BLEACHER REPORT
Mike Freeman
April 19, 2017

(Sean Mathis/Getty Images)

DAVIS FINDING THERE'S LIFE BEYOND FOOTBALL

While polishing what may be the latter years of his NFL career, Davis also has taken steps to establish himself in business. He is part of a group that includes former NBA Commissioner David Stern and Syracuse coach Jim Boeheim that's helped launch SportsCastr.Live, a live streaming platform that allows users to be color commentators and enables viewers to select which sportscaster they wish to have call, recap or make predictions on a game.

It's a damn good idea, and Davis' efforts at developing post-career business interests is something I'm seeing increasingly from players. And now they are starting at an earlier stage in their careers and making deeper forays into the business world. It's something I hear about repeatedly from players and others, and Davis is another example.

"I really started looking at the business world about five years ago," Davis said. "I was really intrigued by it, and that's how this investment came about."

So when will Davis, who is 33, dive full-time into the business world? "I'm going to play for as long as I possibly can," he said. "My girlfriend wants me to play for three more years. She's worried about me getting hurt. But I want to play longer than that."

IPR2024-01310
SportsCastr Inc. EX-2009

SPORTS BIZ: STERN, BOEHEIM HEAD SPORTSCASTR.LIVE INVESTMENT GROUP

DIGITAL SPORTS DESK
Staff Writer
April 19, 2017

What do a former league Commissioner, an NFL tight end, a Hall of Fame basketball coach and a group of sports executives have in common?

Sports Tech investing is the answer. A wide-ranging group of sports executives and game changers announced the launch of SportsCastr.Live, a pioneering video platform that redefines what it means to 'call a game.' SportsCastr.Live is a live streaming platform that allows users to be color commentators and enables viewers to select which sportscaster they wish to have call, recap or make predictions on a game.

The sports tech company's founding investors include David Stern, NBA Commissioner Emeritus; Jim Boeheim, Syracuse University Head Basketball Coach; Donald Schupak, former Managing Partner of the ABA's Spirits of St. Louis; Vernon Davis, two-time NFL Pro Bowler and Washington Redskins tight end; Andrew Schupak, SGI MB CEO; and Eric Bechtel, IdeaQuest Founder. The company is led by CEO Kevin April.

With all the sports business and tech opportunities flowing across Stern's Manhattan office desk, why would SportsCastr.Live warrant his investment and detailed attention?

"It fits my sports technology thesis," Stern told Digital Sports Desk Wednesday night. "Fans want their "personal" view–streaming, VR, data from wearables and machine learning–and now, their own announcer. It is very interesting to me."

Statements from the company news release underlined that viewpoint.

"SportsCastr.Live adds a whole new dimension by giving viewers another choice: announced by whomever they want…even if it is themselves," noted Stern in announcement this morning. "This

DIGITAL SPORTS DESK
Staff Writer
April 19, 2017

platform will redefine what it means to 'call a game.' Think about it: you can stream the game, watch it in VR, get real-time stats and info, etc. Now you can choose your broadcaster and that person has access to all the bells and whistles necessary to deliver a 'network quality' broadcast."

SportsCastr.Live, which boasts adaptive bit-rate technology and ultra-fast delivery, differentiates itself from other live video platforms like Periscope or Facebook Live by offering sports broadcast features that used to only be available in a studio setting. This includes the ability for users to enhance their streams with real-time scoreboards, on-air motion graphics and augmented reality…making it look like they are live on TV, regardless of their location. Plus, all elements are clickable and interactive, allowing viewers to engage with the 'broadcaster' in ways never before possible. Sports fans are able to discover broadcasters from around the world and follow their favorite personalities.

"This platform is a real game-changer, and I'm so excited to be involved. I love it already, and it's only going to get better." said Davis following his live media event held on SportsCastr.Live to discuss re-signing with the Redskins.

SportsCastr.Live is currently in public beta and is available for free on the iTunes App Store. Users can also access the platform via the web at https://sportscastr.live/. The New York-based company recently completed an undisclosed funding round led by SGI MB.

EX-COMMISH DAVID STERN: NBA HAS 'EXTRAORDINARY' FUTURE

ESPN
Associated Press
April 20, 2017

NEW YORK -- David Stern hasn't left the NBA far behind. Just a few blocks, actually.

His office these days is located in a building near the one he had as commissioner, the job he left in 2014 after 30 years in which he helped turn a struggling league into a $5 billion annual behemoth.

For the most part, he likes the direction of the league the last three years.

"In addition to the talent, I'm in awe of the shooting skills of Steph Curry, of Klay Thompson, of a (Russell) Westbrook and a (James) Harden, et cetera," Stern told The Associated Press by phone. "But I'm also in awe of the potential the league has both digitally and globally. So the game is strong, the attendance is at a record, the future is extraordinary internationally and the league is a leader under Adam (Silver) in the digital sphere.

"So it's really a wonderful opportunity for the owners, for the players, and for my former colleagues at the team and league level."

Stern, as would be expected, is keenly aware that it hasn't been smooth sailing for Silver and the league. The NBA is still searching for solutions to some problems that were vexing under Stern, such as tanking and healthy players sitting out games.

He talks with Silver, but won't comment on their discussions about those issues or anything else.

"That would involve the commissioner slash commissioner emeritus privilege," he said.

Stern, 74, is more businessman than sportsman now, advising venture capital firms from his position atop DJS Global Advisors

and investing in a number of startups, some of them in sports technology. He still watches plenty of games, and the viewing process helps guide his investment strategies.

