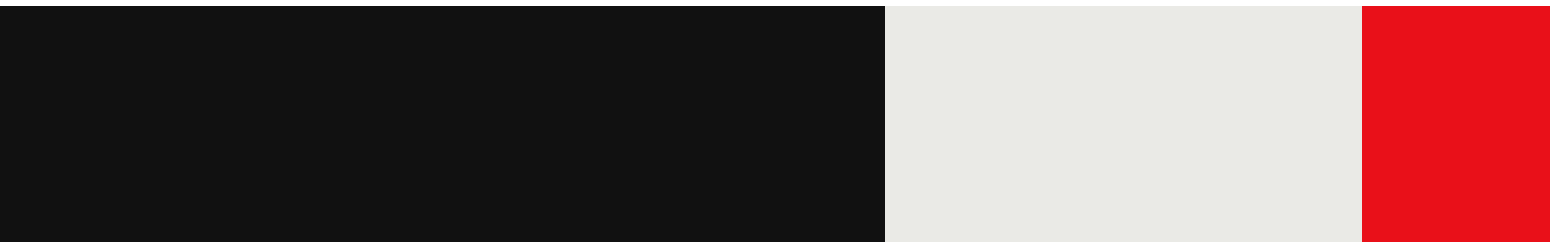



Venu Sports folds after antitrust concerns pile up

Article



The news: Venu Sports is no more. Disney, Fox, and Warner Bros. Discovery announced Friday that they are **cancelling plans to launch the sports streaming service** after it attracted significant antitrust scrutiny from competitors and failed to meet its September 2024 launch date.

- “In an ever-changing marketplace, we determined that it was best to meet the evolving demands of sports fans by focusing on existing products and distribution channels,” the companies said in a joint statement.

How we got here: Announced in February 2024, Venu Sports would have offered customers access to the three networks' linear sports streaming rights for \$42.99 monthly in a move that would have significantly shifted the balance of power in streaming—if it hadn't hit multiple roadblocks.

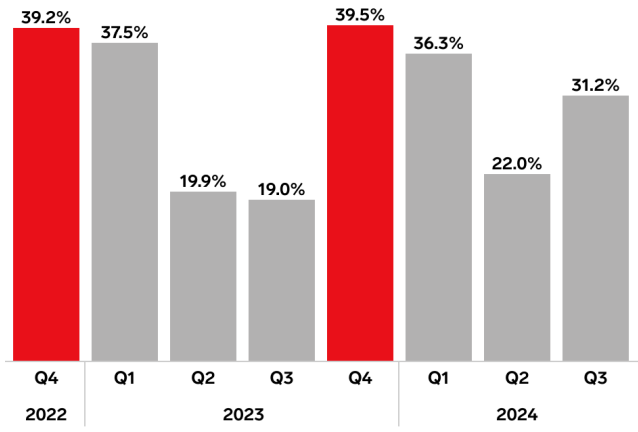
- Venu's first major challenge came when pay TV company **Fubo** [sued to block the service](#), citing antitrust concerns. An August court injunction and October court date [prevented Venu from launching](#) ahead of the 2024-2025 NFL season, a crucial window to attract subscribers.
- The path appeared to clear for Venu earlier this month when Disney announced it would [acquire a majority stake in Fubo](#) and merge the service with **Hulu+ Live TV** with the requirement that Fubo drop its lawsuit. **It's unclear if the Disney-Fubo deal will still proceed despite Venu's cancellation.**
- On Thursday, **Dish (Echostar)** and **DirecTV**—two companies that also [recently attempted a merger](#)—asked a US District Court judge to block the Disney-Fubo merger, claiming it circumvented antitrust concerns. One day later, Venu's owners decided to fold the service.

Our take: The collapse of Venu Sports will slow the pace of streaming industry consolidation, with each of its stakeholders opting to focus on their own products rather than pursue the controversial joint venture.

Competitors like **Prime Video** and **YouTube TV** with costly sports rights deals will likely breathe a sigh of relief at the news as Venu's competitive price point and slew of offerings posed a significant threat to their businesses.

Football Drives Up Live Sports TV Ad Spending in Q4

live sports programming % of US national TV ad spending, Q4 2022-Q3 2024



Note: includes regional sports networks; excludes re-airs, such as primetime Olympics airings

Source: iSpot.tv, Sep 23, 2024

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