Sports Innovation Lab and Ally Assemble Powerhouse Team, Launch ‘Women’s Sports Club’ to Directly Address Media Disparity

Who’s who of sports dealmakers, media and brands will focus on increasing investment in media and sponsorship of women’s sports

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BOSTON, March 07, 2023 – Sports Innovation Lab, the data-driven fan intelligence company behind women's sports initiatives, such as The Fan Project, and Ally Financial Inc., a purpose-driven financial services company known for its commitment to driving equity in women's sports, today announced the launch of the Women's Sports Club. The club will assemble a cohort of businesses that buy and sell sports media and sponsorships with a shared goal to elevate investments in women's sports.

At its core, the Women's Sports Club is built to solve what Ally and Sports Innovations Lab see as the vicious cycle that women's sports have been in the grips of for decades: brands say there is not enough media coverage to justify advertising dollars, while broadcasters say there are not enough advertising dollars to justify media coverage. This vicious cycle leads to poor timeslots and translates to lower viewership and smaller media deals, which eventually translates to lower value for leagues and lower pay for players.

By bringing together the most influential buyers (brands) and sellers (media) in an open and honest environment, the Women's Sports Club will solve challenges in selling and buying women's sports inventory to break the vicious cycle.

Member meetings for the Women's Sports Club will be timed around five of this year's most significant media and sports events, beginning with South by Southwest from March 11-13 in Austin, Texas.

The weekend of networking and events will peak on Sunday, March 12 when the Women's Sports Club is formally introduced to the world on stage as part of SXSW's sports track presented by Sportico. Representatives from Sports Innovation Lab, Ally, ESPN, and Google will hold a panel discussion on "The Brands Behind the Rise of Women's Sports" and provide in-depth detail on the motivation and vision for the Women's Sports Club.

"Women's sports have arrived, and everyone agrees it's smart business to invest," said Angela Ruggiero, co-founder and CEO of Sports Innovation Lab. "But there are real barriers inhibiting brands from placing scaled media buys. The Women's Sports Club is addressing this challenge head-on, and we couldn't have a better partner than Ally to achieve our collective goals."

Ongoing data research from Sports Innovation Lab's industry-leading fan intelligence platform shows that the women's sports fan community is growing twice as fast as the broader general sports fan community. Further fan intelligence research - available in downloadable reports The Fan Project and The Growth of the Women's Sport Community - indicates that fans of women's sports have significantly greater affinity and engagement than general sports fans to brands that sponsor or advertise with their favorite leagues, teams, and athletes.

Despite hard evidence that fans greatly reward brands that invest in women's sports, the total volume of brand participation, investment, and media share allocated to women's sports is disproportionately low against high consumer demand.

"For us, it's as simple as putting deeds over words. We already know emphatically that investing in women's sports is good for business. That's one reason why we committed to reaching equity in our sports media spending," said Andrea Brimmer, Ally's chief marketing and public relations officer. "The real challenge is figuring out where we're going to put our money. There just isn't enough inventory in women's sports to get us to 50-50. And that's a problem the Women's Sports Club is going to solve, together with some of the biggest brands."

Ally has quickly become a well-known name in sports, especially because of its commitment to equality:

- In May of 2022, Ally announced a five-year initiative called the 50-50 Pledge, vowing to reach parity across its paid media spending in men's and women's sports
- As its first bold act on its pledge, Ally teamed up with the National Women's Soccer League and increased its media investment with CBS to help move the league's 2022 championship match into prime time on broadcast television for the first time ever
- More recently, in a first-of-its-kind media sponsorship that puts 90 percent of spend into women's sports first, versus it being an afterthought or add-on to a men's sponsorship, Ally teamed up with Disney and ESPN; this deal also includes more women's highlights on SportsCenter and deeper engagement with women's ACC sports
- And in esports, Ally just announced their sponsorship of The Ally Women's Open, a new women's esports tournament produced by a women's esports platform and led by an all-female management team. The tournament advances Ally's involvement in esports and is another act in its pledge for equality in media spending.

The Women's Sports Club is a prominent group of individuals dedicated to driving media spend in women's sports, featuring representatives from world-class brands including:

- PUMA
- Adobe
- Athleta
- Athletes Unlimited
- Billie Jean King Enterprises
- Coca-Cola
- Delta Air Lines
- espnW

- fuboTV
- Gatorade
- Just Women's Sports
- LPGA
- Meta
- Michelob ULTRA
- Morgan Stanley
- Nike
- NWSL
- Octagon
- TOGETHXR
- WNBA
- Women's Sports Networklin

Through their participation, member companies have demonstrated a commitment to advancing the future of women's sports and strengthening the media marketplace for women's sports advertisers. While no membership fee is required, members are expected to share insights and participate in discussions to further women's sports media investment. For more information about the Women's Sports Club and future membership opportunities, please email: womenssportsclub@sportsilab.com

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 11 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 23,000 dealers nationwide. For more information, please visit www.ally.com and follow @allyfinancial.

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

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

About Sports Innovation Lab
Sports Innovation Lab is a fan intelligence and market research company that helps the world's leading sports organizations acquire the fan of the future - the Fluid Fan™ - and maximize their value. We collect and analyze observational data on what fans buy, watch, and how they behave, then provide analysis and strategic interpretation of that data to world-class clients such as the NFL, NHL, FIFA, Google, Facebook, Coca-Cola, Visa, and PUMA. Learn more at sportsilab.com

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