

The Future of Sports Entertainment

Sports entertainment is in flux.

It's more possible than ever to watch and even participate in sports entertainment virtually. Stadiums are becoming multi-purpose, fully connected, and built to accommodate audiences seeking a more intimate live experience.

With data overlays that give instant insights into the game and the athletes, and better viewing angles via streaming experiences, even the most diehard sports fans are opting away from live games. Why absorb the high cost of a ticket and the hassle of crowds if the optimal viewing and cheering experience requires a good Internet connection and streaming device?

It's not just the environments and fan base that are morphing. Athletes are changing as well. Advances in neuro-feedback and physical performance analytics are elevating human physical performance. Virtual and Augmented Reality are phenomenal platforms for athletic training. They also offer a space where sports fans can 'get in the game' in the realest sense. And Esports are taking top spots in gaming, entertainment, and even advertising as 'athletes' of every age and physical stature compete head-to-head in video game arenas.

With drivers of entertainment, technological and societal change, we believe there are new revenue opportunities that require vision and action today.

Where Internet connectivity accommodates streaming and gaming, fans no longer have to be content with spectating and cheering. They can be part of the action. The generation that grew up as sports fanatics are getting in the game as Fantasy League competitors. Generation Z is co-creating everything from original sports and entertainment content to mash-ups, to team gear.

HOW WILL THE FUTURE CHANGE THE NATURE OF SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT?

Can interactive sports entertainment re-shape society by moving us from passive to engaged?

What effect will virtual reality and volumetric video have on societal mental health and the notion of escapism?

How will stadiums and events ensure fan security?

How will professional leagues create new revenue opportunities?

**“THE GREAT
GROWLING ENGINE
OF CHANGE -
TECHNOLOGY.”
— ALVIN TOFFLER**

Take a journey into the future. Imagine the nature of human capital, security and resiliency, and the face of the customer.

2025 A Mental Health Epidemic among professional athletes is declared, sounding the alarm on holistic wellness. Professional sports see new psychological, behavioral, and physical check-up rules that mirror military regulations proposed a year prior. This holistic wellness focus extends to college athletes as well. Like purely academic endeavors, college athletics teach the skills needed for a career in sports. Each sport has a degree program within the athletic department that enhances physical and mental performance. And because biometric monitoring is available to the youngest athletes, universities and pro teams have years of data to predict an athlete's performance and optimize their health and longevity. Together, these mental, intellectual, and physical endeavors boost morale, reduce stress and distraction, and produce better athletes that are able to perform well over longer careers.

2030 Sports stadiums and arenas begin to change, becoming smaller multi-event venues for games, concerts, Esports, and the performing arts. The facilities offer virtual seating and are optimized for remote AR/VR and volumetric viewing. Increasing the accommodations within a smaller space improves the environmental footprint and the revenue streams. *For example, attendees can opt to pay extra for "engaged seating" — an upgraded ticket that gives access to special interactive options like projection mapping, co-creation capabilities, and even virtual seats for customers who prefer to stream the event from home.*

These modern arenas are more integrated with their surroundings thanks to 5G enabled functions like autonomous transportation systems, smart flooring that produces electrical energy, and biometrics that streamline purchasing and entry.

2040 In the gig economy, audiences and fans shape sports content and competitions. What was once recreation has become a hustle, thanks to the increasing potential to create wealth from sports entertainment participation and production. Attention has shifted from team to individual, thanks to Esport competitions for prize money and fan rankings based on performance stats, physical condition, entertainment factor, and overall status. In many pro sports leagues, there's a debate about the potential split between the 'old' model and the new one, where fantasy league players can earn the right to change teams and act as coach through betting.

CURRENT REALITIES SHAPING THE FUTURE

- Smart flooring enables venue operators to generate electricity, monitor footfall, understand consumer behavior, and power digital media in-stadium.
- RFID tags on athletic gear can track movement, providing new data for training and player selection.
- High speed connectivity allows for frictionless entry, connected transportation, cashless payments, and increased security.
- Emphasis on "Information Age" health issues will increase interest in spirituality and its role in health.
- Out of the roughly 7.4 million students who play high school sports, 2% will earn a college scholarship, and fewer than 2% of those players will go pro.
- Consumers are willing to pay for network-produced and user-generated content.

HOW WILL YOU PREPARE?