

NBA All-Star Technology Summit

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Ernie Johnson

Host, "Inside the NBA"

Mark Cuban

Entrepreneur; Founder, costplusdrugs.com

Pau Gasol

Six-Time NBA All-Star; Investor; President, Gasol Foundation

Damian Lillard

Seven-Time NBA All-Star; Philanthropist; Entrepreneur; Recording Artist

Chiney Ogumike

Two-Time WNBA All-Star; ESPN Broadcaster; Investor

Vivek Ranadivé

Owner & Chairman, Sacramento Kings

Tamika Tremaglio

Executive Director, National Basketball Players Association

THE EVOLVING ATHLETE: HOW PERFORMANCE-ENHANCING INNOVATION IS TRANSFORMING DATA, FANDOM AND SPORTS AS WE KNOW IT

AHMAD RASHAD: All right, folks, let's get ready for our last panel of the day, and it's about the cutting-edge technology that is helping athletes up their performance.

BILL MURRAY: Our moderator, however, is someone who needs no enhancement. He's already enhanced. He's enhanced beyond belief. He's already at the top of his game.

AHMAD RASHAD: Please welcome, joining us in a welcoming way, my main man -- he hates standing ovations, so don't get up -- TNT's Ernie Johnson.

(Applause.)

ERNIE JOHNSON: No, please, sit down. Really. Oh,



man. All right, so let me begin with this overview of the panel.

Cutting-edge technology is revolutionizing the entire sports ecosystem, from helping athletes with their training, recovery, and mental wellness, to elevating the fan experience, billions of dollars being invested in the sports technology sector every year, and this panel will discuss how recent innovations impact athletes, teams, fans, and the broader sports landscape.

And so let us meet our panelists. Far right, Vivek Ranadivé, the owner and chairman of the Sacramento Kings.

(Applause.)

ERNIE JOHNSON: Yeah, this is not one of those hold-your-applause situations, so let her rip.

Damian Lillard, seven-time NBA All-Star, philanthropist, entrepreneur, and recording artist, Dame D.O.L.L.A. Different on Levels the Lord Allows.

DAMIAN LILLARD: That's right.

ERNIE JOHNSON: Yeah, there you go. Right off the top of my noggin too.

Tamika Tremaglio, the executive director of the National Basketball Players Association.

(Applause.)

ERNIE JOHNSON: This guy, Pau Gasol, All-Star six times, investor, president of the Gasol Foundation, and a nominee for the 2023 Naismith Hall of Fame.

(Applause.)

ERNIE JOHNSON: Which the announcement of the finalists is this afternoon here in Salt Lake City, correct? Yeah, right, Ernie, good. Okay.

PAU GASOL: I think.

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sports

ERNIE JOHNSON: Chiney Ogwumike. Chiney is a player with the L.A. Sparks of the WNBA. She's a two-time All-Star. And the job she does on ESPN is just sensational, as you made the transition from player to broadcaster and still a player. Chiney Ogwumike.

(Applause.)

DAMIAN LILLARD: She got big love.

ERNIE JOHNSON: And, Mark Cuban.

So, the --

(Laughter.)

ERNIE JOHNSON: It's always wild when the bio comes out on the thing and never says Dallas Mavericks. It just says entrepreneur and founder of costplusdrugs.com.

MARK CUBAN: Because I want them to talk as little as possible, yeah.

ERNIE JOHNSON: Yeah. Exactly. This is Mark Cuban.

(Applause.)

ERNIE JOHNSON: Oh, and by the way, as we get started, you guys know every time you turn around there's a -- this is National So-and-So Day, you know, this is National -- you know what today is, National Day is? Random Act of Kindness Day. Today is National Random Act of Kindness Day. So as you leave today, do something for somebody, somehow. Make somebody's day better.

And with that way to start, we'll go to Mark Cuban first with this. Here's what we're talking about. And I don't know if you prefer "data" or "data." What do you say, "data" or "data"? What do you say?

MARK CUBAN: I say "data."

ERNIE JOHNSON: "Data."

MARK CUBAN: Unless I say "data."

ERNIE JOHNSON: I say "data."

