The Financing Gap in Sports: Unlocking a $2.5 Trillion Opportunity

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Key Takeaways

A $2.5 Trillion Global Industry: Sports have expanded far beyond tickets and local sponsorships into a diversified global ecosystem spanning media, merchandise, wellness, and live entertainment—with scalable monetization across multiple channels.

Media Rights as the Growth Engine: Live sports remain the strongest driver of mass audiences, supporting more than $60 billion in annual, inflation-linked media contracts that anchor franchise valuations and function like long-duration, infrastructure-style revenue streams.

Institutional Capital Enters the Game: As valuations exceeded the reach of individual owners, leagues opened the door to private equity, sovereign wealth funds, and pensions. Institutional participation is still early, giving first movers a structural advantage in navigating league frameworks, underwriting risk, and establishing credibility.

Durable, Scarce, and Culturally Entrenched: Sports assets have compounded at roughly 13% annually for six decades. Their scarcity, global reach, and deep emotional resonance make them unusually resistant to technological change and macro volatility.

A Financing Opportunity Ahead: With most franchises still under-levered at around 10% loan-to-value and traditional lenders slow to engage, significant whitespace remains for private credit and hybrid financing solutions to optimize balance sheets, unlock liquidity, and capture equity-like upside with credit-like risk.

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The Standard & Poor’s 500 (“S&P 500”) Index is a market-capitalization-weighted index of the 500 largest U.S. publicly traded companies by market value.

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