Foster Garvey

Sports & Entertainment Beat

This Week In Sports & Entertainment: The Sphere Turns Oz Into $260M, Duke Heads To Court & Ryan Coogler Makes Awards History

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Welcome back to the Spotlight! With a trip to the Super Bowl on the line in each of this weekend's NFL Conference Championship matchups, and the NFL's playoff television ratings reaching levels not seen since the '90s (oh, how I miss you) I'd be willing to bet that tens of millions will be tuned in. After all, with the arctic temperatures and impending winter storm in the U.S., many will be staying indoors, so what *else* are you going to do? Talk to each other?!?!

I'd also be willing to bet that the number of dollars bet on the games will be at least equal to the number of viewers of said games. Some might even call that a "sure thing" particularly because of the proliferation and soaring popularity of legal sports gambling. In case you haven't noticed from the ubiquity of sports betting advertisements before, during, after, throughout and [insert your favorite preposition here], a sporting event-including by current and former athletes. Interestingly, a recent YouGov poll observed that such advertisements don't have a material impact on gamblers' decisions to gamble, but instead make brands seem less authentic. Not only that, but I would surmise that athletes' peddling gambling platforms call into question the integrity of their sports. In that regard, it's not particularly helpful that there have been so many betting schemes that have been uncovered in just the past 24 months across all levels of competitive sports. Still, there seems to be little appetite for messing with the formula. Changes on the horizon? Don't bet on it.

- The Sphere is Las Vegas has raked in $260 million for its "The Wizard of Oz" show, because well...there's no place like dome.
- Duke University sues its Quarterback Darian Mensah to enforce its revenue-sharing agreement and keep him from transferring to another school - just the latest instance of schools and athletes duking it out in the NIL era.
- Ryan Coogler's blues-y horror film *Sinners* may pull off a laugher at this year's Academy Awards, having earned 16 award nominations - the most in history for a single film. In other news, the folks behind *Saints* are shedding tears as they were not nominated.

For inquiries and/or unabashed compliments, please feel free to contact me at josh.bloomgarden@foster.com or add me on LinkedIn

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Endorsement Deals, Sponsorships & Investments

YouGov Survey Suggests that Celebrity Gambling Brand Endorsements Don't Do Much for the Average American
January 22, 2026 via ReadWriteWeb

WinSport Seeks Naming Rights Sponsors
January 22, 2026 via Calgary Herald

Private Capital Moves into Emerging Sports as Athvance Launches Pan-European Platform
January 21, 2026 via Private Equity Insights

NIL Could Be Made More Transparent with New Bill Calling for Work Group on Student Athlete Endorsement Deals
January 19, 2026 via Cardinal News

Mark Cuban's Financial Support Has Helped Transform Indiana's Football Program
January 18, 2026 via Lancaster Online

UK Ready to Mirror US with Female Athletes Becoming Investors
January 17, 2026 via City AM

Steve Ballmer Hammers Aspiration Claims Amid NBA's Kawhi Probe
January 16, 2026 via Sportico

Sports

FTC Revives Overlooked Law to Police College Sports Agents
January 22, 2026 via Sportico

Judge Grants Duke's Bid to Block QB Darian Mensah's Transfer Until Feb. 2 Hearing in Contract Fight
January 21, 2026 via AP News

Judge Says Ex-Alabama Player Can Rejoin Team After 3 Years in Pros
January 21, 2026 via Front Office Sports

NBA Finals Schedule Nutmegs Potential World Cup Conflict
January 20, 2026 via Sportico

What New Ohio High School NIL Rules Mean for Student-Athletes
January 16, 2026 via Akron Legal

Chicago Bears' Revival Has NBC Sitting Pretty
January 16, 2026 via Sportico

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Music Biz

Is this Man the Future of Music - or its Executioner? AI Evangelist Mikey Shulman Says He's Making Pop, Not Slop
January 19, 2026 via Exec Review

Cutting Edge Group Acquires Royalty Streams to Composer John Paesano's Catalogue
January 17, 2026 via Music Week

Musical AI Secures US $4.5M New Funding
January 16, 2026 via Private Capital Journal

Film & TV

Scarlett Johansson Joins Hollywood Stars In Accusing AI Giants Of "Theft" In Blunt Open Letter
January 22, 2026 via Deadline

'Wizard of Oz' at Sphere Hits $260 Million in Ticket Sales
January 22, 2026 via MSN

AEW Won't Be Part of Warner Bros-Netflix Deal, Which Could Complicate its HBO Max Future
January 21, 2026 via Awful Announcing

F1 Exec Cites Apple's 'Enthusiasm' as Reason for ESPN Departure
January 21, 2026 via Awful Announcing

'A Knight Of The Seven Kingdoms' Showrunner Ira Parker On Dunk's Plan: "He's Walking Into Madison Square Garden For The Knicks But He's Never Played Before"
January 19, 2026 via Deadline

McConaughey Trademarks Voice, Image, and Catchphrase Against AI Deepfakes
January 19, 2026 via Web Prone News

Sony Pictures Classics Acquires Climate Change Conference Movie From Tom McCarthy
January 16, 2026 via Deadline

Emerging Sports

Flag Football Becomes NCAA Emerging Sport for Women, Nebraska Announces Varsity Program
January 16, 2026 via Associated Press

Posted in Sports & Entertainment Spotlight

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