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WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Final Quarter: Fubo Previews Disney Future After Hulu Merger

"This quarterly earnings call is unlike any other in our history." That's how CEO *David Gandler* opened **Fubo's** 3Q25 earnings call, the final quarter before being acquired by **Disney** and merging with **Hulu + Live TV**. Disney now controls 70% interest in the combined vMVPD business that boasts nearly 6 million subs in North America, although Fubo and Hulu + Live will continue to be offered as separate services and on their own apps.

That last detail raised a few eyebrows in the video world when the close was announced last week, as over 4 million of those 6 million North American subs come from Hulu + Live TV vs the 1.3 million Fubo subs as of 3Q25 (a 1.1% increase YOY). Gandler, who will lead the new combo, explained on the call why the big guy isn't simply swallowing the little guy. Part of it comes down to what each product offers their users.

"We've been very focused on driving our sports identity, branding and delivering capabilities for sports fans," Gandler said of Fubo's approach, while Hulu has been "more of a general entertainment bundle that has sports." He added that "it is very important for us to continue to provide consumers with optionality and flexibility. There is programming that we do not have on FuboTV today, obviously top-quality networks that are available at Hulu."

That includes networks owned by **Warner Bros. Discovery**, which Fubo dropped in April 2024. **TelevisaUnivision** channels also went dark on the platform at the end of last year.

The Fubo acquisition comes at a very interesting moment for

Disney. The Fubo-Hulu combo gives it the second-largest vMVPD in the market just as Disney is locked in a carriage dispute with the leader in the space: **Google's YouTube TV**. Disney nets, including **ESPN** and **ABC**, went dark on the live TV platform on Thursday night, with no resolution yet in sight. That means YouTube TV customers couldn't watch some college football games over the weekend and won't be able to tune into Monday Night Football if the companies don't settle their differences.

It's not difficult to see how the impasse could benefit Fubo in the short term. Not only is it one of the few Pay TV providers that currently offers access to ESPN Unlimited via authentication, it also sells a live sports skinny bundle (with ESPN and ABC included), which is driving record trial conversions, better retention and lower churn, according to CFO *John Janedis*. The bundle is also now available to most of the country: "At launch, the reach was about one-third of the country. Now it's north of 80%, heading to full distribution by the end of the year," Janedis said. But Gandler stopped short of saying Fubo was reaping the rewards of Disney's row with YouTube.

"As it relates to YouTube TV, and I guess their issues with Disney, that's not anything we can really talk about. What I can say is that just like last year, we see bumps all the time from people that are looking for programming," said Gandler when asked whether Fubo has seen a sub uptick during the YouTube blackout. "The interesting thing is that, while we have seen an influx of YouTube TV customers, we're seeing all-around improvements, including in Latino in terms of subscriber growth. We haven't really marketed

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that. We're not attempting to take advantage of that. We'll let that play out as it will and we're focused on our own business here."

Looking ahead, Gandler said that as the combo kicks off, the company "envision[s] unprecedented opportunities," with a near-term focus on "programming efficiencies, ad tech uplift, and marketing at scale, including through ESPN's ecosystem, as well as deeper personalization." He called these efforts the "four major drivers to grow our subscriber base and achieve our profitability goals."

Despite Fubo making up a smaller piece of the vMVPD pie, Gandler emphasized the platform's continued growth opportunities under Disney. But there seemed to be doubters on the line, including one analyst who suggested that Hulu is "the dog" and Fubo is "the tail" of the combo when asking how much the latter service would really drive the business.

"I think actually Fubo is going to be a very important growth engine for the company. There are a few areas in which I think we will really sort of hope to take advantage of this new collaboration," Gandler answered. "One I think is quite obvious: ESPN's ecosystem of ESPN Radio, ESPN.com, Flagship and other spokes that they have within that ESPN flywheel probably averages somewhere in the sort of 100 million monthly active users. This is a funnel that we have never leveraged before. So we think that there is probably significant untapped value for us to grow our subbase, again, profitably, which means it could have a very positive impact on our sales and marketing line."

Gandler also argued that the size of the new company will help create programming efficiencies for Fubo. "I look at this as the second-largest virtual MVPD player in the market, which means that those structural shifts, both from a consumption perspective as well as a monetization perspective, are in our favor. We think that we'll be able to grow that."

