

SBD/December 22, 2016/Year End

Ever-Changing Landscape: Recapping The Year In Sports Media

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Published December 22, 2016

The past year in sports media had everything from landmark streaming deals to well-known TV personalities finding new homes. Laid out below are some of the most unforgettable storylines from an eventful year in TV, print, online and OTT channels.



Tirico covered the Ryder Cup for NBC in October after leaving ESPN

EYES FOR ANOTHER: While ESPN in '16 re-signed a number of on-air talents, including Mike Greenberg and Bomani Jones, several notable ESPN personalities took their talents elsewhere. Mainstay Mike Tirico traded in his "Monday Night Football" mic for a chance to cover more golf and football at NBC, while longtime NBA insider Chris Broussard quietly jumped ship to FS1. In a "much debated" move, Skip Bayless also left his partner in crime Stephen A. Smith for a more showcased role at FS1, joining his former ESPN producer, Jamie Horowitz. ESPN itself shook up its "Monday Night Countdown" crew, saying goodbye to Ray Lewis and Cris Carter and adding former NFLers Randy Moss, Matt Hasselbeck and Charles Woodson to its cast. Longtime ESPN exec John Wildhack also left the net to become

the new Syracuse AD.

HISTORY IN THE MAKING: Fox reaped the benefits of the Cubs ending a 108-year curse, as this year's World Series ratings were the best average for the Fall Classic since the Red Sox swept the Cardinals in '04. Fox' viewership average for this year's series was up 60% from the five-game Royals-Mets World Series last year and up 70% from 13.8 million viewers for the seven-game Giants-Royals matchup in '14. Game 7 itself brought in 40.05 million viewers, the best audience for any MLB game since '91. Media pundits also praised the analyst work from Alex Rodriguez, who became a breakout star throughout Fox' postseason coverage, and John Smoltz, who was in the booth for his first World Series with Joe Buck.

Also:

- The Final Four goes all cable for the first time but **takes a hit with TV ratings**.
- ESPN **disagrees with Nielsen's report** of the net's subscription losses.
- CBS, NBC split "Thursday Night Football" package for the first time.
- **In a possible sign of things to come, Ted Leonsis launches his own OTT service.**
- Twitter begins live streaming sports **including Wimbledon and the NFL**. The PGA Tour also streams its "PGA Tour Live" OTT coverage on Twitter during the **first two events of the FedExCup Playoffs**.
- ESPN's long-anticipated site, **The Undefeated**, finally debuts.
- Rogers Media is **forced to cut staff** after less-than-desirable TV ratings.
- CBS parts ways with highly touted NFL **rules analyst Mike Carey**.
- Mark Cuban **feuds with ESPN** over its coverage of the Mavs by banning two national reporters from games for a brief time in November.