

NBC Sports Group Media Conference

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Rebecca Lowe

Arlo White

Tim Howard

Pierre Mossa

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Joining us on today's call are our Premiere League host, Rebecca Lowe, Arlo White, the newest member of our on-air team, studio analyst Tim Howard, and our coordinating producer, Pierre Mossa.

We'll begin with a couple of opening comments from each and then we will take your questions. So with that, I'll turn it over to Pierre Mossa.

Pierre?

PIERRE MOSSA: Hello, everybody. Thank you for taking the time to speak with us and I hope you and your families are well. We are very much looking forward to season eight of our Premiere League coverage. It's crazy to think we are entering our eighth season. Before we start talking about the upcoming season, I think it's important to recognize the success of Project Restart of Premiere League both on and off the pitch.

The Premiere League did a phenomenal job concluding the season in a safe manner, protecting the players from COVID-19 as well as supporting the players' movement for social equality. Worth recognizing the job they did. As we look towards the 2020-2021 season, we are very much approaching it from an NBC standpoint of building on the success of Project Restart. We want to continue that momentum.

So it's really a continuation of our production plan and the workflows that we created during the summer. As you may know, the season will start behind closed doors and will continue our audio offerings. On linear we will have atmospheric enhanced audio, i.e., added sound effects, and when technically possible we will offer the natural sound-only options on digital.



We are also extremely excited about the new streaming service, Peacock, which will feature 175 exclusive matches, as well as a dedicated Premiere League virtual channel called Premiere League TV.

But there is obviously so much more on Peacock when it comes to news, movies, TV shows and of course sport. It will have live marquee content like the Tour de France right now, U.S. Open golf, NFL Wild Card Game, Olympics, but for the Premiere League fan it will super-serve them. Beside the 24/7 virtual channel, there will be original topical and timeless content, Premiere League review preview, preview, fan zone, news, magazine shows, you name. It will also be home to all 380 matches on-demand as well as classic matches.

And when it comes to Peacock-exclusive match windows, we will produce the same studio coverage and the same content and the same analysis around those matches and around those windows as we do on NBC sn.

So in simple terms, if you're a Premiere League fan, Peacock is a must for you.

I also want to take a moment to recognize a change in our on-air studio team. Kyle Martino was a big success of our broadcast the last seven years and we wish him well, but we are thrilled to welcome Tim Howard to our team -- back to our team. He started his television career with us when he was playing for Everton and did some part-time broadcasting with us and now he will be a full-time member of our team.

I was remembering Tim and I had many chats when he was a player and we worked around his match schedule so we typically scheduled him to work on a Sunday when he had a Saturday match. And then Saturdays would be the most stressful times in the world for all of us at NBC because we were stressing about the result of the Everton match. If he had a bad match or God forbid he gave up a goal or something crazy happened, his manager, Roberto Martinez, might call him into training that day.

So I don't think I've been that nervous about a match in a long time on those Saturday matches. Fortunately whenever we booked Tim to work our Sunday broadcast his matches went well on Sunday and we were all huge, huge Toffees fans those days.



But now we don't have to worry about the Everton results anymore and Tim is going to provide such an interesting new dynamic to our broadcast with his unique perspective as a goalkeeper.

He's obviously played the highest level and not only in the Premier League but World Cups and our audience is going to really enjoy his honest opinions.

To summarize, I know it's a really crazy time in the world but we look forward to providing and bringing the Premier League mornings routine back that, weekend routine back to our audience.

REBECCA LOWE: It's funny, I remember where I was this time, a little bit longer ago than this time last year, 13 months ago when we did this exact same press call and goodness me, would be nice if we could turn back the clock on what's happened in the last 12 months, but we can't.

Project Restart when we returned on June the 17th I think is unique, is the only word I can use for it and it kind of stood ALONE. As Pierre mentioned, everything around it, including the broadcast partners across the world managed to do the best they possibly could in difficult circumstances and this gave the fans something in a hard time.

Now there's really nothing like the eve of a brand new season. It's a bit strange that it's in September and not in August and we feel like we are playing catch up a little bit, but the excitement levels, I already can sense them already from the fans of our show, on social media, everybody is so excited about transfer window being open for a little bit longer and we've had some brilliant names come in already so far this summer.

Also, I think the Premier League is going in the right direction and I would say the United Kingdom seems to be going in the right direction in terms of moving through this pandemic and hopefully the plan is to get supporters back in the stadiums in the beginning of October.