The league that once begged for a television presence -- the NBA Finals that were sometimes shown on tape delay into the early 1980s -- now has national TV deals that are worth more than $2.6 billion annually. But fans aren't just watching games on TV anymore, and Stern believes their viewing habits will change even more in the coming years.

"The fans are going to want to see be able to see what they want to see, when they want to see it and on any device they want to see it on," he said.

Stern believes viewers will favor streaming services and virtual reality, with output from wearable technology to provide statistical data to augment what they're watching. So this week he and a group of partners that includes Syracuse coach Jim Boeheim announced the launch of SportsCastr.Live, a streaming platform that allows users to be color commentators and to select which sportscaster they wish to have call, recap or make predictions on a game.

That adds to previous investments that include ShotTracker, in which sensors send real-time data to coaches' smart devices, and LiveLike, a virtual reality platform to watch sports.

"The key catchword is personalization," Stern said. "So I'm going to want to watch the visiting feed in virtual reality, which the NBA has one game a week now, with real-time stats that are going to be on my smart device because ShotTracker is going to bring it to me."

That sounds like it would be a good fit for his new lifestyle. The businessman doesn't miss being basketball's biggest decision-maker, a job he held from Feb. 1, 1984 -- a few months before Magic Johnson and Larry Bird first met in the NBA Finals and Michael Jordan was drafted -- until Silver, his former assistant -- took over.

SBJ SBD

SPORTS BUSINESS DAILY

Eric Fisher

April 19, 2017

FORMER SPIRITS OF ST. LOUIS OWNER SCHUPAK, DAVID STERN AMONG INVESTORS IN NEW SPORTS VIDEO PLATFORM

NBA Commissioner Emeritus DAVID STERN, Syracuse men's basketball coach JIM BOEHEIM and Redskins TE VERNON DAVIS are part of an investor and advisor group for Sportcastr.Live, a N.Y.-basedstreaming video startup. The company's live streaming platform, entering into public beta this week, allows users to be their own color commentators and customize their own graphics, providing an enhanced level of audience empowerment. The group is joined by DONALD SCHUPAK, former Managing Partner of the ABASpirits of St. Louis, and IdeaQuest Founder ERIC BECHTEL. Financial terms were not disclosed, but for Stern, the deal adds to a quickly growing sports tech portfolio that also includes personal investments in companies such as LiveLike VR, automated sports video production firm Keemotion, and artificial intelligence firm StatMuse, among others. "They've extended the broadcast and made it a social experience," Stern saidof Sportcastr.Live. "It has enormous potential. ... It's going to give an experience of both broadcasting the game and enjoying with friends."

Live Streaming Startup In Competition With Facebook And Twitter Lands Deal With NFL Players

Darren Heitner Contributor
I cover the intersection of sports and money.

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Jul 31, 2018, 07:14am EDT

Updated Jul 31, 2018, 07:14am EDT

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The NFLPA's 8th partnership providing players' rights in exchange for equity is with live streaming... [+]

Facebook Live, Instagram Live, Twitter's Periscope, Twitch . . . there is no shortage of live streaming services in 2018. Yet, the NFL Players Association, through its OneTeam Collective early stage investment vehicle, is interested in a different live streaming service and is making it the eighth active NFLPA partner with the ability to use group player rights in exchange for equity.

The service is SportsCastr, which already boasts notable advisors in NBA Commissioner Emeritus David Stern, NFL tight end Vernon Davis and NCAA Men's Basketball coach Jim Boeheim. It should get a meaningful boost by way of partnership with the NFLPA if a

considerable number of players not only lend their rights to the streaming service, but also use it to provide live commentary as well as share personal insights.

BETA

Nothing precludes athletes from using Facebook, Instagram and the like after the ink dries from SportsCastr's deal with the NFLPA. However, the NFLPA will soon be collaborating with SportsCastr to produce NFL player and other athlete-driven content featured on the platform as part of the deal.

SportsCastr CEO Kevin April also believes that athletes will be interested in using his service whether or not required to do so after they give it a try.

"Other platforms like Facebook Live are not really live," says April. "Facebook Live, for example, has latency of 13+ seconds. This means if that if fans or athletes share commentary on Facebook Live while a game is on — and if someone is viewing that commentary stream on a second-screen while watching the game — the commentary will be delayed and the viewer will hear the fan or athlete yell “GOOOAAAAALLLL” over 10 seconds after they watched the goal happen on TV. On SportsCastr, we’ve designed the platform for sub-second latency that is scalable to millions of viewers."

The platform is also working on a synchronization engine that will allow a viewer who is watching a game on TV, one who is watching on an over-the-top platform and one watching at an arena to each have their experience synchronized with the way they are consuming the content. Additionally, it is in talks with right-holders and forming partnerships that will bring a selection of live sporting events to SportsCastr so that viewers can basically choose who they want their commentators to be while they are watching in a first-screen experience.

Furthermore, SportsCastr is trying its hand at becoming a company that uses cryptocurrency to motivate use of its service. In June, it launched its own token called FanChain, which is awarded in exchange for participation and can be used to unlock premium content, purchase sports tickets and merchandise, as well as send virtual gifts to NFL players. The company is seeking to create partnerships with sports leagues, teams and media publishers to increase the utility of those tokens in the future.

