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Sports & Entertainment Beat

# Sports & Entertainment Spotlight: Los Angeles Rams Pass Rusher Aaron Donald's Restructured Deal Makes Him $95 Million by 2024; and Walton Family Closes a $4.65 Billion Purchase of the Denver Broncos Football Team

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Welcome back to the "Spotlight!" This may come as a shock to exactly none of you, but people can be really good as casting aside morality in the face of heaps of money. That statement came into sharp focus this week with the news of prominent professional golfers bolting the PGA Tour to join the Saudi Sovereign Wealth Fund-backed LIV Golf professional tour. If you're like me, your first thought is that "LIV" seems like a poor name for an organization backed by a government that orchestrated the brutal assassination of Saudi dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi in 2018 or that held mass executions of 81 men after holding kangaroo court proceedings this past March - but, alas "LIV" is the Roman numeral for "54." Perhaps it was the kangaroo aspect that attracted Greg Norman to the opportunity of becoming LIV Golf's C.E.O. (it's funny because he's Australian). For professional golfers such as Dustin Johnson and Phil Mickelson, it was almost certainly the money that lured them - $150 million and $200 million, respectively. This of course coming several months after Mickelson was rather colorfully critical of the idea of joining LIV Golf due to its Saudi ties and the attendant association with human rights violations (call it a "moral mulligan," I guess). To his credit, Tiger Woods was reportedly offered a deal with LIV Golf in the "high nine figures," but he has (so far) admirably declined, shying away from the shiny prize in the negative spotlight. For those of you craving a positive "Spotlight," look no further:

- After having dangled the prospect of his retirement in the absence of a mega contract, Los Angeles Rams pass rusher Aaron Donald restructured his deal such that he will make $95 million by the 2024 NFL season. For any of my superiors reading this, have I mentioned that I'm considering taking up shuffleboard and mahjong on a full-time basis...?
- Walmart heir Rob Walton, his daughter and son-in-law appear poised to close a $4.65 billion purchase of the Denver Broncos football team - the biggest team purchase in North American sports history. They may count themselves as fortunate, but the really lucky one is going to be whomever Walton

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subsequently sells the team to at the everyday low price of $24.95.

- Count Mariah Carey as the latest recording artist to be hit with a lawsuit alleging copyright infringement by a mega-hit song - specifically, Carey's 1994 perennial holiday favorite "All I Want for Christmas Is You." Which begs the question: at what point in the past 28 years did the plaintiff hear the song and decide: "hey, that's mine!"
- Todd and Julie Chrisley, stars of the reality television series, “Chrisley Knows Best” face up to 30 years in prison having been found guilty of bank fraud and tax evasion. For media companies looking to air/make available re-runs of the show, might I suggest renaming the series: “Chrisley Should Have Known Better.”

**Endorsement Deals, Sponsorships & Investments** **NFL signs E. & J. Gallo as wine sponsor - further eroding AB InBev’s hold on league’s alcohol category** *June 8, 2022 via Advertising Age* The maker of Barefoot wine agrees to multi-year deal as the league grows its alcohol sponsor roster.

**Rich Strike agrees to sponsorship deal with Dan-O’s Seasoning** *June 8, 2022 via Sports Business Journal (subscription may be required)* Kentucky Derby winner Rich Strike’s Owner Rick Dawson has “reached a sponsorship agreement” with “Dan-O’s Seasoning,” according to Frank Angst of BloodHorse.

**IHG signs on as MLS’ official hotel partner** *June 8, 2022 via Sports Business Journal (subscription may be required)* MLS today will name IHG Hotels & Resorts its official hotel partner under a new multi-year sponsorship agreement, specific terms of which were not disclosed.

**Wasserman's influence in women's sports extends to athletes, brands and leagues** *June 7, 2022 via Biz Journal* Talent and brand agency Wasserman has few peers when it comes to making the business case for aligning female athletes and leagues with major corporate players.

**Bruno Mars on How His Brand SelvaRey Is Making Rum 'Sexy'** *June 7, 2022 via Hollywood*

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*Reporter* "It's no different than a song," says the Grammy-winning musician, who is set to return to Las Vegas for Silk Sonic's second residency at Park MGM's Dolby Live theater. Bruno Mars just wants to keep the party going.