If we can just -- even if it starts out at 25 percent, I think that still makes a huge difference to the people in the U.S. on their sofas watching our show to gauge and get the atmosphere. 25 percent of 60,000, about 15,000, that's still a lot of people. We will still get the atmosphere, which will be great.

Lastly, Tim Howard, I mean, finally somebody to help me keep the Robbys in line. For goodness sake, he's about twice their height, which is great news. So I'm hoping that he can, you know, hammer them a little bit and we can

have some extra banter at their expense. That's basically why we brought him on.

No, I'm so excited, and I have a million questions about everything that I goalkeeper does do, doesn't do, shouldn't do. But Tim is not just a goalkeeper, he's a player. He's expertise, his experience, the list goes on what he's going to bring to our studio left alone the player perspective and dynamic between the other three of us and it's going to be invaluable and I think it's going to take this show in a slightly different direction and change sometimes is feared by people. I think change is a good thing and let's embrace it.

So I'm super excited for Tim to come on in and bring it on Saturday morning, 7:00 AM. Tim is excited for the alarm going off at 3:00 AM. We are ready to go and excited for the new team.

ARLO WHITE: Hi, everyone, from England, echoing what the guys have said already. I mean, Season 8, it's hard to believe that so much time has passed so quickly.

It was an absolute honor and pleasure to be involved in Project Restart. It went better than I think any of us could have imagined in the circumstances where you don't have crowds inside the grounds, and the crowds are really what genuinely sells the Premier League, the atmosphere, rivalries, the banter you get from the crowds.

But without that, I think people were still enamored with what they were seeing. And when I think of Project Restart, I think of Liverpool sealing the target (ph) for the first time this in 30 years, delighted for them to be able to get over the line when there was talk during the lockdown of a null-and-void season and the wait would go on, so that was pretty spectacular seeing them lift the trophy, on the cop (ph), as well, is quite special. You're looking roundabout 300 people being present for such an incredible job moment in Premier League and Liverpool's history and we were very fortunate to have been there.

But when I also think about Project Restart, I think about the exciting reemergence of Christian Pulisic, and that excites me to see the level he was playing at for Chelsea just before he got injured in that game against Liverpool but hopefully he'll be fit fairly soon.

But he produced some moments that were genuinely breathtaking and his elevation into one of the league's brightest players just continued. He was magnificent, and hopefully he can keep that momentum going when he comes back from injury in a very exciting Chelsea side. I genuinely believe that this season is potentially one of the most exciting that we have ever covered. You look at the

clubs that are involved, Leeds United being back is absolutely huge for the Premiere League.

Look at the managers: Klopp, Bielsa, Ancelotti, Mourinho; the list is endless. Some of these guys are the best at what they do in the entire world and they see a lot of players being signed for good money by these clubs. The depth of quality in the Premiere League I think this year is going to be incredible, and it remains a lifetime high of mine to be the least announcer for this project that we have been on for the last eight years.

So just to echo the welcome for Tim, as well. I've called games with him for NBC. I've watched his broadcasting career flourish. We are very fortunate to have him. Hopefully I can drag him across the Atlantic when things settle down and get him back on the ganter. It's going to be wonderful to have Tim as par of the team. So very, very excited for what is to come.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. What a perfect setup Tim.

TIM HOWARD: Thanks everybody. I'm I share the excitement and delighted to be back with NBC. I got my start in television. I was reluctant, I was still playing, I thought it wasn't the right time -- and boy, was I wrong. It was such an incredible job team that I got to start with, of course, over there in the U.K. I was with Arlo and Lee and Graeme, and so I got to know those guys very well, and I've watched from afar and got a chance to chat with Rebecca and Robby and Robby.

So I went from a part-time employee to a massive fan of the show and now I'm full-time, and just excited to learn with this -- with this crew and grow with them. It's season No. 8. I was a part of a few of the ones early on, so this is exciting times for me, exciting times for the football fan.

The storylines leading into this year's Premiere League are some that we have never seen. So to be able to be a part of that and help articulate it is pretty special. Again for the 15th time, I'm over the moon at this opportunity and very much looking forward to it.

Q. With adding Tim to the studio, what added perspective do you think he gives being a goal -- a goalkeeper in terms of analysis for you guys?

REBECCA LOWE: Yeah, let's talk about some of that detail because I've thought about this a lot and I won't be able to fully understand his perspective and what he brings to the show until we are actually live.