Darren Heitner

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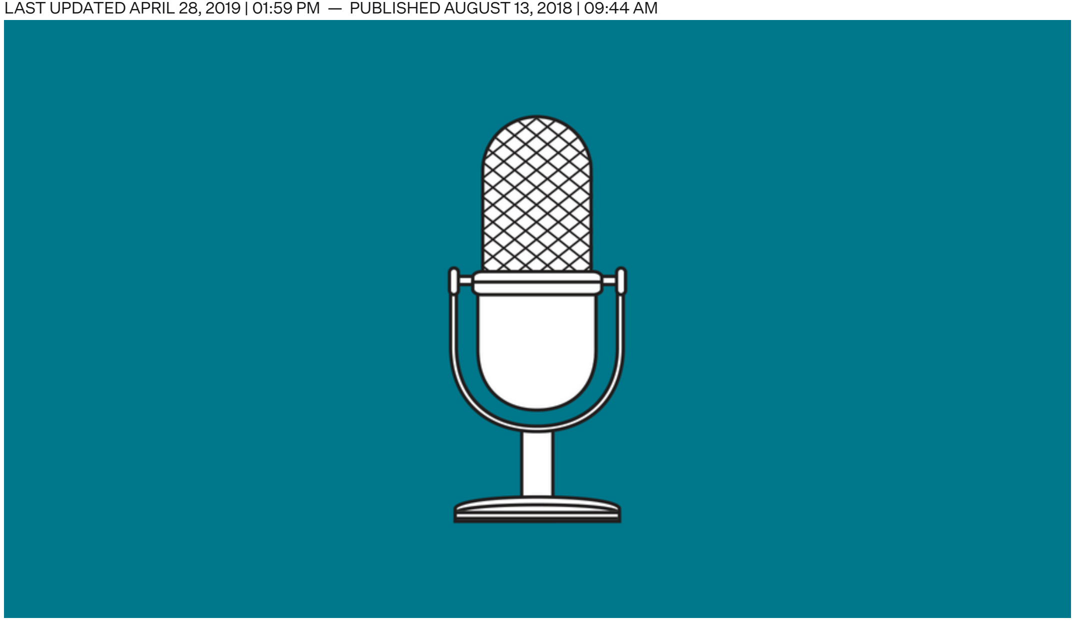
Media

SportsCastr Looks to Give Everyone a Voice When It Comes to Sports

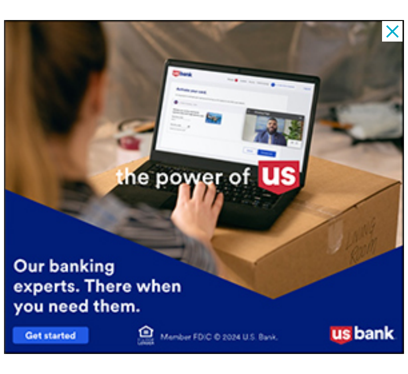
BY JOHN COLLINS

LAST UPDATED APRIL 28, 2019 | 01:59 PM — PUBLISHED AUGUST 13, 2018 | 09:44 AM



First conceived in 2016, SportsCastr is a novel way for fans to try their hand — or voices, rather — at calling pro sports games.

The company offers a platform that boasts the fastest live-video streaming technology to help Average Joe's look like the professionals as they act as sportscasters during live events. Somewhat similar to Twitch, Periscope, and other similar platforms, the SportsCastr app enables users to generate and stream their own content right from their phone.



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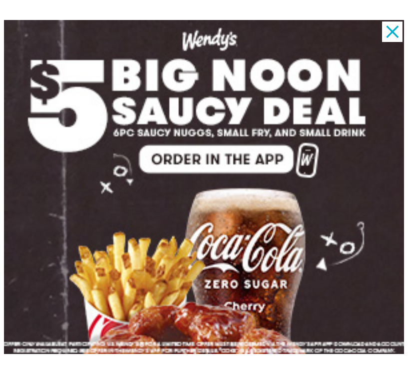
Setting it apart is that the entire ecosystem is designed to function almost as a "sports studio" space, offering "studio quality graphics, real-time scoreboards, virtual reality integrations, and most importantly, fast delivery," which is crucial to the successful broadcast of any live sporting event.

"SportsCastr enables fans to get authentic, real-time reactions and commentary from all sports fans to enhance the social experience," SportsCastr CFO and Head of Strategy Andrew Schupak said.



As we all know, when it comes to sports, everything is more fun when we're doing it together. That's actually one of the primary reasons SportsCastr was created. The website says, "sports are more fun when they're social. Connect with other viewers who are tuned in and live chat with the broadcaster. Regardless of where you are, you no longer have to be in the same room to enjoy the game with fans just like you."

SportsCastr is designed to capitalize on the shifting media consumption habits of today's generation, as well as the persistent desire to be able to have a voice in today's media entertainment landscape.

"This new platform brings the action, the hot takes and the story to the consumer. In an ever-changing app and 24-hour-news-cycle world, it seems like a no-brainer to have an app like this," said Brandon Robinson, a respected broadcaster who hosts Scoop B Radio and has been seen on CNN, MSNBC, ESPN and CBS.

Notable athletes such as former NBA player Steve Smith recognized the potential immediately as well — and he and the likes of NBA Commissioner David Stern and Syracuse Coach Jim Boeheim, among others, jumped on board as investors and/or advisors.

Mentioning his own son's habits, Smith pointed out that "younger sports fans love to watch games, but they also love to watch them in their control." There's usually a second screen involved as well, as many are either following along on Twitter and Instagram, or doing digital multitasking of some other sort.

