NEW SPORTS VIDEO PLATFORM LAUNCHES WITH HIGH PROFILE NAMES: HOW AND WHY DID IT COME ABOUT?

YAHOO FINANCE
Tanner Simkins
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On Wednesday a high profile group of investors with a long history in the sports business announced the launch of SportsCastr.Live, a pioneering video platform that will give any fan a state of the art experience to call any game available in the sports space. It appears to be the next step advancement in marrying live video to a community, and the list of those involved includes: 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.

How is this different, and how did this group come together with such wide backgrounds? We asked industry vet and CEO Kevin April these very questions.

HOW WERE YOU ABLE TO ENGAGE SUCH A DIVERSE GROUP OF INVESTORS? IS THERE A CORE INVOLVEMENT THAT APPEALED TO ALL?

Our lead investors, SGI MB, were instrumental in putting the group together… and it was a case of like attracting like. Many of them have worked together in the past.. For example, Vernon Davis worked with Eric Bechtel at FanTex (as their first athlete to go public). David Stern and Donald Schupak obviously have a very storied history. It's truly a testament as to the power of having the right investors behind you.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST DIFFERENTIATOR FOR THIS PLATFORM VS OTHER IN THE FIELD ALREADY?

As a live-video platform built from the ground-up for sports, we've solved some pretty unique challenges and developed tools

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that do not exist anywhere else. As the primary purpose of SportsCastr is as a second-screen — and as sports is a real-time phenomenon — it was important for us to be able to deliver the live video feeds as fast as possible. Most people aren't aware that when they're watching a live stream on platforms like FaceBook or Periscope, they can be anywhere from 10-30 seconds delayed. On SportsCastr, we've achieved sub two-second latency… This latency doesn't matter in most cases, but with sports, it makes all the difference. Added to this is the ability for users to enhance their streams with visually stunning broadcast-quality motion graphics —including scoreboards that update in real-time as the game happens, and animated lower-thirds that are automagically created — and you have a package that truly used to only be available in a studio setting. And we're just getting started.

JIM BOEHEIM IS A UNIQUE NAME IN THIS SPACE. HOW DID HIS INVOLVEMENT COME ABOUT?

We have a strong Syracuse affinity in our office, and Donald Schupak, our chairman, invited Jim on-board. Donald and Jim actually went to college together and stayed in touch over the years.

WHO IS THE EXACT AUDIENCE FOR THIS AND HOW DO YOU PLAN TO MARKET TO THAT AUDIENCE?

Live video skews younger, but sports appeals to a broad audience… socioeconomically, demographically, even geographically… sports is the one topic that can truly unite diverse groups. To harness this, we've developed a very engaging and clever marketing plan that we'll be rolling out this fall. We know the sports world is going to love it, but they'll have to stay tuned as it's too early to share those details.

WHAT IS THE SCALE OR NUMBER OF ENGAGED USERS YOU ARE LOOKING FOR IN SIX MONTHS, AND THEN A YEAR?

We're currently focussed on continuing to develop our strong product roadmap. We know we're developing really disruptive

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technology that will be of interest to a fairly broad sector of the market, and we're just getting started.

HOW ENGAGED WILL YOUR INVESTORS BE? DO YOU ENVISION ALL OF THEM USING THE PLATFORM THEMSELVES?

Each investor contributes in their own way… some behind the scenes, and some much more visible. I'm sure they will all make appearances (expect to see much more from Vernon Davis!). With that being said, all of our investors have been absolutely instrumental in moving the company forward. For example, David Stern helps with positioning and business development; I work daily with Andrew Schupak — CEO of SGI MB (our lead investors). I'm always bouncing ideas off of Vernon Davis and his team. All of our investors are true partners in every sense.

YOU HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN A NUMBER OF SPORTS TECH STARTUPS, WHY THIS ONE AND WHY NOW?

There's no better fit for sports than live-video.. and there's no better team to pull this off than the one we've assembled. I'm working with true legends and the timing is right. All of the stars are aligned on this one.