What my thoughts are, for example, we have got highlights

at halftime. Something happens in the half, and the goalkeeper we think is at fault, and let's say Robby feels that the goalkeeper made an error. At that time halftime, he can say that and Tim can explain to us from a goalkeeper's perspective -- and I know Tim is part of the goalkeeper's union, that forever will be something that will never be broken -- but he's also going to be totally down the line and brutally honest.

So he will be able to explain to us almost to a fault whether or not the goalkeeper really is at fault. We also, down the years, of course we all have our own opinions but we've never stood between the sticks. We might have done it in the past. We haven't done it at Old Trafford. To have that chance to find out once and for all whether conceding a goal to the near post from 20 yards out is actually a terrible error, or whether that can happen, and why, is really the perspective I think that viewers haven't had, and you can't have, unless you have a top-of-the-line former keeper in the studio, which we are going to be so lucky to have.

Add into that, talk about the characters -- Pierre mentioned this. Tim is not long out of the Premiere League, so he's going to have come up against some of those strikers. So what we want to get into with him before a game is if he's played against the striker that's going to be bearing down goals, how have you structured your week in training based on this striker; what homework have you done; how do you know which way he is going to shoot. Tell us about what it looks like from your perspective and then in the moment, as well, when that player really is bearing down on you in goal.

Like I said I have a million questions and I know the viewers will, as well, and a goalkeeper in the house is such a huge thing, they have exported so many great keepers from Europe. I know he's a very, very popular man and he is somebody that will take our broadcast level to another level without a doubt and have that sort of relevance, in terms of, well, I played with this player who may not be a goalkeeper but made a mistake or has done something brilliant in a that game. He can tell us about the personality of that player in the dressing room. That's what we want to delve into -- the managers, David Moyes, West Ham, he's going to know him better than anybody.

There are so many levels to what Tim is going to be able to bring that it's going to change the show in a positive way and it's simply going to change it by adding layers and perspective and insight and that is what you want from a sport broadcast.

Q. The first question is: You got to be witness to and be a voice of presenting the Black Lives Matter solidarity protests at the games last season and word



is they are going to continue and I wonder what that -- what that means for you, and what it's been like and what your hopes are with that? You've talked about the excitement in the Premiere League and I wonder if you could offer a quick word about the women's league. Obviously there's been a lot of buzz and excitement with American players going over there.

ARLO WHITE: Yes, I think when Project Restart began, I think it was a Thursday night, we were at Manchester City -- more the primetime game if you like. But the whole thing started with Aston Villa against Sheffield United.

We were concentrating on getting into the ground safely and all of the protocols that we had to go through to get into the ground, but we had the monitors on before the game, and everybody looked around and I remember looking around the press box and people were -- it was a jaw-dropping moment, you remember where you were when all 22 players, all the officials, all the coaching staff all dropped to one knee for that moment just after the whistle had blown to start the game. It was extraordinary.

You got from that sense and I think I mentioned in our call before Project Restart, that I had a sense that the players had something up their sleeves; that there was something coordinated that was going to happen. I had no idea it would be quite that powerful, and it lasted until, of course, the end of Project Restart and the eventually end of that season.

I do hope that continues, if there's another development and another way that they could show solidarity with the movement, then I'm sure that will be welcomed, as well. But.

To me, it is symptomatic and representative of a group of footballers who have been much maligned in the past and I know we have seen a couple of incidents real recently involving players on vacation and players on the England squad not adhering to COVID protocols as they should; young lads who have made some big errors early in their careers, but that are socially aware, they have a social conscience and they understand how important they are as role models in terms of supporting causes that they believe very firmly in.

And Tim will attest to this much better than I can, as well as the Robbys and Lee and Graeme. I think that sports locker rooms over here, football changing rooms are the most multi-cultural places to work in the country and in the world. And it's great that those guys that are very, very comfortable working alongside each other, shoulder-to-shoulder, going out to battle for three points every week, they, I think can lead by example of what

multiculturalism and what the eradication of racism actually looks like.

Hopefully they will continue, and I would like to see them even amplify it further if they have something up their sleeves for the start of the new season.