Most recently, SportsCastr got a huge vote of confidence, and quite an effective partner, as the NFL Players Association announced that it has decided to take a minority stake. Through its athlete-driven accelerator OneTeam Collective, NFLPA made this partnership with the intention of having current and former NFL players start providing unique content on SportsCastr as well.

"Athletes constantly explore ways to build their personal brands and creatively connect with their fans, and SportsCastr's live-stream capabilities align perfectly with these goals. We look forward to working with the team to deliver an exciting new way for fans to engage and watch the sports they love," NFLPA Senior Manager of Business Development Ricky Medina said.

That's precisely why Washington Redskins tight end Vernon Davis finds this such an intriguing partnership as well. "Fans are looking for new ways to engage with the game of football and us, the athletes. This live streaming platform is a cool and fun way for fans to add their own voice to games while engaging with players in a different way," Davis noted.

In addition, SportsCastr is now an official licensee of the NFLPA. Even more noteworthy, the NFLPA also plans to produce current and former NFL-player content to feature on the platform via the association's content and production incubator, ACE Media.

"SportsCastr's partnership with the NFLPA through the OneTeam Collective is a powerful opportunity for fans to connect with athletes in a direct and meaningful way," SportsCastr CEO Kevin April said.

Both he and the NFLPA are excited to be on the forefront of innovation in sports broadcasting and marketing.

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This partnership brings fans closer to the game, while giving players a platform to showcase their unique personalities and build their personal brands more effectively. Who knows, it may also serve as a bit of a development tool to help uncover the next Bob Costas or Michael Strahan.

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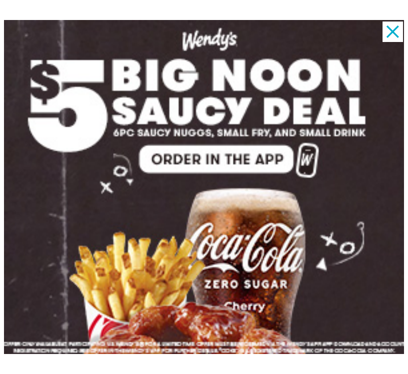

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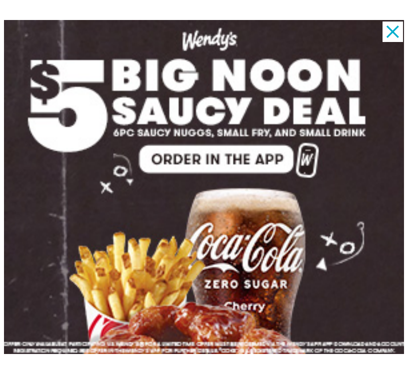

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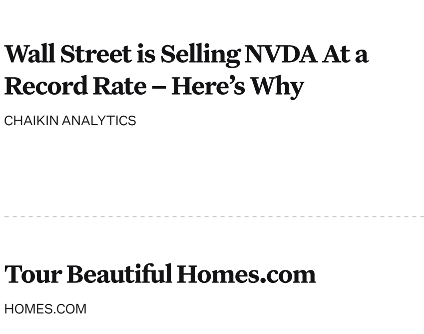

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GEEKWIRE
Taylor Soper
April 19, 2017

(Washington Redskins tight end Vernon Davis hosts a Sportscastr stream. Photo via Sportscastr.)

FORMER NBA COMMISSIONER, SYRACUSE HOOPS HEAD COACH INVEST IN SPORTSCASTR LIVE STREAMING PLATFORM

If you've ever wanted to be a sports broadcaster, there's a new startup that is making it possible with technology.

(Sportscastr CEO Kevin April with investor and former NBA commissioner David Stern. Photo via Sportscastr.)

GEEKWIRE
Taylor Soper
April 19, 2017

SportsCastr.live launched today out of New York City and offers a live video streaming platform that lets anyone become a color commentator.

The company's app and web product gives users a way to stream themselves with on-air graphics like live scoreboards, chat boxes, and picture-in-picture layouts as they talk about a given game going on, making it appear that they are live on TV. The real-time scoreboards are available for NBA, NFL, NHL, MLB, men's college basketball, men's college football, WNBA, and English Premier Soccer games.

Viewers, meanwhile, have a chance to find broadcasters from around the world and interact with the stream via clickable graphics. It gives fans another option for commentary that differs from what is aired on the professional broadcast.

"Sports are more fun when they're social," the website reads. "Connect with other viewers who are tuned in and live chat with the broadcaster. Regardless of where you are, you no longer have to be in the same room to enjoy the game with fans just like you."

The stream doesn't actually show live games and it remains to be seen if and how SportsCastr can work with broadcasters to integrate actual games into its product.

SportsCastr is backed by former NBA commissioner David Stern; famed Syracuse head men's basketball coach Jim

GEEKWIRE
Taylor Soper
April 19, 2017

Boeheim; Washington Redskins Tight End Vernon Davis; and others.
"This platform will redefine what it means to 'call a game,'" Stern, who has been an active investor since retiring, said in a statement. "Think about it: you can stream the game, watch it in VR, get real-time stats and info, etc. Now you can choose your broadcaster and that person has access to all the bells and whistles necessary to deliver a 'network quality' broadcast."

SportsCastr is a joint venture between SGI Pixel, SGI MB, and IdeaQuest. The company employs 12 people and is led by CEO Kevin April, who previously co-founded SportsBlog, according to Ozy.

