Ally and Disney create unprecedented media and collegiate collaboration to advance parity for women's sports

First-of-its-kind initiative turns the tables on traditional media buying with more than 90% anchored in women's sports

CHARLOTTE, N.C., Feb. 20, 2023 /PRNewswire/ -- Ally Financial Inc. and The Walt Disney Company today announced the digital financial services company is extending its marketing presence and powerful support of women's sports with a multi-year, multimillion dollar investment intentionally designed to advance equality in women's sports coverage.

Today, women's sports receive less than ten percent of media coverage, and too often, media investments for women's sports are only included as an add-on to men's packages. To increase representation and drive greater coverage of women's sports, the collaboration features a media investment of more than 90 percent in women's sports, focused on expanding game highlights, branded content and features across the ESPN networks, including regular *SportsCenter* segments that highlight top women's sports accomplishments. Through this relationship, Ally will become an official sponsor of the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC), featuring the first-ever title sponsorships of the ACC Women's Basketball Tournament and Women's Soccer Championship, as well as the exclusive presenting sponsorship of the 2023 ACC Women's Lacrosse Championship.

"For too long, women's sports programming has been treated as an afterthought in the media buying process, perpetually giving women athletes the short end in terms of media exposure and income opportunity while limiting investment opportunities for brands. This cycle needs to change," said Andrea Brimmer, chief marketing and public relations officer at Ally. "We are taking a major step forward together with Disney and the ACC to change the way women's media is packaged, and through this barrier-breaking partnership – that channels funds directly to women's sports and begins to level the playing field for female athletes - we hope to create the kind of systemic change needed to significantly increase visibility, opportunity and fandom in women's sports."

A Sponsorship with Gender Equity at Its Core

Late last year, Ally challenged Disney to create a first-of-its-kind sponsorship package to spotlight women's sports and advance the brand's pledge to reach 50/50 media spend across men's and women's sports. Disney worked hand-in-hand with Ally to create a new and innovative type of package with gender equity at its core.

"The roadblocks we kept running into are that women's sports are generally sold as part of a men's package or as an add-on, and with an already scarce landscape locked up through category exclusivity, it made it nearly impossible to reach our internal investment goals," Brimmer said. "We pushed all parties involved to get creative. Disney and ESPN were willing to dig deep with us to think in fresh ways to buy women's media directly and create opportunities where there weren't any."

The unprecedented package also features a collaboration with Disney's CreativeWorks team, with the goal to build custom creative to keep gender equity and allyship top of mind for all fans. The spots will run in two exclusive SportsCenter episodes later this summer.

As part of the agreement, Ally Bank becomes the Official Retail Bank of the Atlantic Coast Conference, holding media branding and activation rights across all ACC Championships, with first-ever title sponsorships of the ACC Women's Basketball Tournament and Women's Soccer Championship, as well as the exclusive presenting sponsorship of the 2023 ACC Women's Lacrosse Championship. In early March, Ally will kick things off at the Women's and Men's ACC Basketball Championships at the Greensboro Coliseum with interactive fan activations and co-branded giveaways. Ally and Disney intentionally structured the ACC Network media portion of the agreement to create opportunities for additional financial brands to join, thereby increasing investment in women's sports.

"Disney is committed to ensuring our rich storytelling is accessible, where all viewers can see themselves represented," said Rita Ferro, president, Disney Advertising. "For nearly three decades, we have been intentional in prioritizing and spotlighting the accomplishments and stories surrounding women's sports. We are proud that brands like Ally are joining us as we level the playing field and help build a future where sports investments are truly equitable."

ESPN has televised ACC events since 1979 and has exclusive rights to every conference-controlled game across all sports and championships. In partnership with the ACC, ESPN's ACC Network (ACCN), and its digital platform ACCNX, is a 24/7 national network dedicated to ACC sports.

"The ACC is thrilled to have Ally join our league as a sponsor - including their dedicated commitment to support of women's athletics - and we look forward to this meaningful partnership," said ACC Commissioner Jim Phillips, Ph.D. "We are proud of our continued commitment to gender equity and the ongoing support and advancement of women's sports. The relationship with Ally will directly benefit our 15 member institutions, soon to be 28 sponsored sports and nearly 10,000 student-athletes. Thanks to our partners at Disney and ESPN for working aggressively to promote the ACC and creating this amazing relationship with Ally."

Ally's new designation as the Official Retail Bank of the ACC officially kicks off at the ACC Women's Basketball Tournament running March 1-5, 2023, in Greensboro, North Carolina. The ACC Women's Basketball Tournament is the longest-running D1 conference women's basketball tournament in the country and fans can watch all 14 of the tournament games on ACCN (Tuesday-Saturday) and ESPN (Sunday). In addition to the games, ACCN will be on site with live studio programming throughout the event.

About Ally Financial

Ally Financial Inc. (NYSE: ALLY) is a financial services company with the nation's largest all-digital bank and an industry-leading auto financing business, driven by a mission to "Do It Right" and be a relentless ally for customers and communities. The company serves more than 10.5 million customers through a full range of online banking services (including deposits, mortgage, point-of-sale personal lending, and credit card products) and securities brokerage and investment advisory services. The company also includes a robust corporate finance business that offers capital for equity sponsors and middle-market companies, as well as auto financing and insurance offerings through more than 22,000 dealers nationwide. For more information, please visit www.ally.com and follow @allyfinancial.

For more information and disclosures about Ally, visit https://www.ally.com/#disclosures.

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For further images and news on Ally, please visit http://media.ally.com.

About The Walt Disney Company

Disney Advertising builds relationships between brands and audiences with the imagination and innovation that has defined The Walt Disney Company for nearly 100 years by leveraging the most advanced ad portfolio powered by technology and data to drive outcomes and impact for clients. Disney Advertising is committed to the evolution of the global media ecosystem by prioritizing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as a business imperative, and as a key to greater representation in storytelling.

About The ACC

The Atlantic Coast Conference, now in its 70th year of competition and 15 members strong, has long enjoyed the reputation as one of the strongest and most competitive intercollegiate conferences in the nation. ACC members Boston College, Clemson, Duke, Florida State, Georgia Tech, Louisville, Miami, North Carolina, NC State, Notre Dame, Pitt, Syracuse, Virginia, Virginia Tech and Wake Forest continue to build upon the cornerstones on which the league was founded in 1953 with a consistent balance of academics, athletics and integrity. The ACC currently sponsors 27 NCAA sports – 14 for women and 13 for men – with member institutions located in 10 states. Women's gymnastics will become the league's 28th sponsored sport in the 2023-24 academic year. In August 2019, ESPN and the ACC partnered to launch ACC Network (ACCN), a 24/7 national network dedicated to ACC sports and league-wide original programming. For more information, visit theACC.com and follow @accsports on Instagram and @theACC on Twitter and on Facebook (facebook.com/theACC).

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