VIVEK RANADIVÉ: Well, the thing is, the guy -- Mark is -- like he doesn't really believe in technology, so he doesn't know how to pronounce the word.

MARK CUBAN: Right. That's it.

ERNIE JOHNSON: See, it starts early.

MARK CUBAN: It's Random Act of Kindness Day, Vivek.

(Laughter.)

ERNIE JOHNSON: But that was random, and that's for sure.

(Laughter.)

ERNIE JOHNSON: So how are the Mavericks using data, and data, both, to inform on- and off-the-court decisions? And really we could go back and forth with the team owners here. How are the Mavs using it? How are the Kings using it? Go ahead. You go first

MARK CUBAN: I mean, every way we can. I mean, there's really nothing we don't try to apply data to. When it comes to understanding injuries, when it comes to being prepared to prevent injuries, when it comes to learning about preparing mentally.

I mean, data applies to everything. We collect data in so many different formats. The hard part isn't collecting it. The hard part isn't using it. The hard part is knowing whether or not you're using it correctly.

Because sometimes there's -- it's what they call dirty data, right? You have little bits of it, but it's not really enough to make a finite decision. So that's the hard part.

ERNIE JOHNSON: Vivek?

VIVEK RANADIVÉ: Yeah, no, I think, you know, what's interesting is to just look at the sheer volume of data that we're looking at now. So even on the game side, it would just look at a score. So it was one dimension. And then we had box scores where there were rows and columns of data.

Now teams are looking at terabytes of data. Terabytes. The entire Library of Congress has 80 terabytes. So basically between trying to figure out how to make the fan experience incredible, you know, if you think about it, you sit at home, you have a nice couch, you have a remote control, you've got a big screen, high-definition TV, that's tough competition.

Now you have to fight traffic. You have to connect with your friends. You have to find a parking spot, find your seat, get food. A lot of things. So we can use data to both enhance and take the friction out of the fan experience but also to enhance the game.

So just the sheer volume. Literally, our folks are going through a Library of Congress worth of data every day to figure out how to get better.

ERNIE JOHNSON: I mean, how many years is this now for you owning --

VIVEK RANADIVÉ: It's been about ten years.

ERNIE JOHNSON: Yeah. I mean, in that relatively short time, how has it changed and how has it escalated?

VIVEK RANADIVÉ: Dramatically. Dramatically. We were looking at box scores ten years ago. You know, now there's 12 overhead cameras in every arena. And we've gone from two-dimensional to three-dimensional data.

When we built our arena -- arenas were built the same way for thousands of years, going back to the Roman Colosseum. Basically you got an urban token, it gave you access to the arena, it gave you access to your seat. And then there were paper tickets, and then there were pictures on a phone of a paper ticket.

So we flipped the metaphor on its head. So instead of you checking into the arena, the arena checks into you and takes out all the friction and makes it a pleasurable experience.

We literally have a place called Mission Control to eliminate traffic, eliminate all of the friction in the process, and it's all data-driven.

ERNIE JOHNSON: I recall seeing a picture of the Colosseum, in fact, and there was this purple beam coming up from it at -- see, in Sacramento they have this purple beam they --

VIVEK RANADIVÉ: It's lasers, yeah. That's right. Light the beam.

ERNIE JOHNSON: Did that really go absolutely as flat as I thought it did? Yes. Please. I appreciate that.

Chiney, how does --

VIVEK RANADIVÉ: Mark, can you see it from Dallas?

ERNIE JOHNSON: Oh. Okay. What have you done to Vivek?

MARK CUBAN: You know, it's different when you guys win games, so I understand you have to do those things.

(Laughter.)

DAMIAN LILLARD: That's a little shot there.

ERNIE JOHNSON: A little? Yeah.

TAMIKA TREMAGLIO: Kindness Day.

ERNIE JOHNSON: Yeah. Chiney, how does data optimize your performance?

CHINEY OGWUMIKE: So I feel like I have a foot in both worlds, literally and metaphorically. As hoopers, we really go by our basketball instincts. Dame and Pau can really attest to that.

But my other job on ESPN, we go a lot by the numbers. And I've realized that our connectivity with fans, fans really want to know more. They want to learn. They want to engage.