NBPA LAUNCHES BROADCASTER U. VIRTUAL GAME CALL PROGRAM POWERED BY SPORTSCASTR

OCTOBER 02, 2020

Using SportsCastr's studio-quality remote broadcasting platform, the NBPA's Broadcaster U. Virtual Game Call Program will give players a unique opportunity to gain experience in TV color commentary and broadcasting, regardless of their location

NEW YORK, NY, October 2, 2020 – The National Basketball Players Association (NBPA) and SportsCastr, the live streaming company that lets anyone be a color commentator, star in their own interactive podcast or personalize their sports viewing experience, announced today the launch of the NBPA's Broadcaster U. Virtual Game Call Program. The Virtual Game Call Program is the latest addition to the NBPA's Broadcaster U., a pre-existing program that has run for 12 years and is designed for players who are interested in pursuing a career in sports broadcasting. Over the course of this new Program, players will gain valuable experience virtually, learning basic broadcasting techniques and tips from experts and practicing their TV color commentary via a private platform provided by SportsCastr.

As the official streaming partner of the NBPA's Broadcaster U. Virtual Game Call Program, SportsCastr's platform will power the Program's live and interactive broadcasting training sessions and is open to all NBPA members. The Program is divided into three (3) key components:

Broadcasting 101 with Experts– Emmy Award-winning sports media coach Gerry Matalon and former NBA player and ESPN analyst Ryan Hollins will lead virtual discussion sessions with player participants to provide insight into broadcasting basics and techniques. During these virtual sessions, player participants will have the opportunity to prepare and ask questions ahead of their game commentary sessions.
Player Game Commentary Sessions – Working with a play-by-play announcer, player participants will use game footage from the NBA Finals to record their own color commentary on the SportsCastr platform.
Q&A Feedback Session – At the end of the program, player participants will receive feedback on their recorded color commentary from Gerry Matalon.

Additionally, the NBPA is inviting all players who are interested in broadcasting into a special VIP producer initiative on SportsCastr. The initiative — which has been designed specifically for the unique needs of professional athletes — supports players who are interested in developing and growing their brand by utilizing SportsCastr's suite of live video and podcasting tools.

"Broadcaster U. has traditionally been one of our most successful career development programs in terms of preparing players for a career after basketball," said Deborah Murman, the NBPA's Director of Career Development. "In the absence of our annual in-person program due to the coronavirus pandemic, we are excited to partner with SportsCastr to offer players this Virtual Game Call program in its place and create additional opportunities for current and former players to explore, learn and gain practical experience in the broadcasting field."

"The ability to bring fans, athletes and broadcasters together in real time – regardless of their location – is in our DNA and more important than ever," said Kevin April, SportsCastr's CEO. "We're proud to be working with the NBPA on its innovative Broadcaster U. Virtual Game Call Program, and we look forward to welcoming all NBA players who are interested in media onto SportsCastr."

"This NBPA program is a fantastic opportunity for players to get hands-on training and a simulated experience as a game-analyst in the untraditional virtual format," said Gerry Matalon, an NBPA Broadcaster U. instructor. "Each participant will be more informed, educated and experienced in the best practices required to be an excellent game-analyst for college and professional basketball. Should the players in the program decide to pursue the media industry as a vocation after their playing career, they will be enormously better prepared to succeed and qualified for future opportunities."

All media inquiries should be directed to communications@nbpa.com.

About the NBPA

The National Basketball Players Association is the union for current professional basketball players in the National Basketball Association (NBA). Established in 1954, the NBPA's mission is to protect and support the rights and talents of our players, magnify the power of their collective will, and amplify their voices as leaders who will transcend sport and society globally.

The NBPA advocates on behalf of the best interests of all NBA players, including the negotiation of collective bargaining agreements, the filing of grievances on behalf of the players, or counseling players on benefits, educational and post-NBA career opportunities. Business opportunities are generated by THINK450, the for-profit subsidiary of the NBPA charged with managing the players' group licensing rights.

Dedicated to preserving the legacy of its members, the NBPA Foundation provides support and assistance to persons, communities and organizations around the world that seek to improve the lives of those in need.

About SportsCastr

Founded in 2016, SportsCastr develops a patent-protected platform that enables the production and broadcasting of studio-quality interactive live video and podcasts from any location and from any laptop or iPhone — no extra hardware required.

On SportsCastr.com, any fan, reporter or athlete can launch their own Channel and star in their own sports show or podcast, complete with the ability to bring on remote co-hosts and to generate revenue through advertising, virtual gifts, and credit card donations. In turn, viewers can tune into SportsCastr to personalize their sports viewing experience by joining interactive watch alongs hosted by their favorite personalities and influencers.

The company also licenses its platform to teams, leagues and online sports books who want to integrate personalized viewing experiences and actionable live video directly into their owned and operated properties.

SportsCastr is backed by some of the biggest names in sports including the NFL Players Association (NFLPA); SGI MB; NBA TV's Steve Smith; Syracuse legends Jim Boeheim and Billy Owens; Super Bowl Champion's Vernon Davis & Richard Sherman and more. For more information, visit https://SportsCastr.com or email support@sportscastr.com.

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JIM BOEHEIM, DAVID STERN AMONG INVESTORS IN NEW SPORTS VIDEO PLATFORM

NY SPORTS DAY
Jerry Milani
April 19, 2017

When you think of cutting edge technology, investors like David Stern and Jim Boeheim don't normally jump to mind as the first names you think of. However those two bold face names are among the investors in a new sports tech video startup called SportsCastr.Live, which announced its Beta launch on Wednesday.

