

Venu Sports is name of Disney, Fox, and WBD's joint streaming service

Article

The news: Disney, Fox, and Warner Bros. Discovery have unveiled the name of their upcoming sports streaming service, **Venu Sports**. This collaboration aims to offer a subscription-based "skinny" bundle of sports channels, including **ESPN**, **Fox Sports**, and Warner Bros. Discovery networks, alongside **ESPN+**.

- The service is set to launch in the fall of 2024, with an additional option to bundle **Disney+**, **Hulu**, and **Max**.
- **Pete Distad**, a former executive at **Apple** and Hulu, has been appointed CEO, overseeing the project from Venu Sports' office in Los Angeles.

Why it matters: Venu Sports represents a significant shift in the sports streaming landscape, aiming to capture the attention of cord-cutters who have moved away from traditional pay TV.

With a comprehensive package of live sports, the service targets a market segment willing to pay for sports-centric content at a lower cost. This move capitalizes on the extensive sports rights held by ESPN, Fox, and WBD, including major leagues like the **NFL**, **NBA**, **MLB**, and **NHL**, as well as college sports.

- However, the venture faces challenges, particularly in securing comprehensive sports coverage without partnerships with other major networks like **NBCUniversal** and **Paramount**.
- Additionally, the joint venture must navigate potential regulatory hurdles and anti-trust scrutiny. Concerns have been raised by lawmakers and competitors, such as Fubo and **DirectTV**, about the potential for reduced competition and higher prices for consumers.

Our take: The introduction of Venu Sports could significantly affect the sports streaming market, providing a robust alternative for sports enthusiasts who have moved away from traditional cable.

- By consolidating numerous sports channels and live events into a single service, Venu Sports has the potential to simplify how fans access and enjoy sports content.
- However, the venture must tread carefully to address the competitive concerns raised by regulators and industry rivals. Ensuring fair licensing terms and avoiding monopolistic practices will be crucial to gaining regulatory approval and maintaining consumer trust.
- The potential loss of NBA rights for Warner Bros. Discovery poses a significant risk, as it could diminish the service's value proposition. If Warner cannot retain these rights, the service may need to explore additional content to fill the gap.

Share of Total Sports Content US Teen/Adult Sports Fans Consume, by Media and Age, Jan 2024

% of total

	Ages 13-34	Ages 35-54	Ages 55+
Subscription video-on-demand (SVOD)	24%	22%	16%
Social media	23%	14%	6%
Live TV bundle (MVPD/vMVPD)	18%	28%	46%
Apps/websites	11%	10%	5%
Free ad-supported streaming TV (FAST)	10%	10%	8%
Audio	8%	7%	5%
Over-the-air (OTA) antenna	7%	9%	14%

Source: Hub Research, "What's the Score? The evolution of sports fans and sports media," Feb 22, 2024

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