As for the Women's Super League, I think the BBC announced the other day that one of the opening games at the weekend attracted an audience of over 2 million people. It's extraordinary how quickly the Women's Super League has caught on in this country. I think it makes a huge difference that big clubs Manchester City, Manchester United, Liverpool, Everton, Arsenal, Chelsea are all investing heavily in their women's teams. The signing of players, U.S. internationals, coming over to this country -- have had a stronghold on the champions, much like in a competitive sporting environment, the Women's Super League wants to be the best and they are starting way behind a lot of their rivals but they are catching up remarkably quickly.

So you are getting to the point now where if you're watching a top Women's Super League game, you are watching amongst the best football in the women's game the world over. So I think it's very exciting that it's going to be on NBC SN for the remainder of the season and it's certainly getting an enormous amount of traction here, so long may that continue.

Q. Will Peacock allow you and your talent to do anything different this season that you normally wouldn't be able to do due to restrictions of television time, etc.? Are you optimistic it will be available on Hulu, etc.?

PIERRE MOSSA: To answer your second question, that isn't my area, so I'll defer to you Dan who can get you in touch with the Peacock folks on that.

To answer your first question, yes, and there's some exciting parts about Peacock. The first part is there is less commercial obligations, so ultimately, it's about five minutes per hour versus about 15 minutes per hour. So that lends us a lot more time to be able to build up, so you have less time constraints building up to a match, so we are able to -- and again, the two Robbys have already explained -- and there were such time constraints, Robby and Robby, please can we have 30 more seconds or an extra minute to chat or discuss to get into some meatier topics. This will allow us more time to build up and get into deeper discussions, more time to hear manager sounds and more time to be on the pitch when the players warm up. The buildup is really key.



The second part is when the match is over, there's no time constraints of getting off the air. We are obviously not going to stay on forever but over goal zones can go over the allotted time if necessary, especially if there's something key or breaking news or something we want to get into. The time constraints to me are really probably the first quarter of what Peacock allows us to do.

I haven't told the two Robbys and Tim this yet, but the halftime is going to be a lot more time to break stuff down so you will find meatier and more in-depth halftime analysis.

Also the viewer itself is going to benefit from us to have more time to really get into deeper topics to really break down more things.

And then post-match we're really not going to -- I know it may not be off the air but we went end our stream until we put a button on everything the viewer needs to put become on the match. The options on Peacock are endless for us when it comes to a studio coverage.

Q. We have Project Restart in the rear-view mirror and you're obviously going for the new season. Curious from a production perspective, what were some of the lessons learned from the Project Restart and potential excitement for having fans back in the stands hopefully and how it will help each production of each of the matches.

PIERRE MOSSA: Let's start off with the fans in the stands. The Premiere League is very much looking to do that and they have tentative dates planned and they have done some experimental matches in Brighton.

To me, the fans are such a part of the fabric of the Premiere League, and Tim can attest to this, I think I used the term the soundtrack of a football match.

So to be able to have any fans, and I think for all of us, let's take it away from the Premiere League. For sports itself, we all miss fans. We all miss being there as fans. We all miss the fan experience and we all miss hearing the crowds and the cheering.

So to me, it's going to not only enhance the viewer experience but enhance the cover of the match and enhance the experience of the players. Ultimately, when fans do return to Premiere League, it will just make it a better, better experience. So I think we all deeply, deeply miss them.

I think from that standpoint, how we get back to a more normal coverage will be next steps, whether it's

less-enhanced audio or more crowd shots or whatever it is.

But ultimately one of our philosophies is not many people can be at these sporting events right now so we have a responsibility to document the game and document what it's like, their experience of being there, and so that's something that we really focus on. We focus on the Kentucky Derby, Notre Dame, all our other sports, ultimately documenting the experience; when fans do return, we are going to document what the experience is for the fans themselves.

With regard to Project Restart, I think the first most important one is just the support from NBC's health and safety team to be able to put us in a safe working environment and to allow us to be able to do our jobs, all be it we did it a lot differently. I think that was the most important thing.

Right now, most of us are learning new ways of working and I have to tell my five-year-old to stop streaming YouTube Kids when I'm working. But ultimately, to be able to put ourselves in a safe working environment was probably the first thing.

I just think it ultimately -- and I think this goes for anybody in any walk of life in any business: When you're facing challenges, it's awesome to see the team rise to the occasion and the collective production and technical team to be able to allow us to do things differently and to be able to allow us to do our job socially distanced and to be able to do it with less people, etc. Ultimately every part of the work flow has worked well and we are all continuing it.

So I think the people that deserve the credit are really our health and safety team and technical team to allow us to be able to do our jobs.