And I've like now become the breakdown girl who likes to break down the game. And my favorite parts are when I break things down, I might get a text or a call from a player, Dame included, like, hey, what were you saying? And it's just authentically representing them.

And so I think data is embedded in our life. There's always a tug-of-war, like how much data really is the most important, but from my perspective I think it's extremely valuable, as Mark said.

For me, as someone who's dealt with two injuries, data, science, I'm now like the biggest namaste hot yoga girl. Like, there are certain things that help put you in alignment by the numbers, but there are also certain instinctual elements that you don't want to take away. And so seeing, you know, both aspects has been cool.

And I will say we are now officially in the WNBA superteam era, as we know, which is awesome for maybe, you know, two teams. For the other ten, I think it's been really great to see the dialogue really change as a woman in professional sports.

But I think the data is really infrastructural for us, realizing where we lack when it comes to women. And now we have billionaire owners going, you know, head-to-head. And they always say the rising tide lifts all boats. And those billionaire owners are getting in a little trouble by pushing the narrative with charter flights or just player experience.

But realizing that the data says, hey, if we build practice facilities, our women are less likely to get injured, our women are going to perform better.



And so I think it's cool to see this -- like the headlines are these stars are colliding in the WNBA. But the real thing that's pushing forward is the players and the owners working hand in hand to change the game. We have those things being built, I believe, in Vegas and in Seattle. I think in Seattle it's in 2024. And so that is now the standard.

And that's what I love about data, the ability to understand that it's all about, you know, instinct, but also it can be supported by the numbers as well.

ERNIE JOHNSON: When you look at your career, Pau, and going back to, I mean, around 2000, when you come into the league, are there things that you wish you had back then that are prevalent now?

PAU GASOL: Yes and no. You know, at the time, I mean, right now we have so many tools at our reach that provide us important information. I think as a competitor, as an athlete, you always try to understand what can get you ahead, right, what can get you a little above and beyond the competition. You know, what could make me a little better player, besides the work that I put in.

And I think the challenge today, and what I've seen in the last few years of my career, as the collecting of data has been just, you know, huge, it's how do you share that data with the players.

Because at the end of the day, players do not want to be overloaded with numbers and thoughts like, oh, I shoot 45 percent from here but I shoot 41 percent from here, oh, jeez, I'm here, I'm overthinking. You don't want to overthink. You want to play, you want to compete.

But as a player, you do want to understand. You have better equipment, you have deeper staffs nowadays. Does that complicate things? Does that make things easier?

To me, at the end of the day, the performance of the player and the success of the player, the athlete, the person comes up from something a little deeper than that, comes from character, comes from a makeup, comes from your desire to really want to be the best that you can be.

And I don't know. I don't know if all this, you know, equipment that can help you be better in a way. But they're not a substitute for any of that.

So I love the use of the technology that we're doing. I think it's great for our league, it's great for the fans, for the experience. As we were talking about, fans really want to know more. But at the same time, from a player standpoint, there's only so much you want to share, you

can share with them.

At the end of the day, it comes down to the basics, right? You know, what kind of attitude do you come in every single day to work, you know, how good do you really want to be? How bad do you really want it? And then everybody else got to do their part.

ERNIE JOHNSON: Dame, I mean, with the advances in the metrics and in all the information that's available, I mean, I'm sure that like when you started out there probably wasn't somebody giving somebody a sheet and saying, you know, Dame, you need to shoot from 38 feet on a regular basis, you know, you really -- this is really what you -- but so how much information is too much? How is that information funneled to you?

I mean, do you get printouts? Do you have coaches saying, hey, look, here's what you need to do defensively, here's what you can do offensively? How do you navigate all that stuff?

DAMIAN LILLARD: I think it's similar to what Pau said. Sometimes it can be a struggle because we spend our whole lives being pushed, you know, trying to make it to this level. So we're being told you got to fight through some pain and some soreness, you got to fight through some struggles to get here.

And then when you get here, we get all -- we collect all this data, and now we know all of these different things, and they just feeding it to you. So it's almost going against what we've always known. And even though it's in our best interest, you know, it's tough to just completely trust it, you know, to completely just depend on it.

