

New IBM Sports Insights Central provides cognitive analytics foundation for talent evaluation

February 11 2016, by Suzanne Aronowitz

As part of the grand opening of the Toronto Raptors' BioSteel Centre today, IBM (NYSE: IBM) and Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment (MLSE) are introducing a first of its kind solution called [IBM Sports Insights Central](#). The solution is designed to transform the Raptors' talent evaluation processes by reimagining data through cognitive and analytics technology.

IBM Sports Insights Central was developed with input from the Toronto Raptors to provide a comprehensive platform to view, organize and surface relevant data important in evaluating individual and team performance. The platform extends beyond current roster players to include all NBA players and NBA prospects.

The solution was designed by [IBM Interactive Experience](#), the world's largest digital agency, and is powered by IBM Watson cognitive business technology built on the IBM BlueMix cloud development platform. The solution also incorporates cloud services developed by IBM Research. These include IBM Watson Tradeoff analytics, which assess possible roster combinations against a variety of criteria, and IBM Watson Personality Insights, which includes linguistic analytics to understand player personality and social characteristics that align with the organizational culture. IBM Watson Alchemy API technology can further help analyze public news sources to round out player profiles.

"As the NBA continues to achieve greater parity, we are continually looking for a way to gain a competitive advantage. Through this partnership we were able to use IBM's human and technological resources to build a valuable tool that will allow us to evaluate our current roster and potential changes in ways that were not available before," said Masai Ujiri, President and General Manager of the Toronto Raptors. "IBM's solution will raise the bar on the industry standard of player evaluation by automating a historically manual process."

Sports teams, like other industries and businesses, grapple with time consuming manual operational processes to gather and share relevant insights to team, player and prospect data for player evaluation and acquisition. This struggle becomes especially difficult in time sensitive situations like the moments leading up to the annual draft.

"This pioneering work and extensive collaboration with MLSE and the Toronto Raptors to design this solution will provide the Toronto Raptors, and eventually other professional sports franchises, with a faster means to share, visualize and drive time-critical decisions," said Jim Rushton, Global Leader, IBM Sports and Entertainment Practice. "Through this [solution](#), the Raptors will be able to reimagine their data to set a new standard of excellence for talent evaluation and acquisition."

Through these improved analytics and visual insights, IBM Sports Insights Central helps management create player personnel assessments that automatically quantify financial and performance impact on current status of the team.

Provided by IBM

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