Q. We know you worked in a gantry with Arlo before. What excites you about working in the studio with remember beck can a and the Robbys?

TIM HOWARD: It was trial-by-fire a couple years ago. Again it was exciting because all the best in the business and they quarterbacked for me and that part was fun, the learning.

I've since gained more experience and as I've mentioned, I've been watching this show as a fan for a long time. I'm one of those people who gets up bright and early to watch the games and I've developed friendships with Robby, Robby and Becks.

So I'm excited. I see myself -- I see myself on the desk before and hoped that I would get there, and now it's time to go to work.



Obviously their expertise is pretty amazing. It's pretty awesome. And so I believe I have things that I'd like to add and kind of work into their flow and to their cadence and as I said before, I just think this season is setting up to be one of epic proportions. So tons of exciting things to talk about.

Q. Tell us about how logistically it's going to work for you with travel and Memphis and everything else going on to get from here to there and back.

TIM HOWARD: Yeah, it pretty easy logistically. Like some of the other talent, I'll be travelling in and putting to work -- this is, you know, my main focus and priority.

I've been talking to Pierre over the last few weeks and this has been something I've been hoping to get a chance at, and I'm going to put everything into. This isn't -- this isn't something I'm just -- I'm just hoping to be good at. This is something I want to flourish in, so it will take all of my time and effort and energy.

Q. I'm sure this goes above you and sideways and across the company, in terms of the logistic and safety and everybody flying in and out, how comfortable are you with the setup?

PIERRE MOSSA: Very comfortable. I mentioned it before: It takes entire company effort because everybody has to be respectful and responsible in every aspect of our leadership and every aspect of the individuals that are executing the plan to follow the rules to a tee, and if anybody coming into the building is over the temperature limit or exhibits any sort of signs of not being well, they are not allowed in the building and we have plans in place to cover people, and if for some reason one day somebody is traveling in isn't comfortable or isn't feeling right, then they don't come in and we adjust the show.

I've already joked a million times over that I, too, expect -- and this is not for anything more than just, you know, travel delays, not anything else, that some day the two Robbys might take over a show one day just because maybe Rebecca has some travel days or whatever -- and don't have ask me about Rebecca's travel days because that's a separate conversation all together.

Joking aside we take it all very seriously and we feel very comfortable with the plan in place and trust the experts and the senior management that everything we have done properly, and Tim is very responsible. Tim can attest to it with his work in Memphis, he and I have had many conversations and he's been very involved in the plan, the health and safety plans for his team.

So ultimately he's very familiar with it and understands and appreciates the importance of it. All of us love what we do. All of us really enjoy what we do. We feel a huge responsibility to it, and the last thing we would ever do, any member of our team would jeopardize that by being irresponsible. I think that's the most important point. Everybody respects each other and is in respect much the rules.

Going back to your original comment for Tim, he's pretty humble but the last few weeks, I mean, he has been putting in the work, whether it's calls with the two Robbys or calls with Rebecca or a million meetings that I've dragged him into and a million presentations and show reviews everything. And he has this notebook, I have no idea what he's writing -- probably "hate meetings with Pierre" -- but he's taking detailed, detailed notes and he's going to be awesome when it comes to the broadcast. He is putting in the work so there is no doubt in my mind that he's going to be successful because it's his singular focus and he's really got the right approach to the broadcast.

Q. You said you didn't want to mention Rebecca's travel plans. I know during the restart period it took a lot of work.

PIERRE MOSSA: It's more of a joke to a flight back from England where ultimately I have no travel issues and Rebecca and I were flying back from England and our flights got delayed and it was like Planes, Trains and Automobiles, and I blamed her for it every single step of the way.

REBECCA LOWE: Unfortunately every now and then I seem to have the most bizarre travel situations. Getting back from the Super Bowl in Phoenix a few years ago I ended up on four different flights, grounded in a snowstorm in Harrisburg, heart attack in Memphis where we had to land at 2:00 A.M., and there was no baggage people -- I could go on but I'm not going to.

Yes, every now and then, I come into work with quite the storey. Let just hope this season I don't have any of them and everything is very smooth, because I have to say during Project Restart, it was the best experience ever. There was no one crying. It was super easy. Fingers crossed it stays that way.

PIERRE MOSSA: Friendly advice, if you ever see Rebecca on the same flight with you, get on a different flight.

THE MODERATOR: I think that may be our last question. Thank you very much for joining us everybody.

