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Tiger Woods Tops Marketability Survey Of Sports Execs

By [Jon Show](#), Senior Staff Writer

Tiger Woods is not only the most marketable active athlete for brands trying to reach North American consumers, he'll remain in that position for the next five years, according to a poll of 65 sports business and media execs conducted by THE DAILY. In separate questions, nearly 70% of respondents identified Woods as the most marketable active athlete, while 55% believe he will be the most marketable active athlete five years from now. Scott White, Dir of Marketing for Callaway Golf, a competitor of Nike, a brand Woods endorses, said, "Tiger transcends all races, income levels, ages and gender. Ten years ago everyone wanted to 'Be Like Mike.' Now everyone wants to be like Tiger regardless of whether they play golf." In a third question, Michael Jordan was selected as the most marketable retired athlete by almost 74% of voters.



Tiger Most Woods Tops List Of Most Marketable Active Athletes

METHODOLOGY: Respondents were asked to rank, in order, the five athletes they believe are the most marketable in the three aforementioned categories. Points were awarded on a five-point scale, with five points for a first-place vote, four points for second place, three points for third, etc. Rankings are based on percentage of total points received. The charts below list the top ten athletes in each category.

ACTIVE: In the first question, respondents were asked, "Who is the most marketable active athlete in trying to reach North American consumers?"

ACTIVE

RK	NAME	TOTAL POINTS (max: 325)	% OF ALL POINTS	% OF 1st-PLACE VOTES
1)	Tiger Woods	280	86.2%	69.2%
2)	Peyton Manning	208	64.0%	18.5%
3)	LeBron James	137	42.2%	4.6%
4)	Derek Jeter	78	24.0%	1.5%
5)	Dwyane Wade	62	19.1%	1.5%

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Round				
3. Marketplace Round-Up	6)	Dale Earnhardt Jr.	48	14.8%
	7)	Tom Brady	42	12.9%
4. Executive Transactions	8)	Shaquille O'Neal	30	9.2%
5. Former Olympian Starting Rep Business	9)	Maria Sharapova	11	3.4%
	t10)	Kobe Bryant	9	2.8%
	t10)	Brett Favre	9	2.8%
	t10)	Sidney Crosby	9	2.8%

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See [full chart](#)

BREAKING IT DOWN: Strategic President Peter Stern, speaking of the top three finishers, said, "All of these athletes are top performers in their respective games. They all currently have significant endorsement deals, and consumers trust the products they endorse." Woods has deals with Nike, American Express, Tag Heuer, Buick, Gillette, EA Sports and Accenture. Turner Sports Senior VP/Programming & Marketing Jennifer Storms: "Tiger continues to be an athlete that moves the needle. Literally, whatever needle it might be." DirecTV Senior Dir of Marketing Randy Satterburg, whose company has an endorsement deal with Peyton Manning, called him "the most marketable player in the most popular sport." Manning also has high-profile deals with Sony, Reebok, Gatorade, Sprint, MasterCard and Kraft. Rule 1.02 Sports & Entertainment Marketing Managing Dir Eric Bechtel added, "Peyton's MVP and Super Bowl win give him the ultimate credibility now as a spokesperson." At the age of 22, LeBron James recently added a deal with Cub Cadet and ads for Microsoft's Vista operating system to an endorsement roster featuring Nike, Coca-Cola and Bubblicious. ESPN VP/Marketing Aaron Taylor: "LeBron is building his brand like no other athlete has at his age." But CNBC's Darren Rovell, appearing recently as part of a [lengthy discussion about the survey](#) on ESPN Radio's "Mike & Mike," wondered, "How does a guy endorse an operating system?"

RETIRED: In the second question, respondents were asked, "Who is the most marketable retired athlete in trying to reach North American consumers?"

RETIRED

RK	NAME	TOTAL POINTS (max: 325)	% OF ALL POINTS	% OF 1st-PLACE VOTES
1)	Michael Jordan	279	85.8%	73.8%
2)	Cal Ripken Jr.	84	25.8%	3.1%
3)	Charles Barkley	60	18.5%	4.6%
4)	Jack Nicklaus	59	18.2%	1.5%
5)	Lance Armstrong	56	17.2%	4.6%
6)	Muhammad Ali	50	15.4%	3.1%
7)	Dan Marino	49	15.1%	3.1%
8)	Wayne Gretzky	40	12.3%	0.0%
9)	Arnold Palmer	39	12.0%	1.5%
10)	Andre Agassi	38	11.7%	0.0%

See [full chart](#)

BREAKING IT DOWN: Jordan's dominance of the sports marketing scene has become less pronounced over the past few years, but he still counts relationships with Nike, Gatorade and Hanes. The Bonham Group Chair & CEO Dean Bonham: "MJ has earned and maintains iconic status in the pantheon of American marketers." EA Sports Senior Manager of Sports Marketing Brian Movalson added, "Michael will go down as perhaps the most marketable athlete ever." Aside from his numerous investments in sports, Cal Ripken has corporate relationships with Chevrolet, Nike, Energizer, Bank of America/MBNA and others. Baseball America Publisher Lee Folger, whose company does some work with Ripken Baseball, said, "Cal Ripken is a name that still resonates in

the baseball market for his reliability and continued positive involvement in the game. It is a connection that works for both younger and older baseball fans.” Arnold Palmer, who helped invent modern sports marketing as the first client of late IMG Founder Mark McCormack, just squeezed into the top ten. Golf World Exec Editor Ron Sirak: “Palmer still makes tens of millions a year in endorsements and is nearing 78 years old.” Forge Sponsorship Partner John Laurent added Muhammad Ali, who finished sixth, “brings class to a brand like no other athlete. He is more of a humanitarian icon than a sports icon.”

FUTURE: In the third and final question, respondents were asked, “Who, in five years, will be the most marketable active athlete in trying to reach North American consumers?”

FUTURE

RK	NAME	TOTAL POINTS (max: 325)	% OF ALL POINTS	% OF 1st-PLACE VOTES
1)	Tiger Woods	239	73.5%	55.4%
2)	LeBron James	178	54.8%	16.9%
3)	Dwyane Wade	99	30.5%	9.2%
4)	Reggie Bush	71	21.8%	6.2%
5)	Peyton Manning	56	17.2%	6.2%
6)	Sidney Crosby	30	9.2%	0.0%
t7)	David Beckham	26	8.0%	0.0%
t7)	Matt Leinart	26	8.0%	0.0%
t9)	Dale Earnhardt Jr.	22	6.8%	0.0%
t9)	Vince Young	22	6.8%	1.5%

See [full chart](#)



Many Feel LeBron James (l) And Dwyane Wade Are Entering Marketing Prime

BREAKING IT DOWN: Woods (31), Dwyane Wade (24) and James are either entering or are a few years away from what is considered the prime age in their respective sports. Pickett Advertising Exec Creative Dir Bob Dorfman: “Golfers have the longest marketing shelf life of any athletes, and there’s no reason to expect Tiger to let up until he surpasses (Jack) Nicklaus’ record for major wins. Tiger will easily be the marketing champ in 2012; heck, he could still be the champ in 2032.” Noting James’ Nike ad campaign in which he plays a variety of characters, Rocky Mountain News columnist Dave Krieger said, “If the LeBrons haven’t made a movie by then, he should get another agent. They’re already funnier than Eddie Murphy’s multiple character movies.” With the potential of some current stars to challenge career records in the near future, 16W Senior Dir of Talent Marketing Bob Philp said, “I think companies will be lining up to

partner with the likes of Peyton, Tiger and A-Rod to capitalize on their individual story lines in an effort to capture North American consumers.”

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