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An interview with:

**COMMISSIONER GARY BETTMAN
COMMISSIONER ROB MANFRED
JOHN COLLINS
BOB BOWMAN**

GARY MEAGHER: Good afternoon, everyone, joining us across North America.

A press release was just distributed in the last 15 minutes, and we have the principals here to have an opening address and then we will take questions.

Without further ado, we have NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman with us, we have the Commissioner of Baseball, Ron Manfred. We have Major League Baseball's president of business and media, Bob Bowman, and then we have the National Hockey League's COO John Collins.

Without further ado, I'll turn it over to Commissioner Bettman.

COMMISSIONER BETTMAN: Good afternoon and welcome to the formal announcement of what we feel is a transformational six-year digital rights partnership between the NHL and Major League Baseball Advanced Media. I'd like to welcome Commissioner Manfred to join me in making this announcement.

Two professional sports leagues in North America have never entered into an agreement of this nature, and there's a reason for that: digital rights partnerships are extremely complicated. The digital revolution, or should I say evolution, is changing every day. A digital rights deal certainly isn't something that Rob or I could have formalized over drinks at the Cornell reunion.

In truth, we have been talking for years about things that we might do together because together we represent year-round programming and limitless opportunities to service our fans.



Over the last year we were in the digital marketplace deciding what we wanted to do next, looking at all of our options. John Collins and I, Rob and Bob Bowman, shared a vision that together two sports could do more, be more and have more possibilities than one.

We're coming together as partners to see what we can do in addition to our basic businesses, to combine our assets, and importantly, what the possibilities are as to what we can create together to affect the cutting edge. Technology is changing virtually on a daily basis, and together we think we can lead during this extraordinary time.

In this fast-changing technology-driven world, by combining our resources, we believe the possibilities are endless. This type of partnership never has been tried before, and we believe the opportunities are both unprecedented and unlimited. We're dreaming bigger and broader to create the best possible fan experience.

I don't even think we can tell you today where ultimately this is going to take us, but it's going to be more and it's going to be better than anything either of us has done to this point.

Imagine what BAM Technologies can do with the speed of our game. In this partnership, BAM is getting access to our content and we are getting their world-class technology today and as it evolves. That's what makes this deal different.

Having the most digital applications and platforms possible also provides the ability together to use our content in places where it makes sense in new and exciting ways.

If you want GameCenter LIVE, you'll continue to have GameCenter LIVE. If you want GameCenter LIVE with one team for the season, you can have that. But there are a whole host of other things that we're going to look to create together to take our fans deeper inside our game and tell the stories of our teams and our players.

If you're an NHL fan, you're going to get more content and better content than ever before and it's going to be authentic NHL content which, of course, is NHL centric. We're going to control

our content. MLBAM is going to control its content. Perhaps together we can create some joint content.

We're not turning baseball into hockey and baseball isn't turning hockey into baseball. We're each going to do our own things in terms of how the content is created. What we're doing is by taking two sports leagues together, and see if one plus one can equal three or more than three.

I have three more things I would like to say.

First, I want to thank New Line for everything it has done over the years. New Line has been a tremendous partner and we are extremely appreciative. We would not have been able to reach this point without their extraordinary efforts.

Second, there were widespread reports this morning on the economics of this arrangement. Shockingly, they were incorrect to both our chagrin, ours and BAM's. The reports of the value and the nature of the structure were too high.

Suffice it to say we are both pleased with the economics of our partnership. Again, this arrangement is about so much more than the economics.

Finally, I want to thank Rob and Bob for joining forces to embark on an exciting journey for our two sports. We are thrilled to be your partners.

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER MANFRED: At the outset, let me begin by saying that everyone at Major League Baseball Advanced Media is very excited at the prospect of our new deal with the NHL.

I want to echo what Gary said about how complicated a deal like this is to make and I want to thank Bob and John Collins for hanging with this negotiation for a very long time in order to make a deal that I think is going to be really great for MLB Advanced Media and for the NHL.

I think one of the most important things that any sports league or a commissioner of a sports league can do is make sure that you deliver to your fans your content, your games, in the best possible way. We believe MLB Advanced Media has been a leader in this space, that we have developed creative ways to serve our fans through multiple platforms, and we think in partnership with the NHL we will provide that same sort of technology, that same sort of service that will be of great benefit to NHL fans over the long haul.

Last, I want to thank Commissioner Bettman. I think that it takes real foresight and intestinal fortitude to take a really groundbreaking step like this to join forces with another league and try to make something better than it is today, make more out of what is already a great NHL product. We're looking forward to being really great partners with the NHL.