The venture is a live streaming platform that allows users to be color commentators and enables viewers to select which sportscaster they wish to have call, recap or make predictions on a game. Its ease and back-end technology will give any fan the ability to have a professional look in calling games from wherever they are, generating millions of authentic videos and helping anyone be in a live video conversation as live events occur. The business is expected to scale over the course of months, with a larger scale rollout later this summer.

While the former NBA Commissioner has kept himself busy with a number of tech investments since leaving the NBA, this might be a first for the legendary Syracuse coach, whose interest seem to have always been about what goes on on the hardwood, not off it. He is joined by another prominent Syracuse alum, Donald Schupak, who was the former owner of the Spirits of St. Louis of the NBA and has been involved in a number of strategic investments outside of sports over the years.

"When it comes to game broadcasts, fans want what they want, on whatever device they want, whenever they want it.' Now, SportsCastr.Live adds a whole new dimension by giving viewers another choice: announced by whomever they want…even if it is themselves," said Stern in a statement. "Think about it: you can stream the game, watch it in VR, get real-time stats and info, etc. Now you can choose your broadcaster and that person has access to all the bells and whistles necessary to deliver a 'network quality' broadcast."

SportsCastr.Live is currently in public beta and is available for free on the iTunes App Store. Users can also access the platform via the web at https://sportscastr.live/.

Once again legends of hoops are redefining themselves in a new, engaged ways.

NY SPORTS DAY
Jerry Milani
April 19, 2017

(SportsCastr platform being used by (from left) SportsCastr chairman Donald Schupak, Syracuse University coach Jim Boeheim and SportsCastr founder Kevin April. SOURCE: Kevin April)

OZY
Matt Foley
April 5, 2017

WILL THIS STARTUP CHANGE HOW WE WATCH SPORTS?

There's an age-old hierarchy in sports governing the way games are played and consumed. Players play, the media packages and relays the action and, from a safe distance, fans enjoy, either in a stadium or on a couch. If given the chance, though, could you go toe to toe with Jon Gruden on a Monday Night Football call? Or, would you prefer to play cameraman at the World Cup? Soon, thanks to a potential revolution in live video broadcasting, you'll be able to find out.

Much like the mid-20th-century transition from radio to regularly televised live events, sports media is approaching an inflection point. Today, second screens are increasingly used to enhance the viewing experience, and live video streaming is a proven avenue of content production and fan engagement for media personalities. No industry giant, though, had built a platform specifically for live sports. That will change next week with the public beta launch of SportsCastr.Live — a video-streaming platform that aims to empower users in the broadcasting process. With lightning-quick delivery, social customization and graphics found only in TV studios, SportsCastr allows fans to broadcast games and provide commentary on social media or choose their own professional broadcasters for customized viewing pleasure. Of course, uncertainty surrounds SportsCastr

and the industry at large. Lawsuits with sports leagues and a copycat battle will inevitably follow. One thing is certain, though — SportsCastr.Live wants to change the way we watch sports.

"FANS WANT WHAT THEY WANT, ON WHATEVER DEVICE THEY WANT IT, WHENEVER THEY WANT IT."

DAVID STERN, SPORTSCASTR ADVISER & NBA COMMISSIONER EMERITUS

OZY
Matt Foley
April 5, 2017

Most fans might be surprised to learn that since retiring from his 30-year post as commissioner of the NBA, 74-year-old David Stern has leaped headfirst into an internet startup. Stern, who is widely credited with improving the public image and global popularity of the NBA, believes that SportsCastr is a necessary development in an increasingly distracted age. "Fans want what they want, on whatever device they want it, whenever they want it," Stern tells OZY. "SportsCastr gives fans another reason to watch games but on their own terms."

SportsCastr is led by CEO and founder Kevin April, a career entrepreneur who previously co-founded SportsBlog, a network of fan-generated blogs. "I've always been interested in building communities around topics that people are passionate about," April tells OZY. That interest first manifested itself in the early 1990s when April was a teenager in Montreal, regularly skipping school to work on an online community of Atari video game players. In the sports world, April found a similar opportunity to customize products for fanatics. Targeting a hungry consumer base, though, is easy for any entrepreneur. Building the proper team is what really moves the needle. "Donald Schupak is one of the most ambitious businessmen I've ever had the pleasure of working with," says April, when asked about his company chairman, the man who lured David Stern to SportsCastr.

Schupak, 74, is a New York attorney and investor who orchestrated what is widely considered the greatest deal in

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sports history. In 1976, he advised his clients Ozzie and Daniel Silna, owners of the American Basketball Association's Spirits of St. Louis, to dissolve their franchise rather than join the NBA. In return, the Silnas received a portion of the NBA's future TV rights and, prior to a rumored $500 million settlement in 2014, received annual payments totaling $300 million.

To hear Schupak tell it, he made "some simple projections" on the future of sports television programming. Ultimately, he was confident that a small percentage of future TV rights would far surpass the $3 million deal that was offered. Simply put, it was a great bet. It also led to countless court battles over the years, fending off settlement offers and nullification attempts by Stern and the NBA. Now, Schupak is teaming with his former adversary to shake up the sports television market in which their names are so deeply ingrained. "You've got to know what you're capable of doing on your own and when to collaborate with others," Schupak tells OZY. "When Kevin and I sat down, the first person I called was David." According to his old friend, Stern was sold from the start. "He took one look and said, 'This is disruptive — I'm in.' "

Of the many sexy features — studio-quality graphics, real-time scoreboards, virtual reality integrations — the platform's main differentiator will be fast delivery. SportsCastr boasts a two-second latency versus 10 to 30 seconds from competing platforms. This is of grave importance for broadcasting live events, but SportsCastr's focus on adaptive bit-rate technology — the app's ability to tune video quality based on signal strength — is reproducible. According to Anthony Pompliano, a former product manager at Facebook and current managing partner at venture capital firm Full Tilt Capital, early adoption is key for any young tech company. "Technology can be a differentiator," Pompliano says. "But density of the user base will be the deciding factor. Can they build it fast enough, where a Facebook has to come buy them?"

