**ESPN, Verizon and others will lead streaming proliferation**

ESPN+, the network’s upcoming direct-to-consumer streaming service, is still set to launch in early 2018 and could be the blockbuster for the first half of the year. Disney’s proposed $52 billion deal for 21st Century Fox assets—including 22 regional sports networks—looked like it could have provided a boost for ESPN’s digital strategy, but Disney CEO Bob Iger said those channels won’t be of much value to the DTC launch, though he left the door open for the future.

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