And I think I struggle with it sometimes because I'm coming into the practice facility, and every day it's like, well, we need to get you on the table because look at these numbers, and your load last night was this, and you hurt your calf because you played back-to-back and you played this many minutes.

It's like they're breaking down every single part of the game, and they have numbers to back it up. And sometimes it's more important to just go off of your feel for yourself and what you've experienced your whole life. And then there's times where you have to address this data that we have.

And for me personally, as I get older and I want to extend my career, that's where it becomes more important for me to say, okay, like, I do need to push through some things, I do need to lean on the fact that this is who I am. This is what makes me who I am.

But I also need to know, like, I got to respect these numbers because it's real. You know, it's typically a good sample size, and it's accurate. So it's also a way for me to be better at doing what I do, to be able to do it longer, to be able to do it more efficient.

So like I said, it's something I struggle with, but it's something that I got a lot of respect for it because it's ultimately giving us a chance to prolong our careers and also keep us as healthy as possible.

ERNIE JOHNSON: Yeah. Tamika, how are you -- in your role now, how is all of this information helping you in your -- I mean, one of your goals, obviously, is welfare of all these players, these 450 in the NBA.

TAMIKA TREMAGLIO: Yeah. So it has been incredibly helpful, of course, and we spend a lot of time talking about wearables and devices and how that's beneficial. We also spend a lot of time talking about privacy and how that may impact negotiating contracts and things like that. All of that is significant for us.

But we also recognize that at the end of the day, when we think about business and as we are exposing our players to the business side, that it really is about relationships and it's about building these authentic relationships.

So when we're using technology and social media, et cetera, I know the panel before talked a little bit about that, it's important that our players are recognizing that they need to be authentic and that people want to get to know them and that their fan engagement is really based upon that.

So making sure that we're focused on that as well and preparing them as part of the union to be ready for that is significant.

So with Pau, for instance, looking at when it was time and he was transitioning, we looked at -- he wanted to consider telling his story. So there was a docuseries that was distributed by Amazon that took you through the trials and tribulations. It showed Pau sort of leading from the front.

And then as we know, our players are often focused on, one, draft is sort of pivotal day; the other day that they all want is to be on the cover of 2K, right?

And so you have Damian, Damian who was on the cover of 2K, and obviously not only did they recognize how good he was on the court, they also recognized -- and I think, Ernie, you mentioned this before -- but rapping. And so that's part of 2K2, so that they see our players more holistically.

That becomes part of the relationship-building with the fans. So that's what we're encouraging our players to do, is to build with their fans more authentically.

ERNIE JOHNSON: How is social used most effectively in this day and age, both by players, by owners, by organizations? What's the best use of social media, Mark?

MARK CUBAN: Just be authentic. Just be yourself. Don't try to force things. Don't try to pretend you're something you're not. Don't try to be hip hop -- or hot, rather, based off of what's happening in the moment.

And also know how to turn it off. Because the hardest part for an athlete, owner, anybody who's involved, is to not get really, really mad when you read a lot of the things that are said or shown on social media. Because if you're a competitor, whether as a businessperson or as an athlete, your initial response is to want to fight back. And it's really, really hard not to take all the things that are said personally.

And so knowing how to be yourself on social media, knowing when not to say something and having a process. Like I'll respond to tweets or Instagram posts, in some cases, and not hit send because I know I need to hit the delete button, but I feel better because I wrote it. You know?

And so you've got to learn what not to do, and that's almost as important as knowing what to do.

ERNIE JOHNSON: Do you advise your -- do you advise the players on the Dallas Mavericks on their use of social media?

MARK CUBAN: I talk to them a lot but, you know, it's interesting because kids coming in today as 20-, 21-year-olds are native to Instagram. Not necessarily Twitter, but Instagram and TikTok and YouTube in particular.

You know, from Dame's age, and definitely now with Pau's age, you know, they picked it up while they're in the league. Whereas a kid coming in now, you might be, you know, 12 years old, and you're not even allowed to have a TikTok or Instagram, but you already have a million followers and you're already a brand. And because you're already a brand, you already have a business.