In an effort to attract those early adopters, April and Schupak are building a roster of celebrity supporters. Stern has helped build relationships across the NBA, and the Washington Redskins'

Vernon Davis and Syracuse University basketball coach Jim Boeheim are official advisers. Eric Bechtel, president of marketing firm IdeaQuest and a SportsCastr investor and adviser, thinks amateur sports could be just as important as the pro games. “It could be huge at the youth level, from Little League to college,” he tells OZY. The idea is that SportsCastr would serve as a live streaming and free broadcast outlet for enthusiastic communities desperate for coverage.

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Matt Foley
April 5, 2017

We’ll know soon if SportsCastr has staying power, but live video streaming in sports is here to stay. Next time you visit a live event, take a look around and listen: If a large number of spectators are practicing their best Joe Buck impression, Kevin April might truly be in luck.

SOCIAL REACTIONS

Jim Boeheim
"EXCITED FOR THE (SPORTSCASTR) LAUNCH!"

Troy Ruediger
"SOLID TEAM BEHIND THIS, DEFINITELY WORTH CHECKING OUT!"

Katie Smith
"YOU HAVE TO CHECK OUT THIS NEW PLATFORM ... UNBELIEVABLE STUFF"

Dan Scott
"LOVE THE APP!"

JRSportBrief
"GET IN EARLY"

Steve Rudden
"I LOVE IT SO FAR"

SportsBusinessRadio
"ANOTHER SMART TECH PARTNERSHIP FOR STERN."

Terry Lyons
"STERN LIKES (SPORTSCASTR) AND SO DO WE!"

LeslieAnne Wade
"... IMPORTANT AND CONNECTED INFLUENCE GROUP RAPIDLY CHANGING MEDIA"

SB NATION
James Szuba
April 23, 2017

(Photo by Rich Barnes/Getty Images)

JIM BOEHEIM WANTS YOU TO BE A SPORTS BROADCASTER

If I were to tell you that James Arthur Boeheim was serving as an advisor on a new live streaming platform, would you believe me? Because that's just what he's doing.

Per the site https://sportscastr.live/company Jim is an advisor on the new technology that essentially allows you at home to be Marv Albert, Mike Tirico, Sean McDonough, et al. Jim will be in good company alongside former NBA comissioner David Stern and Redskins tight end Vernon Davis who are also in advisor roles.

Essentially, the platform is similar to Facebook Live, but allows users to give their own game call. The user casts a live video to a selected audience and gives the play-by-play or color commentary. The platform offers studio quality graphics and real time scoreboards. Although live game streams won't be immediately available, it will try to differentiate itself through speed with only a two-second latency. So if your friend is streaming live, you'll catch his or her call with a two-second delay.

This is an extremely innovative idea that might have some staying power. You have to wonder if this will devalue the field of broadcasting to an extent, although the top dogs/talent will always have their day.

Personally, I could see this developing into a sort of a video chat room where friends and communities could gather to share the experience a game. How cool would it be to virtual chat with your friends across multiple cities during Syracuse games?

SB NATION
James Szuba
April 23, 2017

ST. LOUIS SPORTS DAY
Staff Writer
April 19, 2017

FORMER SPIRITS OF ST. LOUIS OWNER SCHUPAK, DAVID STERN AMONG INVESTORS IN NEW SPORTS VIDEO PLATFORM

David Stern and Donald Schupak were on opposite sides of a bargaining table over the years as the long gone Spirits of St. Louis continued to get their massive rights payout from the NBA year after year. Now the two are united, ironically in another sports and video venture.

On Wednesday, SportsCastr.Live, a live streaming platform that allows users to be color commentators and enables viewers to select which sportscaster they wish to have call, recap or make predictions on a game announced their launch and high level investors, Stern and Schupak among them. The list also includes Jim Boeheim, Syracuse University Head Basketball Coach, Vernon Davis, two-time NFL Pro Bowler and Washington Redskins tight end.

For Stern it is the latest in a series of investments in the tech space, but one of the few that brings him back with one of the men who helped forge one of the greatest non-playing windfalls for any business entity on any level, as the Spirits owners continued to receive payout for decades after the team folded with the NBA-ABA merger. That money has helped fund numerous businesses, of which SpostCastr.Live is the latest.

“When it comes to game broadcasts, fans want what they want,

ST. LOUIS SPORTS DAY
Staff Writer
April 19, 2017

on whatever device they want, whenever they want it.' Now, SportsCastr.Live adds a whole new dimension by giving viewers an-other choice: announced by whomever they want…even if it is themselves," said Stern in a statement. "This platform will redefine what it means to 'call a game.' Think about it: you can stream the game, watch it in VR, get real-time stats and info, etc. Now you can choose your broadcaster and that person has access to all the bells and whistles necessary to deliver a 'network quality' broadcast."

The platform differentiates itself from other live video platforms like Periscope or Facebook Live by offering sports broadcast features that used to only be available in a studio setting. This includes the ability for users to enhance their streams with real-time scoreboards, on-air motion graphics and augmented reality…making it look like they are live on TV, regardless of their location.

