# Sports investment surges as Rory McIlroy and TPG launch new venture amid shifting global trends



# From Golf Greens to Investment Scenes: The Rise of Sports Investment

In a paradigm shift reflecting the growing intersection between sports and finance, TPG has teamed up with golfer Rory McIlroy, his business partner Sean O’Flaherty, and Symphony Ventures to unveil TPG Sports. This newly minted entity aims to capitalise on the burgeoning market for sports investments, focusing on businesses across various teams and leagues. With McIlroy’s recent monumental achievement of completing a career Grand Slam at the Masters, his reputation is poised to attract even more attention to this venture.

The emergence of dedicated investment bodies within sports is not an isolated trend. Last year, JP Morgan established a sports investment banking team, following its involvement in Sir Jim Ratcliffe's minority stake acquisition of Manchester United. Moreover, Standard Chartered recently launched a sports investment fund tailored for affluent clients. The metamorphosis of sports from mere pastimes to lucrative investment opportunities underscores a burgeoning landscape for investors.

### The Allure of Sports Investments

The appeal of investing in sports entities has grown significantly in the past few years. According to estimations from CNBC, the average NBA team now holds a staggering value of $4.66 billion, reflecting a 15% year-on-year increase. Similarly, NFL teams average $6.49 billion and NHL teams have surged to $1.92 billion, with year-on-year rises of 11% and an impressive 37%, respectively.

A study conducted by KLUTCH Sports Group and RBC solidified this narrative, highlighting that sports franchises have historically outperformed traditional asset classes such as equities and commodities. The resilience of these franchises, particularly during periods of economic turbulence like the COVID-19 pandemic, has further attracted minority stakeholders from various private firms and institutions. As North American leagues gradually open doors to private equity, involvement in established franchises is becoming an enticing prospect.

Data from the Ross-Arctos Sports Franchise Index (RASFI) illustrates the benefits enjoyed by those venturing into sports investments. Over five, ten, and twenty-year periods, sports assets have consistently outshone global equities and US equities, yielding increases of 14.4%, 15.2%, and 12.3%, respectively.

Investment firms are also exploring ancillary ventures within the sports sector, driven by rapid growth in sponsorships and lucrative media rights deals. This evolution has transformed the sports industry into a captivating focal point for investors willing to enter an increasingly competitive arena.

### Shifting Dynamics in the Market

A recent Deloitte study indicates a dramatic rise in demand for sports investments, with European involvement increasing from 20% to 24% in 2023, although North American players still dominate, representing 55% of all investments. This diversity not only highlights the global appeal of sports but also opens up opportunities in untapped markets, where the potential for fresh investments is on the rise.

Soccer, in particular, has emerged as a focal point for investment. According to Deloitte’s 2025 Sports Investment Outlook, 2024 will see soccer transactions make up nearly half of all dealings involving sports rights-holders. Notably, only 16% of these transactions fall within Europe’s big five leagues: the Premier League, Bundesliga, La Liga, Serie A, and Ligue 1. Furthermore, projections suggest MLS will experience double-digit growth in sponsorship revenue by 2025, driven largely by its predominantly youthful and diverse fanbase.

Equally significant is the rise of motorsports, accounting for 8% of all deals done in 2024, a stark increase from 4% the previous year. Moreover, women’s sports, particularly leagues such as the WNBA and NWSL, are capturing significant investment interest.

### A Future of Opportunity

The landscape of sports investment is broadening as investors increasingly look beyond traditional avenues. Emerging sports like Pickleball, golf, and e-sports present scalable media prospects and innovative sponsorship models, attracting investors seeking high-reward possibilities with comparatively lower entry costs.

As competition intensifies, the coming years will see sports business groups reassess the returns from early investments to strategically allocate resources for future endeavours. Deloitte's study highlighted a pivotal choice: investing in well-established sports or diversifying into emerging markets that carry higher risks and potential rewards. TPG's recent entry into the sector signals the dawn of a new era—one where sports investment is no fleeting trend, but rather a frontier teeming with opportunity.