Now add to that NIL. So if you're a kid in college right now, you're maybe staying in school because you're great at social media and you're making a half a million dollars a year as a freshman at pick-a-school university, and now all of a sudden coming into -- if and when you get to the NBA,

you already know. Right?

And so it's a whole -- it's evolving very, very quickly already. And so you -- you know, as an owner, in trying to help our guys, I have to look at who they are and see where they are in their social media and branding journey.

ERNIE JOHNSON: Okay, so for you and for Vivek, do you find yourself holding your breath every now and then? Because things can -- if something gets out there --

MARK CUBAN: No, it's exact opposite. It's the exact opposite. Back in the day, back in the day when I first bought the --

ERNIE JOHNSON: Hold on, I mean, so you're not afraid of what some -- what one or some of your players might put on social that --

MARK CUBAN: It's not nearly as bad as being terrified you're going to get a call at 3:00 in the morning because somebody was out doing something stupid.

ERNIE JOHNSON: Yeah.

MARK CUBAN: Right? These guys could tell you, you know, when they first came into the league, right, the stuff that was going down. Because there were no cameras. There was no real social media.

You know, Instagram came around in 2010, 2011. Same with Snapchat. TikTok is even more recent. Now every guy knows that there's a camera everywhere you go. Everywhere you go. And you have to be responsible. Back then, it was like anything goes. So for me, in terms of nervousness, it's a net positive.

VIVEK RANADIVÉ: Yeah, but there's another aspect that I think as owners we need to look at, and I know the league is looking at it, which is these teams have hundreds of millions of followers, as do the individuals. Who makes the money? Our friends in the audience here: Facebook, Google, Instagram.

So basically we are taking our most valuable asset, which is the social network and the data that's associated with it, and handing it on a silver platter to the guys that we're familiar with from your Stanford days. You know, so we're just handing all this data, all the value of the social network to them.

So one of the big opportunities in the future -- and that's why I've always felt that teams are undervalued. Because if you look at the followings these teams have or the followings that somebody like Dame has, the value there is

incredible, and the data is incredible.

So we actually pay Facebook to figure out who our fans are when that's our own social network. So I see this as being next frontier for the league; that we're going to dramatically increase the values of these teams by owning that social network, owning the data that goes with it, and having a direct relationship with those fans.

ERNIE JOHNSON: Dame, how do you decide what you're going to put out there for the world to see?

DAMIAN LILLARD: I mean, I'm not going to go out there and just air out all my problems in my life. But I think what Mark said is true. You know, just being authentic. That's the way I go about it. Anything I post, like anything that I know is true to me, something that I care about, something that I'm proud to show, then I'll post it.

But I just try to be authentic about it and, you know, keep it true to myself. And, you know, I've had a lot of success, you know, just on all my social media platforms by doing that. So I've never had a reason to try to, you know, get in line with whatever was popular, whatever was trending at that time. And I've been able to sustain that.

And I think for a lot of athletes my age, I'm sure, Pau, and, you know, around my age, growing up I was a huge fan of a lot of players, but I only knew who they were when they did a postgame interview or from just watching them play. I was a fan of their game, but I didn't really know who they were. I knew Michael Jordan had the Jordans. That was it. You know?

And now with social media, I think it's a opportunity for us to give younger fans, older fans, just fans of our game, fans of sports, opportunity to know the athletes that they're following, you know, beyond just what we do. They're getting to see our families. They're getting to see what we enjoy doing aside from our career. They're getting to see the type of quotes we like, the type of things we believe in.

You know, they get to see who we truly are, especially when we are posting and, you know, doing things that are authentic to us. And I think that ultimately plays into favor of us as individuals and our league and sports period.

ERNIE JOHNSON: It goes into something I know I've heard you say in the past too, Tamika, that just the storytelling so that the fans out there understand that this is not just points, rebounds, assists. I mean, you kind of lose sight of the fact sometimes that, look, we all got stuff. And a lot of us have got to play out this stuff in a real public setting.

TAMIKA TREMAGLIO: That's right. And it is about creating this different level of intimacy, like Damian was talking about. It really is about focus on the whole self.

