

# Sports & Entertainment Spotlight: Former Miami Dolphins' Head Coach Brian Flores Files a Potential Landmark Lawsuit Against the NFL Alleging Racial Discrimination, and Former NBA Player J.R. Smith Aims for NIL Opportunities

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Welcome back to the Spotlight and oh-me, oh-my, do we have a full slate of developments in the National Football League (NFL) - and that's to say nothing of what happened on the field, with the Cincinnati Bengals and Los Angeles Rams battling their way into Super Bowl LVI. First, seven-time Super Bowl champion (and two-time Super Bowl runner-up to my New York Football Giants) quarterback Tom Brady was reported to have retired, several days before his official announcement and the vesting of his \$15 million signing bonus. While he could well afford to have done so, the all-time great was not about to leave that money on the table. A few days later, the Washington Football Team (formerly known as the Washington Redskins) debut their new name and branding as the Washington Commanders, and at least so far, appear to have avoided the same plight that the Cleveland Guardians baseball team met when changing their name several months ago. Kudos to the Commanders' trademark attorneys there. But overshadowing all of that was former Miami Dolphins' head coach, Brian Flores, a Black man, filing a potential landmark lawsuit for himself and an uncertified class action against the NFL and several named member clubs (unfortunately including the aforementioned New York Football Giants) alleging, amongst other things, pervasive racial discrimination in the NFL's hiring process - in spite of the NFL's "Rooney

Rule," requiring teams to conduct interviews with minority coaching candidates. Time will tell how this case will shake out, what other details will be revealed (already we've learned about alleged payments to coaches for losing football games in an effort to improve NFL draft position,) and how much Flores will be able to bring about lasting change through this lawsuit. Rest assured, the "Spotlight" has you covered - but until then, check out what else is on tap this week:

- *Former NBA Player J.R. Smith, who made headlines last year after retiring from basketball to enroll in, and play golf competitively at North Carolina A&T, signs with a sports agency to position himself for name, image and likeness opportunities, becoming the first former professional athlete to enter into such a deal. Whoever said it's too late to relive your glory days?*
- *Justin Bieber became the latest entertainer to buy a Bored Ape NFT, laying out an astonishing \$1.29 million (500 Ethereum tokens). Far be it from me to question the behind the scenes deal making, but shouldn't the Apes be paying for the entertainers on account of being bored?*
- *The Joe Rogan – Neil Young et al. Spotify kerfuffle continues for a second week with more artists demanding that their music be pulled from the streaming platform over COVID-19 vaccine misinformation. We will see whether Spotify remains immune from loss of content.*

## **Endorsement Deals, Sponsorships & Investments**

### **Morgan Stanley Global Sports & Entertainment Continues Financial Education for College Football All-Stars in Partnership with Reese's Senior Bowl**

*February 1, 2022 via Lancaster Online – Global search 2*

Morgan Stanley Global Sports & Entertainment (GSE), a division of Morgan Stanley Wealth Management dedicated to serving the unique needs of professional athletes and entertainers, remains the exclusive financial education partner of the Reese's Senior Bowl for the eighth consecutive year.

### **Rafael Nadal Sets New Grand Slam Record With His Lucky \$1 Million Richard Mille Rafa Watch**

*January 31, 2022 via Auto Evolution*

It's not uncommon for public figures, whether they're artists or athletes, to partner with certain brands for publicity - and an extra buck in that person's bank account. That said, tennis champ Rafael Nadal is a brand ambassador unlike most.

### **Lack of Detailed NIL Rules Challenges NCAA Enforcement**

*January 29, 2022 via Times of Northwest Indiana*

The NCAA lifted most restrictions on athletes earning money through sponsorship deals or as paid endorsers last summer after numerous states passed laws that usurped the association's rules.

### **NIL Opportunities Growing for NAIA Student Athletes**

*January 26, 2022 via Forbes - Business (subscription may be required)*

The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics has formed a new partnership with Opendorse, the first-ever association-wide deal in college athletics. The three-year partnership will give NAIA athletes access to Opendorse's NIL marketing, education and compliance platform.

## **Sports**

### **Brian Flores Sues NFL, Three Teams as Former Miami Dolphins Coach Alleges Racism in Hiring Practices**

*February 1, 2022 via ESPN*

Brian Flores has sued the NFL and three teams — the Dolphins, Broncos and Giants — alleging discrimination regarding his interview processes with Denver and New York and his firing last month by Miami.

