; 24 pylon cameras as well as the introduction of an 8K camera.

Super Bowl Sunday programming will open with Road to the Super Bowl at 11a, followed by Skip and Shannon: Undisputed Super Bowl Special at noon and FOX Super Bowl Kickoff at 1p. FOX Super Bowl Pregame runs 2-6:30p, after which the game will begin.

ON THE AIR

Meanwhile, **FOX Sports** also announced that Super Bowl XLV champion **Greg Jennings** is joining the network as an NFL analyst, contributing to a number of FOX Sports studio shows. "We've been fortunate to have Greg on as a guest across many of our studio shows and have been incredibly impressed by his insight and ability to speak on a wide variety of topics," said Whit Albohm, Vice President, Daily Studio Production for FS1. "His lengthy playing career and deep connections to the NFL make him an incredible asset to our team, and we are thrilled to have him at FOX Sports."

CBS will, for the first time ever, feature the **NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Selection Committee** offering fans an in-season look at Championship bracket starting Feb. 11. NCAA Men's Basketball Chair Mark Hollis will be in studio for the reveal of the nation's top 16 seeds, identifying the top four teams in each region as they stand. Hollis joins host Greg Gumbel and analysts Clark Kellogg and Seth Davis for the program, along with bracketologist Jerry Palm. Twenty-nine days following the preview, the official NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Championship field of 68 will be announced exclusively on CBS on March 12.

Bellator MMA saw 1.85 million viewers tune in for the final fight in Tito Ortiz's storied career, where he bested Chael Sonnen, to mark the most watched Bellator fight on Spike since last February, according to Nielsen. Overall, Bellator 170 delivered 1.4 million viewers – making it the 3rd most watched card in the franchise's history.

ESPN announced that host Sage Steele and analyst Jalen Rose will team up as the **NBA Countdown** studio duo for pregame and halftime shows during ABC's NBA Sunday Showcase series. The series opens on Sunday, with the Cavaliers facing the Thunder. The pairing marks the first time ESPN has featured a two-person NBA Countdown team for regular editions of the show.

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NBC Sports Group begins the **2017 LPGA season** begins this week with the Pure Silk-Bahamas LPGA Classic, airing live on Golf Channel Thursday-Sunday. This year, NBC Sports Group carries 33 LPGA Tour events in the season-long Race to the CME Globe marking the highest number of Golf Channel televised events in LPGA history. Last year saw 614 hours of LPGA coverage on Golf Channel in 2016, capping the most ever on the network.

NHL Network is delivering 12 hours of live, on-site coverage of the 2017 Honda NHL All-Star Weekend in LA this weekend with analysts E.J. Hradek, Mike Johnson, Mike Rupp and Kevin Weekes joining hosts Jamison Coyle, Jamie Hersch and Tony Luftman for the programming. Coverage starts Friday at 7p with the NHL Tonight: Best of the All-Stars Special. At 8p, the channel showcases a live simulcast of Sportsnet's NHL All-Star Special leading up to The NHL 100 Presented by GEICO.

WWE Superstar **John Cena** will host Nickelodeon's 2017 Kids' Choice Awards on March 11 at 8p from USC's Galen Center in Los Angeles. "John Cena's energy and larger-than-life personality will bring the most excitement, comedy and fun to this year's Kids' Choice Awards," said Shelly Sumpter Gillyard, Senior Vice President, Talent and Events for Nickelodeon. "He's a big kid at heart, and we can't wait to give kids around the world a front row seat to this year's show."

SPONSORSHIP & PROMOTION

NBC Sports locked in plans for its biggest NHL All-Star Game engagement plan ever with the multi-platform campaign "**Hockey Goes Hollywood**." The promotion will blend the event with the "glitz and glamour of Hollywood moviemaking, and many of Los Angeles' world famous landmarks." The plan will deliver four major content pieces: "Movie Trailer" – featuring Crosby, Kane, Ovechkin, and Rask reciting famous movie lines; "Audition" – showcasing some of the game's greatest players auditioning in front of two insufferable casting agents for an All-Star roster spot in the stereotypical way an actor has to land a job in Hollywood; "L.A. Landmarks": a video incorporating the NHL into many world famous landmarks of Los Angeles; and Movie Posters – hockey versions of some of the movie industry's most iconic pictures.