GARY MEAGHER: We're ready to open it up for questions.

Q. Gary, understanding that you don't want to go into the specifics of the economics, could you say whether the economics include a rights fee and an equity plan as parts of it?

COMMISSIONER BETTMAN: Yes.

Q. Can you explain exactly what rights they're getting, even more than what the release says?

COMMISSIONER BETTMAN: The rights, and John Collins and Bob Bowman can correct me on this because of how complicated it is, you start with all of our digital platforms and the distribution of the NHL Network, and in particular our out-of-market streaming package.

Q. Anybody want to add anything to that?

COMMISSIONER BETTMAN: I think I got it.

Q. Bob, you talked at length about a strategic partnership that would allow BAM to branch out in the future. On the face of it, it appears to be that partnership. Commissioner Bettman kind of alluded to the fact that you guys were going to (indiscernible) this behind hockey and baseball. Am I correct in that? Is this something where you're going to try to basically look to branch out, much like you've done with HBO Now and other properties?

BOB BOWMAN: First of all, I thank the Commissioner and John and Molly and Dave from the NHL, as well as our own group, for getting where we are today. It was not exactly a short trip. I thank our Commissioner for having the boldness to say yes and be helpful along the way. As you know, he is a trained lawyer. That has all sorts of advantages in a negotiation. Hey, Bob, have you thought of this (laughter)?

But to your question, right now we just are focused on the ala carte efforts, HBO, WWE, PGA TOUR, which we launched this week, our boldest

effort yet with an incredibly great group of people who run a great league called the NHL.

I don't know where it will lead to. Certainly BAM Tech has gone from a vendor of what I call dedicated rights to a vendor of very important rights like WWE and HBO, but still a vendor to a vendor to a back-end technology that actually has skin in the game, where we're actually paying a rights fee, as the Commissioner alluded to, and the PGA TOUR where we're paying a production fee.

I think that represents the vision that we have. We're not smart enough to know where it ends. We know when you're given great content like the NHL and a great backbone like MLBAM Tech, I think great things happens. Putting the fans first is the way it's worked for us. We're very optimistic. Stay tuned.

Q. So this is not in any way, shape or form some splintering off and creation of some new arm off of BAM at this time?

BOB BOWMAN: No. I think you should assume that BAM Tech is, indeed, as we speak, being created to seek partners and investors as we move forward. I think the NHL is certainly moving down that path.

Q. Mr. Collins, can you please discuss if any employees of Bell Media have lost their jobs as part of this deal?

JOHN COLLINS: Well, Bell Media, TSN in particular, was a partner and the operator for the NHL Network initially in Canada, then we took that feed, combined it with production operations and business operations here in the U.S. That became the NHL Network business.

The decision, when we came through the Rogers agreement last year, with the sheer amount of programming, both around the game, the number of games that Rogers would be making available, and the number of features that they were going to be doing, it really didn't require an NHL Network to really serve that Canadian hockey fan.

So there was a plan to always roll the NHL Network back in Canada and relocate that operation out of TSN and bring it back to the States.

COMMISSIONER BETTMAN: Just to add to it, once we made the national rights deal with Rogers, it was by necessity and contemplated that there would have to be a fundamental change in the NHL Network in Canada.

That doesn't apply to the United States. But obviously the issues, concerns and imperatives in Canada as it related to the NHL Network as it existed in Canada had to change.

JOHN COLLINS: I think there are a number of staff and employees on the NHL side who will be affected by this shift. While we haven't had time to kind of sort through that, we'll work closely with Bob and his team to see how we can transition those people.

Q. Will you guys be hiring additional staff at the Secaucus office?

BOB BOWMAN: Undoubtedly we will be hiring additional staff. I think what John said is right. We hope to transition as many as we can. Rob McCleary will be overseeing the NHL Network and will make the final decision. I hope we'll transition as many as we can, but undoubtedly there will be others that we hire, too.

Q. Is any revenue that the NHL makes off this deal considered hockey-related revenue which could therefore increase the salary cap down the road?

COMMISSIONER BETTMAN: When we generate revenue, the beauty of our partnership with the players is the generation of revenue increases the cap because the players get 50%. Obviously there is hockey-related revenue in this deal.

Q. Gary, the MLB has been considerably more strict with protecting things like GIFs and images on YouTube. The NHL has been less strict about that. Is there any anticipation that that could change?

COMMISSIONER BETTMAN: We're constantly reviewing our rules and procedures. To the extent that they need to be adjusted, they will be, if we determine that that's appropriate.

Q. It said in the press release these changes were coming early 2016. Is that when we should expect all the changes? Should we expect anything earlier than that?