The other piece of the puzzle is the combo's approach to advertising going forward, with Fubo transitioning its ad sales team to Disney in 1Q26 and moving its inventory into Disney's ad server. "Once part of the Disney ecosystem, all of our football, basketball, baseball, soccer, all of that inventory will likely move over hopefully sooner rather than later," he said. "So there is probably some pretty significant upside from where we are today relative to where we could be if you think about Disney Sports' CPMs and their ability to just use their scale to fill our veils."

Finally, there's the international side of the business and how it will be additive to Disney. Gandler highlighted French live TV streamer Molotov's migration into Fubo as a way the company is boosting Disney's international programming: "I think that similar to the way Hulu + Live TV has been embedded into Hulu and potentially into Disney+, we think that there's probably an opportunity for us to drive significant growth," he said, adding that Fubo is looking for further ways to partner

with Disney internationally. "Our ambitions have not changed. We want to be the world's largest live TV provider."

FUBO'S 3Q25 BY THE NUMBERS

Fubo stock finished down more than 8% after reporting a 2.3% YOY drop in total revenue, delivering \$368.6 million in 3Q25, its last quarter before merging with **Hulu + Live TV**. Advertising revenue in North America was \$25 million, a 7% YOY decline, which the company said was "largely due to the removal of certain ad-insertable content." There was some good news, though: Fubo finished the quarter with 1.63 million paid subscribers in North America, which amounted to a 1.1% YOY increase, following two consecutive quarters of sub declines on this side of the pond. It was the highest subscriber result for a third quarter in Fubo's history. (Internationally, Fubo saw a 9.5% YOY decline in subs, down to 342 million.) It also delivered its second consecutive quarter of positive Adjusted EBITDA, finishing at \$6.9 million.

DISNEY-YOUTUBE TV STILL FIGHTING AHEAD OF MNF, ELECTIONS

The latest beef between **Disney** and **YouTube TV** lasted through its first weekend, with **ESPN** and other channels dark on the platform since late Thursday. With no new contract in place, the channels remained absent while college football games took place, alongside coverage of the World Series and NFL. Next on the "Leverage Calendar" is tonight's Monday Night Football game between Dallas and Arizona starting at 8:15pm. Disney hoped Tuesday's Election festivities would move the needle in negotiations, asking YouTube TV to restore ABC for Election Day coverage. "We believe in putting the public interest first and hope YouTube TV will take this small step for their customers while we continue to work toward a fair agreement," a Disney spokesperson said in a statement to CFX. YouTube declined the request, saying the stations returning for only a day would create customer confusion—not to mention the vast number of outlets users can find on YouTube and YouTube TV that'll be covering Election Day developments. Instead, it countered by asking to immediately restore Disney channels as negotiations continue. Disney has already looked for other ways to get its high-profile programming to impacted customers. This weekend's talk show "College GameDay" was made available on the ESPN app with no subscription or authentication required, in addition to availability on **X**. Disney and YouTube TV's dispute has already surpassed their 2021 fight, which lasted two days before networks were restored. Disney, however, hasn't been afraid to hold out for an extended period of time—football be

damned. Its 2023 spat with **Charter** lasted nearly two weeks amid the start of the college football season. Then a year later, it had a 12-day tussle with **DirectTV**. Meanwhile, YouTube TV has a handful of ongoing disputes with **TelevisaUnivision**, **MLB Network** and several RSNs it's dropped, including **Monumental Sports Network** and **SNY**. The RSNs aren't expected to return anytime soon, but the TU saga has been going on for more than a month. Those wrangling with YouTube TV have begun to zone in on **Google** more often in their messaging, saying the company is using its scale to strengthen its position in the market. **NAB** joined the chorus Monday and used YouTube TV-Disney to advocate for changes to broadcast ownership rules. "Google doesn't want to fairly compensate ABC stations for this programming, and the Big Tech giant's market power gives it enormous control over consumers' access to entertainment, information and news," NAB wrote in a blog, adding that big tech companies are taking advantage of local stations and the discrepancy between their respective reach.