The alignment of seasoned investors with leading athletes like McIlroy marks a new chapter wherein the realms of sports and finance are intricately intertwined, creating a compelling narrative set against a backdrop of rapid change in the global sports industry.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.essentiallysports.com/flagship-think-tank-news-from-mcilroy-to-standard-chartered-sports-investing-is-the-new-private-equity-frontier/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.essentiallysports.com/flagship-think-tank-news-from-mcilroy-to-standard-chartered-sports-investing-is-the-new-private-equity-frontier/), [[4]](https://www.tpg.com/news-and-insights/troon-announces-significant-strategic-investment-tpg-and-rory)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.essentiallysports.com/flagship-think-tank-news-from-mcilroy-to-standard-chartered-sports-investing-is-the-new-private-equity-frontier/), [[5]](https://www.irishtimes.com/business/2024/08/22/rory-mcilroys-symphony-ventures-backs-event-ticket-firm-tickpick/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.essentiallysports.com/flagship-think-tank-news-from-mcilroy-to-standard-chartered-sports-investing-is-the-new-private-equity-frontier/), [[6]](https://www.axios.com/2024/10/21/tpg-sports-fund)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.essentiallysports.com/flagship-think-tank-news-from-mcilroy-to-standard-chartered-sports-investing-is-the-new-private-equity-frontier/), [[3]](https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20240624826878/en/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.essentiallysports.com/flagship-think-tank-news-from-mcilroy-to-standard-chartered-sports-investing-is-the-new-private-equity-frontier/), [[2]](https://www.golfmonthly.com/news/rory-mcilroy-pga-tour-pif-deal)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.essentiallysports.com/flagship-think-tank-news-from-mcilroy-to-standard-chartered-sports-investing-is-the-new-private-equity-frontier/), [[6]](https://www.axios.com/2024/10/21/tpg-sports-fund)
* Paragraph 8 – [[1]](https://www.essentiallysports.com/flagship-think-tank-news-from-mcilroy-to-standard-chartered-sports-investing-is-the-new-private-equity-frontier/), [[4]](https://www.tpg.com/news-and-insights/troon-announces-significant-strategic-investment-tpg-and-rory)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.essentiallysports.com/flagship-think-tank-news-from-mcilroy-to-standard-chartered-sports-investing-is-the-new-private-equity-frontier/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.golfmonthly.com/news/rory-mcilroy-pga-tour-pif-deal> - Rory McIlroy has expressed support for a potential agreement between the PGA Tour and the Saudi Public Investment Fund (PIF), which backs LIV Golf, stating that such a deal would benefit professional golf in the long run. Despite ongoing discussions since June 2023 aimed at ending a three-year division in men's elite golf, no deal has been finalized. McIlroy, appearing on CNBC’s Squawk Box, emphasized the importance of unifying top players, arguing that limiting competition among them to just four events a year is detrimental to the sport. However, he also highlighted the PGA Tour's current momentum, including strong TV ratings and prominent wins, suggesting there is no immediate need for a rushed deal. Previous negotiations showed promise, especially following meetings with U.S. President Donald Trump, but proposals such as a $1.5 billion offer from PIF, which included keeping LIV Golf intact and appointing PIF governor Yasir Al-Rumayyan as co-chairman of a new PGA Tour enterprise, were reportedly declined. McIlroy concluded that while timing isn't critical, a unified front is necessary for golf's long-term health.
3. <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20240624826878/en/> - TMRW Sports, focused on innovative approaches in sports, media, and entertainment, announced the closure of its Series A investment round. The round was co-led by Dynasty Equity, which recently closed a strategic minority investment in Liverpool FC, and Connect Ventures, which co-led the initial fundraising round for TMRW Sports. The investment group includes leading institutional investors, sports team owners, cultural icons, and business leaders. TMRW Sports was founded by Tiger Woods, Rory McIlroy, and Mike McCarley. The overall investment group’s sports business experience spans NFL, NBA, MLB, NHL, PGA TOUR, Premier League, Formula 1, NASCAR, MLS, NWSL, WNBA, tennis, surfing, and cricket, and includes cultural icons with a combined reach of more than 1 billion social media followers. TMRW Sports’ first project is TGL presented by SoFi, a new team golf league that fuses advanced tech and live action with six teams of PGA TOUR superstars and will launch in January in prime time on ESPN and ESPN+.
4. <https://www.tpg.com/news-and-insights/troon-announces-significant-strategic-investment-tpg-and-rory> - Troon, the leader in providing golf and club-related leisure and hospitality services, announced a significant strategic investment from TPG Capital, the private equity platform of alternative asset firm TPG, and Symphony Ventures, the investment fund of professional golfer Rory McIlroy. The new investment provides Troon with additional capital, resources, and expertise to build on its market-leading position. Existing investor Leonard Green & Partners will retain a significant investment in the business. Troon currently provides operational, management, and advisory services to more than 620 golf and leisure facilities globally. The transaction is expected to close in December and is subject to regulatory approvals and other customary closing conditions.
5. <https://www.irishtimes.com/business/2024/08/22/rory-mcilroys-symphony-ventures-backs-event-ticket-firm-tickpick/> - Rory McIlroy’s Symphony Ventures and Brighton Park Capital made a $250 million equity investment in TickPick, a ticketing marketplace that competes with StubHub, SeatGeek, Vivid Seats, and others. Brighton Park now owns a majority of the New York-based company, and as part of the investment, acquired a minority stake in TickPick owned by GreyLion. TickPick has processed transactions totaling close to $1 billion annually, and revenue has grown 50% or more per year since inception. The company has partnerships with the NFL’s Philadelphia Eagles and Los Angeles Rams, MLB’s Minnesota Twins, and LaLiga North America. McIlroy stated, “I’m proud to support a company that puts the fans at the heart of everything they do.”
6. <https://www.axios.com/2024/10/21/tpg-sports-fund> - TPG is initiating the process of raising a private equity fund specifically targeted at the sports sector, as reported by Axios based on information from multiple sources. This move points to the growing interest of established private equity firms in the sports industry, encompassing investments in teams, media rights, real estate, and related services. Notably, pro golfer Rory McIlroy, who previously collaborated with TPG on a deal for Troon, a golf facilities services company, will serve as one of the advisers for this new venture. This development underscores the shifting investment trends within the private equity landscape towards the lucrative opportunities in the world of sports.
7. <https://dynastyequity.com/news/tmrw/> - TMRW Sports, focused on building progressive approaches in sports, media, and entertainment, announced the closure of its Series A investment round. The round was co-led by Dynasty Equity, which recently closed a strategic minority investment in Liverpool FC, and Connect Ventures, which co-led the initial fundraising round for TMRW Sports. The investment group includes leading institutional investors, sports team owners, cultural icons, and business leaders. TMRW Sports was founded by Tiger Woods, Rory McIlroy, and Mike McCarley. The overall investment group’s sports business experience spans NFL, NBA, MLB, NHL, PGA TOUR, Premier League, Formula 1, NASCAR, MLS, NWSL, WNBA, tennis, surfing, and cricket, and includes cultural icons with a combined reach of more than 1 billion social media followers. TMRW Sports’ first project is TGL presented by SoFi, a new team golf league that fuses advanced tech and live action with six teams of PGA TOUR superstars and will launch in January in prime time on ESPN and ESPN+.