COMMISSIONER BETTMAN: I think it's fair to say from the beginning of the season through the calendar year, it will be business as usual as our fans have been used to.

But we have a lot of work to do in the transition that this agreement contemplates. We collectively believe we can effectively make the

transition, begin to implement the things we want to implement by January 1st.

Your question makes it sound like that's both a beginning and an end date. As all of us have said, we contemplate this being an evolutionary, revolutionary agreement. So whatever we're doing on January 1st may not be the same thing that we're doing on June 1st, September 1st after that, or the following January 1st.

This is going to be a process where we continue to look for ways to upgrade and connect.

Q. Gary, if your least tech-savvy fan asks you, What did you buy into today, what would you tell them?

COMMISSIONER BETTMAN: More and better than you ever imagined. We're going to collectively be as cutting edge as anything you can find in sports. The content will continue to be authentic. There will be more of it, there will be richer content and we'll be doing more things in more ways.

Q. What about the literal and equity state, what would you say you bought into?

COMMISSIONER BETTMAN: We bought into the growth of this venture, which we're very optimistic and excited about its future prospects.

Q. Commissioner Bettman, will this deal with MLB open up some more stadium series games throughout the next couple of years, incorporating baseball stadiums for hockey games, as Yankee Stadium was used?

COMMISSIONER BETTMAN: No, the outdoor games typically are picked up by NBC and NBC Sports Net in the United States. They control the distribution rights exclusively for those games.

So whether or not we do two outdoor games or ten, I believe at least in the United States their distribution will be controlled by NBC, whether or not they're in a baseball stadium or a football stadium.

Q. Gary and/or Rob, did you have to get over any cultural things? This is an unusual deal between two sports and two leagues. Besides getting through the business stuff, was there a cultural divide between the two of you?

COMMISSIONER BETTMAN: I don't believe so. I think there's a definite deep respect both on a personal level and a professional level

everybody both in baseball and hockey have for each other. I think there's a profound respect for both sports.

That's why, as it relates to content, for example, we're each controlling our own content. We're going to see if there are things we can do together with the content that neither of us is doing now.

But fans of either sport or both sports should count on continued authenticity and focus on the sport being covered.

COMMISSIONER MANFRED: I would agree. I don't see this as a cultural thing. I think our owners look at BAM Tech as a technology business that needs content to grow. I think, as Gary said, our owners have great respect for the National Hockey League, its content, and saw this as a great opportunity.

Q. John, something that was asked earlier, what can we expect on the NHL Network come opening night 2015 that perhaps we didn't see before?

JOHN COLLINS: I think the NHL Network is the first product that really will be visible from this new relationship. Everything that Bob and Rob have to do for the start of the season includes getting the NHL Network moved to the Secaucus studio, building sets, transitioning and hiring new talent, and ultimately working together on what the programming will be.

I think that our feeling is, what we've shared with these guys, is we think there are three cornerstone shows to build off of: in addition to the games, NHL LIVE will serve a national look into what's happening on tonight's games, On the Fly is our look around the league when we don't have games on the network, then NHL Tonight, which is everything you need to know about what happened in the night's games.

I think beyond that we are very open and are looking forward to Rob and his guys' ideas about how to improve the network. It's been something that we have a lot of pride in, but it's also something that we recognize there's significant opportunities to improve.

I think one of the great things about the deal is this allows us to really focus on content. So I think, as Rob's guys want to figure out ways to help use the authenticity, the access we can provide into the locker rooms, onto the ice, onto the benches, it gives fans a whole new view of the sport that they love. Those are things we'll be working on together.



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COMMISSIONER BETTMAN: Also for a variety of reasons baseball has been able to devote probably far greater resources to their network than we've been able to devote to ours. So from a professionalism, production standpoint, we think this is an opportunity to, as John said, not only improve the content but to improve the production values, as well.

Q. Do you both expect everything to be fully operational by opening night?

COMMISSIONER BETTMAN: We'll be fully operational. My guess is we'll get better over time. Whatever you see on opening night will be good, and whatever you see a month later will be better. As we get through the season, it will be better yet.

Q. A pretty prominent broadcaster who used to work in Secaucus, Keith Olbermann, is known as a huge fan/savant of both baseball and hockey. He's now a free agent. Has there been any talks of bringing him to the two networks in some kind of capacity?

COMMISSIONER BETTMAN: Not that I'm aware of.

COMMISSIONER MANFRED: There have been no talks.

COMMISSIONER BETTMAN: Are you his agent (laughter)?

GARY MEAGHER: Thank you, everyone, for joining us for the conference call today.

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