### **Nadal Captures Record 21st Slam as Career Earnings Push \$500 Million**

*January 30, 2022 via News Break - Top Stories*

Nadal rallied from down two sets to defeat Daniil Medvedev in an epic 5-hour, 24-minute Australian Open final. The win marked Nadal's record 21st Grand Slam title, breaking a tie for the all-time lead in men's tennis with fellow Big Three members, Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic.

### **Tom Brady May Be Retiring. Here's How Much He's Earned in His 22-Year NFL Career**

*January 29, 2022 via Forbes - Business (subscription may be required)*

It could be over. ESPN's Adam Schefter and Jeff Darlington reported on last Saturday afternoon, January 29, that Tom Brady was retiring from professional football.

### **J.R. Smith Timing Life Right in Pursuit of NIL**

*January 28, 2022 via Sportico - Law (subscription may be required)*

Retired NBA player and college freshman J.R. Smith is joining the NIL world. The two-time NBA champion and Sixth Man of the Year Award recipient has hired Excel Sports to represent him in NIL deals, ESPN's Adrian Wojnarowski reported on Friday, January 28.

### **Denver Broncos Tap Allen & Co. to Run Potential Record Sale**

*January 28, 2022 via Sportico - Business (subscription may be required)*

The Denver Broncos have hired Allen & Co. to run what is expected to be the most expensive franchise sale in sports history.

### **LeBron James Foundation Joins Crypto.com in Web3 Education Drive**

*January 28, 2022 via Sportico - Business (subscription may be required)*

After acquiring the naming rights to the Los Angeles Lakers' home arena, Crypto.com is now headed to

LeBron James' other home. The cryptocurrency exchange company has partnered with the LeBron James Family Foundation to add Web3 education to the foundation's I Promise program in Akron, Ohio.

### **Beijing Olympics Highlights U.S. government and Corporations Divide Over China**

January 27, 2022 via *Intellasia – China News* (subscription may be required)

The Beijing Olympics kick off next week under a cloud of controversy, with six countries including the U.S. announcing diplomatic boycotts over China's human rights abuses.

### **Beijing Games Offer NBCU Challenges, 'Unprecedented Opportunity'**

January 27, 2022 via *Sportico - Business* (subscription may be required)

NBCUniversal is about to begin broadcasting the second half of a rare Olympics doubleheader - and, as Variety reports, fatigue has set in. The Winter Games in Beijing begin February 4, just six months after the close of the Tokyo Summer Olympic Games that were postponed from 2020 because of the pandemic.

## **Music Biz**

### **Joe Rogan Isn't Spotify's Only Podcast Problem**

January 31, 2022 via *Bloomberg - News* (subscription may be required)

Spotify Chief Executive Office Daniel Ek is trying to extinguish a raging controversy that began a week ago, when singer Neil Young demanded his music be removed from the platform over concerns that its most popular podcaster, Joe Rogan, is spreading vaccine misinformation.

### **Hollywood Start-Up Plans to Track Unpaid Residuals, Royalties**

January 31, 2022 via *News Break – Top Stories*

Hollywood Reporter journalists have joined forces to realize a software that tracks airings of films and television episodes to uncover unpaid residuals, royalties and profit participations.

### **Primary Wave Acquires Stakes in Def Leppard's Music Publishing Catalog and Master Royalty Income Stream**

January 31, 2022 via *Music Business Worldwide*

Primary Wave Music has acquired what it says is an "additional" stake in Def Leppard's music publishing catalog, as well as the band's master royalty income stream.

### **Bono and The Edge Release New Version of Sunday Bloody Sunday on Anniversary of Massacre**

January 30, 2022 via *Irish Times Online*

Bono and the Edge from U2 have released a dramatically reworked acoustic version of Sunday Bloody Sunday on Instagram to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the massacre in Derry.

### **Travis Scott Fans Seemingly Faked More Than 60,000 Signatures on a Petition for Him to Be Allowed to Perform at Coachella After Being Axed From the Lineup**

January 28, 2022 via BuzzFeed – Latest

A fan-made petition campaigning for Travis Scott to be allowed to perform at Coachella has been removed from Change.org after it was found that over 60,000 of its signatures had been faked.

### **Neil Young's Radio Channel on SiriusXM is Revived After Spotify Removal**

January 27, 2022 via Wall Street Journal Technology (subscription may be required)

As Neil Young's music was coming down from the world's largest streaming service, satellite-radio company SiriusXM went to him to strike a deal. SiriusXM, a unit of Liberty Media Corp., announced the return of "Neil Young Radio," a satellite and streamed channel featuring Mr. Young.

