NFL and Texas Medical Center Announce Winners for 1st and Future Competition

Three companies win $50,000 each in live sports-technology startup showdown

Houston – February 4, 2017 – Three winners were announced today in the second annual **1st and Future** competition, a collaboration between the **National Football League (NFL)** and the **Texas Medical Center** (TMC) to award startups focused on driving innovations to advance sports technology and athlete safety. The winners – **GoRout** of Rochester, Minnesota, **Mobile Virtual Player** of Lebanon, New Hampshire and **Windpact** of Leesburg, Virginia – each left with $50,000 from the NFL to further develop their innovation, acceptance into TMC's world-renowned startup program TMCx, and two tickets to Super Bowl LI on February 5.

The live pitch competition took place at the Texas Medical Center Accelerator (TMCx) in Houston, where nine finalists faced off in three categories – Communicating with the Athlete, Training the Athlete and Materials to Protect the Athlete. **Scott Hanson** of the NFL Network and host of *NFL RedZone* emceed, as the companies faced off in front of an exclusive audience comprised of NFL team owners and executives, as well as representatives and guests of the Houston Super Bowl Host Committee and the Texas Medical Center.

NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell and **GE CEO and Chairman Jeff Immelt** kicked off 1st and Future with a conversation moderated by **TMC President and CEO Dr. Robert C. Robbins**. The focus was on advancing technology in the market through industry partnership, such as the GE-NFL Head Health Initiative and open-innovation challenges like 1st and Future.

Following each pitch, the presenters faced questions from a team of judges, including:

- **Ed Egan**, Ph.D., Director of the McNair Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation at Rice University's Baker Institute
- **Rich Ellenbogen**, M.D., Chairman of the Department of Neurological Surgery at the University of Washington Medical Center and Co-Chairman of the NFL Head, Neck and Spine Committee
- **Bernard Harris**, M.D., M.B.A, CEO and Managing Partner of Vesalius Ventures
- **Mae Jemison**, M.D., Principal, 100 Year Starship
- **Chad Pennington**, former NFL quarterback, NFL Legend
- **Sue Siegel**, CEO of GE Ventures and healthymagination
- **John Urschel**, Baltimore Ravens guard and center

The finalists included the following startup companies (with a summary of each startup's product or service, as described by them):

Communicating with the Athlete
New technologies that will improve the secure and safe means of communication between a coach on the sideline or in the coaches' booth and a designated player on the field.

Winner: GoRout – Rochester, Minnesota
GoRout has created on-field wearable technology to help streamline the communication between football coaches and players by allowing players to receive digital play diagrams and data from coaches on the sideline.

Elevety – Toronto, Ontario, Canada
Elevety is a wearable technology company with a mission to bring voice communication to the worlds of adventure and spectator sports. The 2-way, closed system peer-to-peer communication devices allow teams to communicate in real-time voice anywhere, without the need for a mobile network.

Linkpro – Jersey, Channel Islands, United Kingdom
The Linkpro® Explore1 is a technology-enabled sports helmet with fully integrated communications technology that allows users to connect to select groups with a simple one-touch system.

Training the Athlete
Educational and training innovations designed to reduce injury during practice or competition. Innovations may include training techniques or equipment.

Winner: Mobile Virtual Player – Lebanon, New Hampshire
Mobile Virtual Player (MVP) is an innovative, patented training platform that allows coaches to teach and train players effectively while significantly reducing the risk of injury from player-to-player contact. MVP brings a highly-mobile, remote controlled, self-righting 'virtual player' onto the field to revolutionize football training.

The Iron Neck – Austin, Texas
The Iron Neck is a breakthrough neck training tool that enables athletes across all sports to increase strength, flexibility and range of motion to better defend against concussive forces and rehabilitate previous injuries. By attaching to existing equipment, the Iron Neck leaves no gym footprint and combines horizontal and rotational resistance with 360 degrees of movement to build consistent and measurable training programs at every level.

LVL – Austin, Texas
LVL is a next-generation, optical sensor-driven platform that gives a continuous view of players' physiological states including: hydration, muscle effort and exertion, heart rate, speed and concussion markers. Using patented machine learning techniques, LVL produces real-time recommendations for risk reduction, training optimization and rest and recovery needs.

Materials to Protect the Athlete
Novel or innovative solutions and materials that advance player health and safety while allowing for the highest-level of performance.

Winner: Windpact – Leesburg, Virginia
Windpact is a safety technology company that has developed a patented padding system that uses air and foam to absorb and disperse impact energy to improve the performance of helmets and protective gear. Driven by a team of engineers, designers and developers and led by a Pro Bowl NFL veteran, Windpact has begun integrating its flagship Crash Cloud technology into partner helmets and aims to further advance player health and safety through its scientific approach to product development.

2ND Skull – Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
2ND SKULL is a protective headgear company with patented products that are scientifically engineered to reduce impact. The 2ND SKULL® CAP, is a thin, soft, flexible and breathable protective skull cap that fits under football helmets and provides added protection against linear and rotational impacts.

Prevent Biometrics – Minneapolis, Minnesota
Prevent's head impact monitor can detect potential concussion-causing impacts in real-time on the field of play, taking today's observational, subjective and inaccurate method of identifying athletes for concussion assessment and turning it into an objective, accurate, data-driven process.

The full competition will be available to watch on the TMC website.

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About TMC
What was sparked with the founding of a single hospital in Houston in 1925 has come to be the Texas Medical Center (TMC) today. Home to 59 member institutions, including 21 hospitals, 13 support organizations, nine academic and research institutions, six nursing programs, four public health organizations, three medical schools, four universities, two pharmacy schools and a dental school, TMC operates the world's largest medical city with eight million patients and family encounters with doctors, nurses and staff at TMC every year. TMC is dedicated to reinventing life sciences to improve the health and wellness of Houston, and the world. Learn more at tmc.edu.

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