You know, one of the things that dawned on me initially in taking on this role is that our players were seen simply as just players. Not to say that's not a big deal, but the reality is it was about the whole person.

So I wanted to say, okay, Dame does -- he's a rapper. He also plays on the court. He has a son. All of these things make up the person. And, quite frankly, there are going to be very few people who will get the opportunity to play in the NBA. But I want my children to see all of the things that they do, how great they are as fathers, all of their story.

This does give them that opportunity. And to your point, it certainly gives them the ability to connect with them, and that's what influences them. That's what --

VIVEK RANADIVÉ: I wanted to say that we also listen. So Tamika and I are part of the Social Justice -- we all are part of the Social Justice Coalition, and that was really listening to what we were hearing. You know, that there was social injustice and the league has a platform, it has a voice, it has a brand, it has a network, and we can do.

So it's really a two-way street, that our fans can hear the greats, like Damian, Pau, but we as a league and as owners, we also can listen to what the sentiment is out there.

ERNIE JOHNSON: Pau, you're investing in products in terms of injury and injury recovery and that kind of thing. And this kind of opens the door, and I really would like to hear from everybody on this, on load management, injury management, what does the medical staff say, what does a player -- does a player really want to play but isn't allowed to play?

I kind of want to get into this because, look, fans show up, and they want to see their guys. They want to see their stars. So is there a way that we can -- is there a way we can remedy that, and what is being discussed in terms of having the product on the floor be what the fans wanted to see?

Have there been times where medical staff said you can't play, and you said, "No, I'm good to go. I want to go"?

PAU GASOL: Yes.

ERNIE JOHNSON: So how do you -- so who wins that battle?

PAU GASOL: I mean, ultimately, it's hard to stop a player that wants to play from playing. You know? And in retrospect, probably I should have listened sometimes, some of those times. But you're a competitor, you're a player, you want to play, and then you deal with the consequences a little bit, you know.

I had a long run. I feel like I really took care of myself. I incorporated the tools that I needed to incorporate in order to recover, especially the later years of my career. But there's no running away from the wear and tear and everything, all the miles that you have accumulated.

So now, in retrospect, talking about some of the injuries that I've had, it was a -- you know, and I'll talk about this international championship in the World Cup in 2006. I had a stress reaction that was detected on my fifth metatarsal in 2004 or '5, and I was -- you know, I stopped playing for two months.

And we played the playoffs against the Dallas Mavericks in the first round, and that was my first game back after two months of being out. We got swept, unfortunately. Then a year later, the season after, you know, I kept playing, and no soreness, no stuff. But, you know, that was there.

And in the World Championship in 2006, my country, Spain, won. We won in Saitama, in Japan. My foot was sore. My foot was acting up. I knew it wasn't -- I wasn't feeling well. And I got -- and it fractured in the semifinals, the game against Argentina, Manu Ginóbili, Nocioni, all those guys, right, all those great teams.

And I got hurt, you know? And I probably -- if I would have had, you know, one of these devices of load management, if you took X-ray or something, you give me a chance of not -- to say, hey, if you play this game, you might break your foot.

I told -- I told -- and I will swear by this, you know, I'll break my foot 100 million times, you know, to give my team a chance to win that game, play a final in the World Cup and win a World Cup, a world title.

And my team emotionally was so hyped by seeing me going through that and winning and playing an amazing game against Greece at the time, who beat the U.S. in the semis, of the LeBrons, of -- you know, if you guys have seen "The Redeem Team," it shows a little bit of that. Not a lot. It talks more on the 2008 match in China.

But, you know, there's things that are worth going through. You know, as a player, as a competitor, you know, you'll bounce back. It's a team sport. It's not an individual sport.

Even your main player. At the time I won -- I was given the MVP of the tournament, you know, it's still worth going through it. You know, I would have chose to break my foot and be out --

MARK CUBAN: (Indiscernible) from a team perspective. On one hand, the only mission is to win a championship, not to win a game, during the regular season. And we have all heard the thing, why is the end the end of the game, right? It was a blowout and somebody got hurt.