**Why Aaron Donald's extension has Los Angeles Rams eyeing another Super Bowl ring** *June 6, 2022 via ESPN* Defensive tackle Aaron Donald will be the highest-paid non-quarterback in the NFL for the second time in his career. Coach Sean McVay is thrilled Donald is getting paid and continuing his career with the Los Angeles Rams.

**Why World Wide Technology is severing its sponsorship deal with pro golfer Graeme McDowell** *June 6, 2022 via Biz Journal* World Wide Technology has severed its sponsorship agreement with professional golfer Graeme McDowell, a decision that stems from his decision to participate in a new golf league that has drawn controversy.

**In choosing colleges, top athletes say: "Show me the NIL"** *June 3, 2022 via Moneywatch CBS* It's been almost a year since the NCAA gave college athletes the right to earn money from their own name, image or likeness, a move that supporters of the policy said would allow young sports stars to profit from the big bucks they help generate for their schools.

**Nike Co-Founder Phil Knight Leads $2+ Billion Offer for NBA's Trail Blazers** *June 2, 2022 via Sportico (subscription may be required)* Nike co-founder Phil Knight and Los Angeles Dodgers investor Alan Smolinisky have made an offer of more than $2 billion off to purchase the Portland Trail Blazers, according to The New York Times.

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**Sports** **NBA Finals: 49ers rooting for Warriors' core to join four-ring club** *June 8, 2022 via Mercury News* As the Warriors vie for their fourth NBA championship in eight seasons,

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some 49ers legends can relate, and they're doing so in awe. "I have mad respect for all of them, because they don't shortcut," Ronnie Lott said in a phone interview Tuesday.

**Denver Broncos and Walton-Penner family enter into purchase and sale agreement** *June 8, 2022 via CNN Top Stories* The Denver Broncos and the Walton-Penner family have entered into a purchase and sale agreement to acquire the NFL team.

**Pro lacrosse season begins as sport's leaders eye Olympics** *June 4, 2022 via Lancaster Online* Paul Rabil had a dream that went beyond the Premier Lacrosse League he founded with brother Mike four years ago.

**Celtics-Warriors NBA Finals Showdown a Dream Pairing for ABC** *June 1, 2022 via Sportico (subscription may be required)* The NBA Finals are set to tip off in San Francisco, and given the pairing of the most-titled franchise in basketball history and arguably the greatest team of this young-ish century, fans are in for a treat.

**US Open's $10 million purse offers hope for gender pay equality** *June 1, 2022 via The Independent* Dottie Pepper recalls being paired with Meg Mallon for the final round of the 1991 U.S. Women's Open with what she viewed as an impressive $110,000 first-place prize on the line. Things have changed, but Lydia Ko says not enough. Mallon would win that tournament and earn the record-breaking payday.

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**Music Biz** **Kylie Minogue Said Blocking Kylie Jenner From Trademarking Her Name Was "Something That Had to Be Done" and Teased That She "Came to an Agreement" With the Kardashians** *June 8, 2022 via Yahoo News* Very few go head-to-head with the Kardashians

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and come out on top. However, one woman who did just that, and survived to tell the tale, is Kylie Minogue.

**Mariah Carey sued over 'All I Want for Christmas is You'; 'Scrubs' revival?: Buzz** *June 6, 2022 via Syracuse Post Standard* ET reports Mariah Carey is being sued for $20 million over her 1994 holiday hit "All I Want for Christmas is You."

**SoundExchange Powers the Future of Music With the Release of a New Mobile App, Tools, and Look** *June 6, 2022 via Yahoo Finance* SoundExchange, the premier music tech organization powering the future of music, today unveiled the next generation of solutions to make the business of music easier and fairer including a new mobile app, look, and website that will serve as a resource for creators, publishers, and digital service providers.

**The Strokes' Julian Casablancas sells stake in publishing catalog to Primary Wave in 'multi-million dollar deal'** *June 6, 2022 via Music Business Worldwide* Company says deal includes 'share of music publishing on all Strokes compositions, as well as his share of master copyrights and master royalties' Source.

**Sex Pistols' 'God Save The Queen' Becomes Top-Selling Single in U.K. During Platinum Jubilee** *June 5, 2022 via Greenwich Time* As Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee festivities continue, a reissue of Sex Pistols' infamous anarchist anthem "God Save The Queen" hit the top of the charts in the U.K.

