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ENG 105-002

Science Podcast Script (Revised)

Intro: On todays ‘Sports Return with Covid-19’ we’ll be discussing American sports and their planned return to action, the issues being faced now and in the near future, and the likelihood of their return working. We’ll be hearing from public health expert Dr. Anthony Fauci, as well as insiders around the world sports including writers, athletes and owners.

[Insert opening song – “Electric Avenue”]

 Its ‘Sports Return with Covid-19’ presented by Spotify \*say this as opening song fades\*

Welcome to the Sports and Covid-19 radio podcast, today is Wednesday July 8th, I’m your host, Dylan Rainey, we’ve got an exciting show for you today as everyone it itching to hear more about the approaching return of sports in the US. Let’s get right into it.

The fact is this virus isn’t going away anytime soon, so how safe is it for sports to come back in the US? We’ve seen sports returning successfully in other countries, with soccer specifically working efficiently so far, all be it with no fans.

(sound effect) [Insert audio clips discussing sports return in other countries vs the US].

But unfortunately, the US has not been able to control the virus like many of these countries in Europe. With Covi-19 cases still rising in the US. what is the likelihood that we will see the NBA, NFL, MLB actually return as planned?

Right now it looks murky at best, while fans are eager to see live sports on their televisions as soon as possible, the fact that many Americans have not taken this virus as seriously as other countries could result is us not getting that satisfaction of live sports for quite some time. Since the college sports landscape varies greatly from that of professional sports, and there are so many different factors at play in their potential return like whether colleges will be having students on campus at all in the fall, today we will be focusing strictly on professional sports and their plans for returning during this ongoing pandemic. But as of right now, if I had to make a guess, I’d say College Football will be pushed back to the spring.

For all Pro Sports planning to return or already in the process of returning, there has been significant time and money invested into making the environment as safe as possible for athletes and staff, all leagues have put in place regular testing for the virus at least twice a week, and players or staff will be immediately quarantined if and when they test positive.

Let’s get into the details, The NBA has a detailed plan in place to finish out their season and the playoffs in the Orlando bubble they have created, while the MLB has a plan in place for a shortened 60 game season after finally having agreed to conditions between the players and the ownership. Meanwhile, the NFL is planning on having as regular a season as possible, with a full 16 game season going on as scheduled. And finally, the NHL has a plan to return with a similarly format to the NBA. But how likely are any of these plans to actually start as scheduled, or finish how they’re planned without being cancelled. That’s the question we face today as the virus is still running rampant in the US with no signs of slowing down.

So how did we get here, it seems that poor leadership and the inability to truly care about others is at the core of this ongoing dilemma in our country. Athletic teams are posting on their social media sites that “if you want our sports to return or go on as planned, then wear a mask” but the real issue is people haven’t been wearing masks ALREADY when it is scientifically proven that it will help save lives! (sound effect) [Insert interview clip with Dr. Fauci discussing importance of masks] We know we aren’t going to change anyone’s world view from this podcast, but that’s an issue that worries us as a nation that the chance of saving lives has not resonated with so many Americans.

Since this is a sports podcast, we will try to stick to sports, so let’s dive deep into the current plans for their returns to action

In the NBA, the bubble is already in place and teams have begun traveling to Orlando and starting their stay in the bubble with the official restart of games on July 30th.

There is a schedule already in place for the seeding games, where all 22 of the participating teams will each play 8 games in 2 weeks in order to get to the top 8 teams in each division. While no fans will be in attendance, almost all of the these games will be televised. That’ll be 88 total seeding games played in 2 weeks -talk about a gambler’s paradise! And Teams will go home as they are eliminated, so the number of people in the bubble will constantly be decreasing. Here’s NBA Commissioner Adam Silver discussing the NBA’s plans for return.

(sound effect) [Insert Adam Silver audio clip discussing covid protocol]

There are many fears that those who are working in the Disney Bubble around the teams and players may bring in the virus, as they are not required to sleep in the bubble like the players and staff. On top of that, the cases in Florida continue to rise and is one of the states most hit by the virus. If a large number of players test positive for the virus, the restart may again be cancelled and the season may never finish. And here’s a very recent comment by Silver addressing this possibility:

(sound effect) [insert clip from 7/8 of Adam Silver discussing this]

The MLS is planning a tournament style playoff in Orlando as well, beginning today, July 8th, and this may prove to be a good barometer for whether the NBA restart plans can be a success.

Elsewhere, after long and strenuous negotiations between the players and ownership, the MLB has agreed to a shortened season that will begin on July 23rd. without fans in attendance. The schedule has been released, and the season will be a very exciting one for fans watching from home as almost any team has a chance of making the playoffs in such a short season. There are many protocols in place with this plan, as is with every sport returning, heres Trevor Baur, pitcher of the Cincinnati Reds discusses this,

 (sound effect) [Insert audio clip of Trevor Bauer discussing restart]

Wow, sounds like they are really going above and beyond with safety protocols

Finally, the NFL, who has benefitted up to this point from being in the offseason when the virus hit, is gearing up for training camp and a full 16 game season to go on as scheduled. While there are already many plans in place that will make this season different from any other, including a virtual training camp and 2 pre-season games instead of the regular 4, there is still significant hope around the league that the season can happen as close to normal as possible. However, there will be most definitely be more issues that come to light as the season gets closer that must be addressed, here’s sports writer Lindsey Jones from the Athletic reporting:

(sound effect) [Insert Audio Clip from the Athletic podcast]

And let’s not leave out the NHL, who have plans to return on August 1st, with 24 teams competing in the Stanley Cup. The tournament is scheduled to begin August 1st with the Stanley Cup Qualifiers, with 16 teams playing eight best-of-5 series and a round-robin among the top four teams in each conference to determine seeds for the Stanley Cup Playoffs. This will all be held without fans at two hub cities to be identified: one for the 12 participating Eastern Conference teams and one for the 12 Western Conference teams.

The Commissioner said the decision on the hub cities and when play will begin will depend on COVID-19 conditions, testing ability and government regulations. A comprehensive system for testing will be in place in each hub city, and each team will be permitted to travel a maximum of 50 personnel, including players, coaches and staff.

Based on what I’ve heard from hockey insiders, Toronto and Las Vegas are favorites to be the two hub cities.

Closing: While we are very excited for the planned return of professional sports in the US, we should be cautiously optimistic, and remember that people’s lives are far more valuable than sports returning, and but hopefully it’ll go well with the various sports league putting extensive time and research into making it as safe as possible to return. Lastly we hope that we can step up our efforts to be selfless and limit the spread of the virus, and eventually if we do what’s best for ourselves and our neighbors, than sports will return again one day for good.

[Closing Song – “Take on Me”] \*fades in during last sentence of Closing