When it comes down to it, at this point in the season, there is no NBA player whose body feels like the first game of the season. Right? Everybody is in pain. And if you know that, you have to try to figure out what's the equilibrium to be ready for the playoffs, hopefully, or to gear for a run for the playoffs post All-Star game.

So that's where I think what's changed in thinking is 10, 15 years ago we would never give up a game during the regular season. Every game was every game. Now it's this is a step, but what's the ultimate mission? And that's why the load management.

And do we recognize that sometimes a fan is going to come to a game? Right. But, at the same time, I've always said, since day one, we can't promote our games based off of our records or any individual player. We have to make -- to what Vivek was saying, it's got to be a full experience for the player.

Because at the end of the day, you know, when we played you guys in that series against Memphis, none of us remember a single game of it. But if you were at that game, you remember who you were with, you remember the excitement, you remember the fun.

And that's what the NBA really sells. We don't sell the performance of any one player. We sell the excitement that you feel when you go to a game. Because that's what separates our entertainment from every other.

When you walk into a game, an NBA game, a WNBA game, the energy you feel is amazing. And it's not about any one player, it's about all, everybody on that roster laying it out to win that game.

And so that's why we do load management. Because at the end of the day, we can trust the entertainment experience, but the goal is to win a championship.

TAMIKA TREMAGLIO: Mark, the one thing I would just add to it, because I think, Ernie, it is important to level set a little bit, our players love the game of basketball. They want to play.

MARK CUBAN: You have to.

TAMIKA TREMAGLIO: So the perception that, you know, they've decided to randomly take off for no reason is absolutely inaccurate.

MARK CUBAN: Right. And that's our fault for letting that perception create, right.

TAMIKA TREMAGLIO: I agree. Thank you for saying --

MARK CUBAN: Because I will always try to be out front trying to stand up. You know, and Dame and Pau was just saying it, right --

CHINEY OGWUMIKE: It's not just your fault, though, it's also the media's. Because we love to talk about load management on TV.

MARK CUBAN: Yes, of course. Because you run out of things to talk about.

CHINEY OGWUMIKE: No, that's not true, because it is a -- it is a negotiable debate. And I will say this, you know, as someone that has dealt with two major injuries myself. I understand the value.

And also as someone who plays with my big sis, I am literally running through doors to try to play on the floor. And at the end of my season, my sis is sitting in the training room, she's like, "Sit your butt down. You are not playing. I know what you're going through."

Because we have a vision of this build. Like you said. There's a plan for a player that is holistic. But that doesn't mean we don't love the game.

And I will say this also. Women, there's no load management. Typically our players play year-round, and there's a big difference in what we experience and even the tech that we have in order to sustain. And nonetheless, we continue to thrive. Right?

And so when we have these discussions, it's really fascinating to me because it is important to preserve your players for the best moments. But, at the same time, you want to make sure that the fan comes in and gets that experience.

And I think Jimmy Butler recently was a great example. That fan that came, he's not playing, but still there was a moment that was had that was special.

And so when we think about these debates, I do think the

media has blown it quite a bit -- sorry, ESPN -- out of proportion. But it is a way that people try to level in the long game plan.

Because we want to hoop. We want to play. We want to compete at the highest levels. But we also understand that there is there's a timeline to achieving all of that.

VIVEK RANADIVÉ: Yeah. So, Ernie, we've -- we're often contrarian in our point of view. So we're the only team in the league that has a completely different point of view on this. And it's actually worked. So we are the number one team in terms of days -- games lost to injury this season. And so we don't believe in load management.

So we -- our approach is rather than managing the load, what about managing the training to meet the load? And that has actually paid dividends for us. And so we have the lowest lost games to injury.

DAMIAN LILLARD: I agree with that. I agree what he's saying. Because I think it's, on one hand, like -- so, for example, two games before the break, we played the Lakers at home. When we play the Lakers at home, it feels like a Lakers game.

And this last time, LeBron didn't play. So that's one individual player that people really come to see. That gives them a different level of experience that didn't play and it didn't -- they didn't show up. It was like a home game for us again.

So I think there are some situations where the individual player provides a different experience.

