

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Gina Katzmark

gina@iegworld.com

980.286.2502

www.sponsorship.com



NFL Sponsorship Surges Despite Global Pandemic

Increase driven by stadium naming rights and league-level sponsorship programs

CHICAGO, Feb. 3, 2021 – In a year when many sponsorship programs across sports and entertainment have been forced into tense value reconciliation negotiations, the juggernaut National Football League (NFL) and its teams continued to garner higher rights fees from consumer brands. According to IEG, the sponsorship authority, sponsorship revenue was up 10% from the previous season to reach \$1.62B compared to \$1.47B during 2019-20. Annual increases in sponsorship revenue in the NFL have historically ranged from 4% to 6%.

Two new stadiums, Allegiant and SoFi, account for a \$55M increase in new spending in naming rights alone. Note, the Raiders, Rams and Chargers were previously in the bottom half of the league for sponsorship revenue and moved up to the top half this year. Sponsorship revenue growth was steady among the other 29 teams in the league with spending increasing 2% year over year on average for the others.

Notable new league-level sponsorships include Subway becoming the official quick-service restaurant of the NFL, replacing McDonald's sponsorship that concluded after the 2018-19 season. Invisalign came on board with a new category as the official clear aligner of the League. Truist took over the official retail bank category that has been open for a decade. And Microsoft extended its partnership and expanded it to include the highly pandemic-relevant Microsoft Teams.

Categories investing in sponsorship remained relatively stable, with betting and personal care experiencing the most growth. There were 23 new Lottery & Gaming sponsorship deals signed driving the spending in that category up nearly 25% year over year.

Invisalign was the most active brand signing new sponsorship agreements by picking up the League and 11 teams. Sportsbook BetMGM had six new deals. Monkey Knife Fight, PointsBet, Caesars and Draftkings all picked up at least two new sponsorship agreements in the NFL as well. The Raiders move to Las Vegas helped the upward mobility of the Lottery & Gaming category as three of the team's 13 founding partners are casinos.

"What's most notable with these updates is that while NFL continues to operate as a mass-reach platform for some of the usual suspects in sponsorship, it has quickly evolved as a marketing destination for new categories, lesser-known brands and new executions," said Peter Laatz, Global Managing Director, IEG.

The rideshare sponsorship category got smaller this season. Lyft and Uber dropped nine deals combined likely due to lack on on-site fans and travel needs to and from events. Papa John's presence in the NFL has been getting smaller as well. The pizza chain is now down to eight NFL team deals, and once had 20+ teams before ending its official NFL partnership in 2018.

While the global pandemic reduced and eliminated most on-site sponsorship activation programs for fans, most NFL sponsorship programs included digital and social content integrations. Additionally, many brand partners in the NFL helped with COVID-19 safety initiatives, personal protective equipment and to provide community assistance programs at stadiums.

The NFL is the biggest U.S. sports league based on sponsorship revenue, ahead of the National Basketball Association, Major League Baseball and the National Hockey League.

About IEG

IEG delivers proprietary market intelligence, thought leadership and strategic counsel that empowers our clients to make more informed sponsorship decisions. For nearly 40 years, IEG has delivered expert counsel across a full spectrum of partnerships. The world's most recognized sports and entertainment properties and best-known brands, along with start-ups, social-driven organizations and public-sector operators, all turn to IEG to access the company's unmatched depth of expertise. When sponsorship decisions are made, IEG is there to deliver a measurable impact. IEG is owned by [Engine Shop](#) and is part of the [Bruin Sports Capital](#) portfolio.