


MLB Streaming Arm Sued by Former Executive Over Disney Sale

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John Dinn Mann says he was promised stake worth \$80 million

Mann says he helped build unit from a 'fledgling start up'

As Major League Baseball begins a new season, a former executive is calling foul on the organization's interactive media and internet company.

John Dinn Mann claims in a lawsuit that over 17 years he helped build MLB Advanced Media from a "fledgling startup" into a "media juggernaut," but was shut out of promised profits when the majority of the unit was sold to Walt Disney Co. for \$2.6 billion.

Mann claims he was granted a 2 percent equity stake in the company's "non-baseball business" in 2006 after he was convinced not to leave. But after Disney bought 75 percent of the business, he says he was fired without cause and offered \$2 million to walk away. His stake would currently be worth almost \$80 million, he said.

MLBAM "decided instead to cast him aside and renege on its promise," Mann's attorney, Douglas Wigdor, said in a statement. "Companies should not be permitted to treat dedicated employees in this manner."

Major League Baseball said in a statement that the suit is without merit and there is "not a single document that shows the grant of an equity interest in any MLB entity."

MLBAM is a limited partnership of the owners of Major League teams formed in 2000 to consolidate the online rights and ticket sales for all 30 clubs. BAMTech operates MLB.com, the At Bat app and MLB.tv.

Following the sale to Disney, each owner of MLBAM got at least \$50 million, Mann said.

The case is John Dinn Mann v MLB Advanced Media LP, 651503/2018, New York State Supreme Court, New York County (Manhattan.)