



NFL

NBA

MLB

Golf

Soccer

NHL

Cult



In the future you'll probably be able to pitch to Babe Ruth when you aren't watching eSports

332
SHARES

SHARE



TWEET



EMAIL

By: **Chris Korman** | February 19, 2016 1:37 pm

Follow @ChrisKorman

Look back at predictions from years ago and you learn quickly that futurists — people who make a livelihood of predicting how we'll live in the decades to come — are wrong in both ways. The world often evolves more slowly than they predict. But some technologies emerge more rapidly than they ever would have imagined — and have a far deeper impact.

Sports Illustrated once envisioned **college sports evolving to the point where players were paid by 2001**. We're still years away from reaching that level of enlightenment.

But the Los Angeles Times, in its 1988 look-ahead to the year 2013, envisioned many technologies that now exist while failing to predict how their own product would be consumed: customized newspapers would be distributed **via the family printer in this version** of the future, not read on smartphones and tablets.

So while the Delaware North report on the Future of Sports, **which you can read about here**, is comprehensive and detailed, it should be considered carefully (something the authors freely admit.)

We asked other futurists how they thought the sports world would change. Here's what they said.

Dr. James Canton

CEO and Chairman, Institute for Global Futures

*Believes universities, health institutes and tech companies will soon merge efforts to develop technologies that make current sports far safer using nano-technology in uniform and equipment materials that send real-time information about the health of an athlete (i.e. his elbow is weakened but

not yet injured and he should rest) to coaches and doctors.

*Humans being humans, they'll only push the boundaries and create new sports – or modify existing ones – to test the limits of the new technology ... resulting in new forms of injury.

*Those that stick to traditional sports will be able to play much longer, possibly into their 60s.

*A fan in the future will be able to use augmented or virtual reality to pitch to Babe Ruth or re-try that play that cost their team the game. (Looking at you people in Minnesota who think it's so easy to kick a field goal.)

*Broadcasts of sports will eventually need to be artificially slowed down because athletes boosted by genetic manipulation, performance enhancing drugs and wearable technology will move more quickly than the eye can comprehend.

*Quarterbacks will eventually have computers embedded in their visors that feed them information about pre-snap formations and the play as it develops.



Neville E. Guard-USA TODAY Sports

Jim Carroll

Futurist, trends and innovation expert

*Change will happen at Silicon Valley's pace, not that of the NFL or NBA or any other league or sanctioning body. Technology companies will become the driving force behind sports innovation.

*Having just spoken to a PGA gathering, Carroll outlined a future in which any foursome will retreat to the clubhouse for post-round brews and ... film breakdown. Within a few years, golfers will be able to post HD video to social media of their great shots, taken from cameras on the course and in the golf carts. They'll also get detailed information about every shot they took; info will be gathered from the club, the ball, wearables and those cameras.

*The in-stadium (or arena) experience will be similar. Every object used in the game will soon be able to send information to a computer, so fans will be inundated with precise data about the speed of a baseball bat, the arc of a basketball shot and everything else.



Neville E. Guard-USA TODAY Sports

Glen Hiemstra

Founder of Futurist.com

*Disagrees with the Delaware North report's prediction that technologically enhanced humans would be welcomed by fans. "This may happen but not for decades," he wrote to FTW. "Surveys have shown that people fear bio and tech engineering of humans more than they fear things like nuclear war. So a public embracing of such tech is a way off, even if the tech is available. Further, as Bill Gates once accurately noted, we have a tendency to

overestimate how fast technologies will develop, while underestimating their eventual impact.”

*Sees a day when there may be weight limits set in the NFL (**a prediction he made in 2010**), or where the league is segmented into natural athletes and enhanced athletes (the same would happen for the Olympics).

*Points out how drastically 3D printing will change the process of getting sports equipment. Facilities will be able to print customized equipment for athletes on demand.

*Believes the audience for eSports “will probably dwarf all the sports that we think of now, including soccer. This kind of gaming will eventually have the largest prize money and advertising.”

*Eventually there will be a “return to natural sports” movement, much like the natural and local food movement. Yes, there will be sports hipsters.



Neville E. Guard-USA TODAY Sports

Anne Lise Kjaer

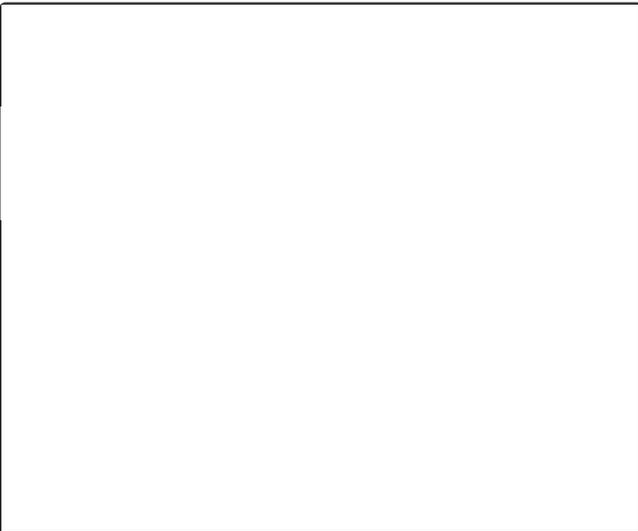
CEO and Founder, kjaer global

*Fans are already more connected – to teams, athletes, journalists and other fans – than ever before thanks to Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and other social media platforms. In the future there will be even “more emphasis ... on engaging the fans before, during and after the event – creating a stronger ‘team spirit’ across the whole stakeholder ecosystem. Transmedia will be used to connect everyone across multi-channel, multi-screen, multi-devices, etc. in a more seamless way than ever.”

*She, too, sees fans getting more information about the sports they watch and play. From a memo to FTW: “Future sports fan will demand participation physically, emotionally and intellectually. New

generations of sportsmen and women will participate by measuring themselves against their favorite athletes as well as their peers across all aspect of their lives (e.g. health, nutrition, mindfulness, lifestyle choices etc), not just in sports performance. They will demand more exclusive and intelligent data from both sides of the bench – sport will be more intellectual and could even entail more cognitive digital data to make the experience 'deep' and 'real'”

*Stadiums will be more eco-friendly. “Future arenas will also become more sustainable, smart real-time stadiums connecting, athletes, audiences, businesses and media with the physical space instantly. Event locations will be chosen according to best resource use to reduce the environmental footprint of both the organizers and the participants.”



Chris Korman

Follow @ChrisKorman



Chris Korman writes and edits features at FTW. He has covered college sports, the NFL, horse racing, lumberjacks, competitive shooting, gay rugby and a few other things.

MORE ...