**'Radiolab' Podcast Producer WNYC Studios Eyes TV & Film Adaptations After Signing With UTA** *June 2, 2022 via Deadline* WNYC Studios, the audio company behind series including Radiolab and Dolly Parton's America, is looking to move into the world of film and TV after signing with UTA.

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**Film & TV** **UTA Acquires Mediahound to Accelerate Data Analytics Capabilities** *June 8, 2022 via MENAFN* Leading global entertainment, talent, and sports agency UTA has acquired MediaHound, a software and data analytics company that helps entertainment and media companies develop proprietary insights to most effectively utilize information to benefit talent, content, and audiences.

**Formula One Excitement Bodes Well For Shareholders as Rights Deal, Brad Pitt Film Move Forward** *June 8, 2022 via Benzinga* Shareholders of Liberty Formula One could soon be excited as the global racing league continues to expand and grow its viewership across the U.S. The success will likely increase the amount the league gets in a new media rights deal.

**Esports Revenue Boost May Come From Fan Data Rather Than Media Rights** *June 7, 2022 via Sportico (subscription may be required)* Esports organizations have largely underwhelmed from a P&L standpoint to date. They're held back by the lack of broadcast rights around the games themselves, explained Adam Rymer, the C.E.O. of Envy Gaming, a Dallas-based media and entertainment company that focuses on the gaming sector.

**Paramount Sued for Releasing 'Top Gun: Maverick' Without Copyright License** *June 6, 2022 via Bloomberg (subscription may be required)* Paramount Pictures Corp. was accused in a lawsuit of releasing its blockbuster "Top Gun: Maverick" without securing a license from the estate of the writer whose story inspired the original film about four decades ago.

**Formula 1 'eyes $100 million price' for US TV rights as sport's popularity surges with Netflix series** *June 6, 2022 via Daily Mail* Netflix has reportedly joined Amazon Prime, NBC and ESPN in a bidding war over Formula 1's US media rights. ESPN reportedly has a $70 million offer on the table, but F1 wants $100 million.

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**Blue Ant International Buys Distributor Drive Media Rights in Major U.K. Acquisition (EXCLUSIVE)** *June 6, 2022 via Greenwich Time* Manori Ravindran provided by Canada's Blue Ant International has made one of its most ambitious acquisitions to date, taking 100 percent ownership of U.K.-based distributor Drive Media Rights Variety can reveal.

**Tom Brady's Film Company Eyes More Than Sports After $50 Million Raise** *June 6, 2022 via Sportico (subscription may be required)* Religion of Sports has raised $50 million in Series B funding as the media company expands its storytelling ambitions. Founded by Tom Brady, Gotham Chopra, and Michael Strahan in 2017, the studio is best known for a string of multipart athlete documentaries starring the likes of Steph Curry.

**LIV Golf completes streaming pacts with YouTube, Facebook** *June 5, 2022 via Sport Business (subscription may be required)* LIV Golf completes streaming pacts with YouTube and Facebook.

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**Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs)** **Micah Johnson: From MLB to NFT Superstar** *June 8, 2022 via Markets Insider* Shortly after Micah Johnson joined the Los Angeles Dodgers Major League Baseball team, the team's manager, Dave Roberts, asked all the new members to share their hobbies.

**iHeartMedia and State Farm® collaborate on first-ever exclusive arena naming rights in the metaverse with iHeartLand** *June 8, 2022 via State Farm News* State Farm celebrates its 100th anniversary by looking to redefine the future of entertainment with iHeartMedia.

**Seth Green's Stolen 'Bored Ape' Muddles NFT Legal Ownership** *June 8, 2022 via Bloomberg*

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*Law* The theft of actor and producer Seth Green's "Bored Ape" NFT has prompted debate around copyright and ownership of the popular digital assets and their unusual licensing structure.

**How Big Is the Music NFT Market, and How Far Will the Trend Go?** *June 8, 2022 via Crypto News Australia* Most people unaware of the blockchain potential will tell you that NFTs are just games for kids, but those who follow the trends and know how the blockchain industry works will say that NFTs are the next big thing in the Web3 ecosystem.

**The Weeknd Inks Partnership Deal with Binance for Tour** *June 3, 2022 via CoinSpeaker* The Weeknd stated he was enthralled by Binance's user focus and novel tech, noting that the company is all about community. A versatile musician and songwriter The Weeknd has announced a new sponsorship deal with a well-known cryptocurrency exchange Binance.

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*Posted in Sports & Entertainment Spotlight*

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