### **Neil Young's Ultimatum to Spotify Shows Streaming Platforms Are Now a Battleground Where Artists Can Leverage Power**

January 26, 2022 via News Break – Top Stories

Neil Young has given Spotify an ultimatum: remove the Joe Rogan Experience podcast or Neil Young walks. In a letter to his management team and label, the 79-year-old rocker lambasted Spotify for spreading Rogan's misinformation about COVID vaccinations.

## **Film & TV**

### **Joe Rogan's Path From Reality Host to Covid Controversy King**

February 1, 2022 via CNN Top Stories

If Joe Rogan wasn't already a household name before last week, he almost certainly is now. His Spotify-based podcast's Covid commentary created a backlash that led several musicians and customers to boycott the platform.

### **FuboTV Brings Customers NBCUniversal's Coverage of 2022 Olympic Winter Games, February 2-20, 2022**

February 1, 2022 via Business Wire – Sports News

FuboTV Inc., the leading sports-first live TV streaming platform, in agreement with NBCUniversal, announced a multi-platform content offering for NBCUniversal's coverage of the XXIV Olympic Winter Games from Beijing, China, which take place from February 2-20, 2022.

### **Warner Bros. TV Signs 'Ted Lasso' Star Brett Goldstein**

February 1, 2022 via Television Business International

Warner Bros. Television Group (WBTVG) has signed an overall development deal with Ted Lasso star, writer and co-executive producer Brett Goldstein. Under the terms of the deal, Goldstein will develop, create, and produce new programming exclusively for its platforms, including potentially for WarnerMedia's HBO Max, external streaming services, cable, and the five broadcast networks.

### **Netflix Golf, Tennis Series Push Game-Time, All-Access Barrier**

*January 28, 2022 via Sportico - Business (subscription may be required)*

Netflix recently announced Box to Box films, the production company behind the hit docuseries Formula 1: Drive to Survive, will produce two more documentary series, focused on the PGA Tour and professional tennis' Grand Slam events, for the streaming service.

### **Comedian Leanne Morgan Signs With UTA**

*January 26, 2022 via News Break – Top Stories*

Nashville based stand-up comedian and actress Leanne Morgan has inked with UTA for worldwide representation in all areas.

### **ESPN Extends PFL Deal**

*January 25, 2022 via News Break – Top Stories*

The Professional Fighters League (PFL) and ESPN have announced a new, multi-year media rights agreement that will see expanded coverage on ESPN linear networks and ESPN+ in the US.

## **Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs)**

### **Coachella Jumps Into NFT Trend, Teams Up With FTX for Concert Passes**

*February 1, 2022 via Yahoo Finance – Top Stories*

Music festival Coachella and cryptocurrency exchange FTX are teaming up to offer ten lifetime festival guest passes as NFTs, underscoring how the music industry is using digital collectibles to enhance the concert going experience, while offering a glimpse into the future of live events.

### **Kanye West Explains Why He Won't Make NFTs, for Now**

*February 1, 2022 via Bloomberg - News (subscription may be required)*

Kanye West says he won't be cashing in on the NFT craze, unlike other celebrities and musicians. But because it's Kanye, he left the door open to changing his mind.

### **Justin Bieber Shows Off His Bored Ape Yacht Club NFT: Why Did He Pay \$1.3M For This Particular Ape?**

*January 31, 2022 via Benzinga*

Musician Justin Bieber became one of the latest celebrities to purchase a Bored Ape Yacht Club, one of the most well-known and highest valued NFT collections. Bieber showed off his Bored Ape for the first time Monday, posting the image on Instagram.

### **NFTs, Celebrities and Perverse Deal-Making**

*January 31, 2022 via Yahoo Finance – Top Stories*

Early last week, a viral clip from "The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon" began making the rounds on social media. In it, Fallon's guest, the socialite turned crypto promoter Paris Hilton, shows off a picture of one of her recent NFT purchases: a reddish Bored Ape complete with hat and sunglasses.

**Warner Music Strikes Deal With OneOf for Artist and Music NFTs**

*January 31, 2022 via Greenwich Time*

Jem Aswad provided by OneOf has formed a preferred partnership with Warner Music Group that will see the company create exclusive NFTs for a range of artists across WMG's catalog of music.

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