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Tom Brady and Patriots well-positioned from branding standpoint to withstand injury

Boston Business Journal - by [Jesse Noyes](#)[Print](#) [Email](#) [Reprints](#) [RSS Feeds](#) [Add to Del.icio.us](#) [Digg This](#) [Comments](#)**Related News**[Local firms rank on Fortune's Global 500](#)[FAU hopes research park has 'Gatorade-like' breakthrough](#)[Keep fighting](#)[PepsiCo buys Izzie](#)

Just like legions on fans, sponsors of star quarterback Tom Brady and his team the **New England Patriots** should be anxiously awaiting news on the extent of athletes injury.

Brady, who was inflicted Sunday with an injury that several media outlets have speculated could end his season, is one of the most marketable sports figures in the country. And the Patriots, who have won three Super Bowls with Brady as quarterback, have cashed in millions from advertisers riding on the success of the team.

Sports marketing experts said that the team's performance without Brady will be watched closely by sponsors, but that a real effect probably wouldn't be felt right away.

"If you're a sponsor you're concerned," said Cleon Daskalakis, president of Andover, Mass.-based Celebrity Marketing Inc. "You're concerned whether their performance is staying the same. But your audience is not going away."

"The team is clearly going to be judged on wins and losses," said Peter Stern, founder of New York-based Strategic, which formerly when by **Strategic Sports Group Inc.** "I think the goodwill of their (previous) success will carry them this season."

Brady was ranked the seventh most marketable active athlete by **SportsBusiness Journal** last year.

But Brady might be shielded from a lot of advertising fallout from his injury due to the fact that most of sponsorships he has done have been around off-the-field activities, experts said. He's done advertisements for fashionable brands like watch-maker **Movado** and apparel company Stetson.

"He's got a lot of brands that are not just sports brands," Stern said.

A call to Brady's agent was not immediately returned.

The Patriots, which were ranked the third most valuable team in the NFL by business

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magazine Forbes last year at \$1.2 billion, have protected themselves by creating a team-centered image, said Grant Pace, executive creative director of Boston-based advertising firm Conover Tuttle Pace. “(The team) doesn’t feel like a one-man marketing scheme,” he said. “I’d Be surprised if there’s even a blip in their team marketing goals.”

Major corporate sponsors of the Patriots include **Bank of America Corp.** (NYSE: BAC) and **PepsiCo Inc.**’s (NYSE: PEP) **Gatorade**.

That said, experts said the impact of a Brady injury that extends beyond the season on corporate sponsorships is less certain. “If it’s a long, long-term (injury), then, yeah, there’s a huge effect,” Daskalakis said.

A call to the Patriots was not immediately returned.

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