SportsCastr.Live is currently in public beta and is available for free on the iTunes App Store. Users can also access the platform via the web at https://sportscastr.live/.

While the Spirits are long gone, their legacy and impactfulness continues.

The Drum™

New SportsCastr.Live video platform gains more celebrity backing from former NBA star

Kyle O'Brien
May, 31 2017

The landscape of sports broadcast continues to shift, and with it comes a new online platform, SportsCastr.Live. The live streaming video platform – currently in public beta – allows users to be color commentators and enables viewers to select which sportscaster they wish to have call, recap or make predictions on a game.

SportsCastr.Live has been gaining the backing and support of some high-powered people within the sports industry, and recently 14-year NBA veteran and current NBA TV studio analyst Steve Smith joined forces with the team of sports executives and players behind the platform.

Smith, an NBA champion and all-star, joins SportsCastr.Live's team of advisors and investors, including David Stern, NBA commissioner emeritus; Jim Boeheim, Syracuse University head basketball coach; Vernon Davis, two-time NFL Pro Bowler and Washington tight end; Donald Schupak, former managing partner of the ABA's Spirits of St. Louis; Andrew Schupak, SGI MB chief executive; and Eric Bechtel, IdeaQuest founder. The company is led by chief executive officer Kevin April.

"Clearly, we are seeing major shifts in how audiences watch sports," said Smith. "I am very intrigued by this new platform...which is poised to revolutionize the way fans consume their sports content."

SportsCastr.Live, which utilizes adaptive bit-rate technology and ultra-fast delivery, differentiates itself from other live video platforms like Periscope or Facebook Live by offering sports broadcast features that used to only be available in a studio setting, according to a release. This includes the ability for users to enhance their streams with real-time scoreboards, on-air motion graphics and augmented reality, making it look like they are live on TV, regardless of their location. Plus, all elements are clickable and interactive, allowing viewers to engage with the 'broadcaster' in ways never before possible. Sports fans are now able to discover broadcasters from around the world and follow their favorite personalities.

"When it comes to game broadcasts, fans want what they want, on whatever device they want, whenever they want it. Now, SportsCastr.Live adds a whole new dimension by giving viewers another choice: announced by whomever they want, even if it is themselves," said Stern in the release. "This platform will redefine what it means to 'call a game'. Think about it: you can stream the game, watch it in VR, get real-time stats and info, etc. Now you can choose your broadcaster and that person has access to all the bells and whistles necessary to deliver a 'network quality' broadcast."

SportsCastr.Live is currently in public beta and is available for free on the iTunes App Store. Users can also access the platform through the SportsCastr.Live website.

The New York-based company recently completed an undisclosed funding round led by SGI MB.

ThePostGame

David Stern Talks Live Streaming NBA Games, His Social Media Presence

Jeff Eisenband
August 1, 2017

David Stern stepped down as NBA commissioner three and a half years ago. Since then, he has been semi-retired, not starting a full-time job, but not exiting the sports world.

Stern, who has a Columbia law degree and 30 years of experience running the NBA, turned to investing.

One of his ventures is SportsCastr.Live, a live-streaming platform that allows fans to serve as their own play-by-play announcers. This is designed to complement a live broadcast by giving fans the option to hear friends and influencers deliver their opinions on the action. Stern is part of a high-profile group of investors, which includes Syracuse basketball coach Jim Boeheim, NFL tight end Vernon Davis and former NBA star Steve Smith.

Stern is also an investor in Overtime, which focuses on high school basketball highlights. In June at the Hashtag Sports conference, Stern spoke on the "Redefining Sports Viewership" panel with Overtime CEO Dan Porter and Jason Gay of The Wall Street Journal. Afterward, he discussed the world of live streaming with ThePostGame.

ThePostGame: In terms of Sportscastr.Live, why get involved in something like this? Why not retire and go off into the sunset?
DAVID STERN: Oh, because staying engaging and learning is what keeps life really interesting. For me, learning about venture capital, learning about investment banking,

learning about advisory work, it's great. I used to say the NBA is a learning organization, and I take it personally. I'm a person who loves to learn on a daily basis, and I'm doing it through venture.

TPG: There's a certain irony considering all the TV deals that were done when you were the commissioner and now you're talking about live streaming and doing things that directly compete with the TV deals.

STERN: I don't think so. I think they're all additive to what the NBA does. The NBA is now streaming. The Sportscastr.Live would be based on the NBA games and enhance them, all of the things, shottracker, key motion. Over time, these are all a place where we're reinforcing the importance of basketball and reinforcing the NBA brand.

TPG: How do you think people will consume sports in three years, specifically the NBA?

STERN: The great majority will continue to watch traditional games, but as the younger audiences come in, they're going to be looking to Snapchat stories, they're going to be looking to Facebook feeds, they're going to be looking to Twitter feeds, but it's all going to accretive to the basic product and bring them in as fans.

TPG: How would you change live streaming if you could go back, say, five years?
STERN: I think it's actually emerging beautifully. We were doing live stream, I'm guessing it was 10 years ago. I don't remember exactly when NBA League Pass began. We were streaming that to League Pass International. We really have embraced that and it just continues to grow. And you can't control these developments. They're so organic, it's amazing.

TPG: How do you watch the NBA?

STERN: I watch games.

TPG: On TV?

STERN: On TV. I don't stream. I don't watch it on live stream. I do it on live TV. It's very urgent.
TPG: Do you use social media? Do you check it out?

STERN: I check it out, but you can't find it there because there are too many false David Sterns.