And I also agree with what he's saying. Like as far as load management, I'm a player that I give our training staff the hardest time. Because they like, "Dame, we want you to sit tonight. We got to back-to-back coming up. We play three games" --

ERNIE JOHNSON: Do you ever win that battle?

DAMIAN LILLARD: Pau said it. Any player that really wants to play, it is hard to stop him from playing. And most -- unless I'm just like I don't want to not allow them to do their job too much, I'd be like, "All right." But 90 percent of the time, I'm playing.

But I think what he said is a point that we have to understand, and that's address the training part of it because we load manage throughout the season because we play too many games and we travel, but I think it's a year-round thing.

In the summer you see people playing in 35 pro-am games, and doing all these different workouts. And, you know, it's so much going on that's outside of the season. But, you know, during that time, we still under contract, we still getting ready for our NBA season.

So when the season comes, now we're more at risk of injury. Our bodies are -- you know, our mind is fresh and we think we fresh coming into camp, but we hooped so much and trained so much and traveled here and traveled there, to where I think that's a part of, you know, how you can address load management year-round instead of waiting till the season comes and saying "I got to sit tonight" or -- you know what I mean?

It's a year-round thing because the season may end, but your body is doing the same thing. You're still doing the work, you're still putting stress on your body, you're still having the same movement.

So I think it's a thing that we got to focus on year-round as far as like our health and our preparation. And then once we get to the season, it's not the same. You know, I don't think it's the same issue.

ERNIE JOHNSON: We've only got a few minutes or a couple of seconds left. We could talk -- I think this is one of those topics you could talk about all day, dovetailing off of what technology has brought us in terms of injury, in terms of knowing what a body can sustain.

But I also think -- and, look, I think I've lost sight of it a little bit too in my situation, because we -- you know, we go to games for free. You know? We cover games. This is what we do. You guys play.

And sometimes you lose sight of the fact that the guy sitting in Braselton, Georgia, with three kids who want to watch an NBA game and want to see Steph Curry on his one trip to Atlanta, am I going to make that investment, and if I do, uh-oh.

I mean, you can understand an injury, something happens, he can't play. But if it's, no, he doesn't play back-to-backs or he doesn't play -- man, if you're a fan, if you're a fan of your players, that's got to be a factor.

TAMIKA TREMAGLIO: No, it's no question. And we've seen it. We've heard it. We know it's a challenge. But the reality is they want to play. It is really about how it's sort of being delivered in the NBA.

And thank you, Mark, for suggesting that it does need to be something that's talked about more widely.

MARK CUBAN: Yeah, there's no doubt the players want to play.

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TAMIKA TREMAGLIO: They do.

MARK CUBAN: You can't be an NBA player without just focusing on it nonstop. But as much as you feel bad when someone comes and Luka is sitting or Steph is sitting, it's incumbent on the teams to make sure that experience is still worth the price they pay. Right? Because it's not just -- the NBA is never just about any one player or two players. There's sixteen other guys on the roster, you know, that make the game special.

VIVEK RANADIVÉ: Mark, you can do all the load management you want when you play us. I'm okay with this.

MARK CUBAN: And on that, it's okay.

ERNIE JOHNSON: Guys, great talk, and thank you so much. We appreciate you all.

(Applause.)

ERNIE JOHNSON: Thanks for letting us be here.

AHMAD RASHAD: Ernie, thank you very much. We have -- this has been so much fun. And we want to thank everyone who has taken part in today's program.

A special thanks to the entire NBA team for all their hard work. And I want to thank everyone in the room for joining the 2023 All-Star Tech Summit.

And from my co-host here, do you have any pearls that you'd like to leave on these folks?

BILL MURRAY: Well, we'd certainly like to thank Adam Silver for signing all of those basketballs.

(Laughter.)

BILL MURRAY: But just remember, you're here in Salt Lake. You're at high altitude. Your brains and your bodies are operating at a much better level than ordinary. Take what these evolving athletes have given you and make some good of it. Take it out into the world. Take advantage of yourself today. All right? All the best.

AHMAD RASHAD: Enjoy. Enjoy NBA Weekend, all right, All-Star Weekend.

BILL MURRAY: How about that band? How about that band? Come on.