PepsiCo and Tastemade are launching Game Day Grub Match ahead of the Super Bowl, a digital content series featuring three Tastemade chefs competing to create the ultimate football food. The series is hosted by celebrity chef and restaurateur Jet Tila, with a lineup of judges that include Food Network Chef Anne Burrell; former Steelers wide Hines Ward; and PepsiCo Executive Chef Stephen Kalil. The Tastemakers competed in three rounds, each with a distinct theme, included Food Inside Food, Texas-inspired, and Finger Food.

The **NFL** is hosting Plays for Life, the League's Super Bowl LI Women's Summit, on February 3 and 4 in Houston and will invite approximately 250 Houston-area teen girls to attend the event, which will be exclusively livestreamed at MAKERS.com. Pam Oliver will emcee, with guests set to include NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell, Gabby Douglas, Tony Dungy, Aly Raisman, and Meredith Walker, co-Creator/Executive Director of Amy Poehler's Smart Girls.

Buffalo Wild Wings heads to the Super Bowl with Brett Favre, with a "What the Favre?!" campaign that will leverage spots (including a Super Bowl pre-game ad), social media extensions and online videos to "take fans on a journey as Brett Favre obsesses over who, or what, might have been behind his all-time interception record." Fans can join the conversation using the #HitTheButton hashtag

Full Swing announced a new partnership with world number one **Jason Day**. Full Swing's flagship product, the S8 Series simulator, will be installed early this year in Day's Columbus, Ohio home while Day will be supporting the brand through various marketing initiatives and accompanying

DIGITAL & STREAMING

The Players' Tribune is launching its own podcast network, in partnership with DGital Media that will feature oral histories, athlete-hosted podcasts, a flagship show and other topical series. The network debuts tomorrow with Giant Steps, an oral history podcast event that chronicles the rise of the Giants' first Super Bowl championship in 1986, narrated by Michael Strahan.

NeuLion extended its partnership with the Southern Conference to continue to power the conference's digital network. "Extending our partnership with NeuLion represents an important step forward in enhancing our connection to our fans and continuing to showcase our brand of intercollegiate athletics," said John Iamarino, Southern Conference Commissioner. "NeuLion's demonstrated experience in delivering digital content to any device helps us maximize our alumni's affinities for their schools by providing a single digital destination to access every school's sports content. Offering school-specific content on individual channels leads to higher engagement among viewers."

Minute Media announced they have grown to more than 70 million unique users per month globally, up from 27 million per month this time last year. The audience growth has catapulted Minute Media to be the third largest sports property in the UK and the ninth largest in the US in less than eight months, according to comScore for the month of December.

ESPORTS

The **Esports Integrity Coalition** announced the addition of GameCo Inc., creator of the world's first video game gambling machines, to its membership. Esports Integrity Commissioner Ian Smith said, "We are delighted that GameCo has decided to join ESIC. GameCo operates at the juncture between esports and betting, and embracing integrity efforts in this early stage of its operations speaks to the company's impeccable ethos and values and its determination to get things right from day one, not just for itself, but for the wider community in which it operates."

Riot Games casters will no longer be prevented from monetizing their streams, according to Yahoo Esports. The move allows paid subscribers for talent via the Twitch Partnership program and accepting donations from stream viewers. However, casters are still not allowed to have sponsors or paid advertisements.

ROSTER MOVES

Alliance MMA named James Byrne as its Chief Marketing Officer. Prior to joining Alliance, Byrne served as an executive consultant to the UFC and, before that, was a senior marketer at the WWE.

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