SCHUMER, CARR SQUARE OFF

President *Trump* was pleased with the "60 Minutes" interview that aired on **CBS** this weekend. But not everyone shared his sentiments. Sen. *Chuck Schumer* [mused](#) on **X** that perhaps he should file an **FCC** complaint "against the Trump White House for editing his unhinged 60 Minutes interview," declaring that he would use "the exact same language Trump lodged against Vice President *Harris*." FCC Chair *Brendan Carr* [fired back](#) that his "frivolous filing" couldn't be processed by the Commission because of the government shutdown. "But seriously, you should end the Schumer Shutdown—which is imposing real pain on American families—rather than nonsense posting. You should open the government, rather than using Americans' pain to pander to your far left flank," he added. CBS parent **Paramount** settled a Trump lawsuit over the editing of the *Harris* interview for \$16 million, with some Dems questioning whether that was a prerequisite to getting the FCC to sign off on the Paramount Skydance deal.

BERNSTEIN LOWERS CHARTER

Bernstein downgraded **Charter** from "Outperform" to "Market Perform," saying EBITDA growth has become increasingly difficult. "FWA remains competitive, fiber expansion is accelerating and MNOs with owner economics are fighting harder for net adds, giving away iPhones like popsicles," the firm wrote, adding that Charter is beginning to see churn pressure within its wireless base. Bernstein lowered its price target on Charter by \$70 to \$280, citing greater broadband losses, slower ARPU growth and elevated market spending to offset headwinds. Charter closed down nearly 5% Monday.

DISNEY'S SLING SUIT PROBES WHAT COUNTS AS A SUBSCRIPTION

A court transcript is available from last month's hearing on **Dis-**

ney's motion for a preliminary [injunction](#) for **Dish's Sling TV** day and weekend passes, and while much of it is redacted, we spied a few zingers. "ESPN, we're going on 50 years of ESPN. Disney content is 100 years, your Honor. We don't sell it by the day. This isn't Budget Rent-a-Car," said *Daniel Petrocelli*, the attorney representing Disney. Disney is suing over Sling TV's flexible packages, including a \$4.99 day pass and \$9.99 weekend pass, claiming they violate the terms of their distribution contract. **Warner Bros. Discovery** has filed a similar suit. Much of the non-redacted portion of the transcript focused on the definition of a subscription. Disney argued that a subscription requires an ongoing commitment or relationship with the service. Dish attorney *Elyse Echtman* argued that a subscription is for a "set period of time," which in the day pass instance is 24 hours. Judge *Arun Subramanian*, who recently oversaw the federal criminal trial of *Sean Combs*, had plenty of questions for both sides. At our deadline, he hadn't issued a ruling on the preliminary injunction. As for the subscription question, Petrocelli emphasized to the court that when Dish announced the passes on Aug. 12, it advertised them as no-subscription offerings. "And then when we said, we're going to sue you; cease and desist, they then took it out. But they went to great pains to communicate to the public that this is not a subscription. These are one-time charges. They don't renew," he said. The judge responded that it's Contract Law 101 that he can't consider that type of external evidence for initial analysis of the contract, referencing the "four corners" rule—a contract's meaning is determined by the four corners of the document itself.

CARRIAGE

There's a new triple-play bundle in town. The **AMC+**, **MGM+**, **Starz** package launched today for \$19.99 in the U.S., exclusively on **Prime Video**. The combo pack represents a 31% savings over buying the streaming services separately. – Georgia is on **Charter's** mind. So much so that it has launched the **Spectrum News Georgia** network, available to Spectrum TV customers on channel 1 throughout the state. Earlier this year, Charter launched Spanish-language net **Spectrum Noticias** as well as **Spectrum News Michigan** and **Spectrum News Alabama**.

WORLD SERIES RATINGS

You can't ask for a much better way to wrap up the MLB season (unless you're a Blue Jays fan). Saturday's Game 7 of the World Series between Toronto and the L.A. Dodgers averaged 25.98 million viewers across **Fox**, **Fox Deportes** and **Fox Sports** streaming platforms, according to **Nielsen** Panel Only Fast Nationals and **Adobe** Analytics. That's the most-watched World Series game since 2017's Game 7 that saw Houston win its first championship over the Dodgers. Saturday's viewership peaked at 31.54 million during the 11:30-11:45pm window as the game went into the 11th inning, which saw the Dodgers break a 4-4 deadlock en route to a second consecutive title. Final numbers are expected Tuesday.