



By: Tomorrow's Affairs Staff

"Inside the Game" – The NBA turns the game into an algorithm



The NBA and Amazon Web Services have **announced** a new multi-year partnership, making AWS the league's official cloud and AI partner.

At the centre of this collaboration is the "NBA Inside the Game powered by AWS" platform, **designed** to analyse in real time everything that happens on the court — player movement, positioning, shooting, defence — and to turn that data into visual and tactical insights available to audiences and teams.

For the league, this is not just a technological upgrade. Ultimately, the game itself is being moved into the data frame, changing the way the sport is viewed, interpreted and evaluated.

Basketball in a data format

"Inside the Game" **uses** sensors that register up to 29 points on each player's body sixty times per second. AI models, developed on AWS infrastructure, process this data to generate new metrics: shot difficulty, defence performance, and player gravity—the ability to alter the structure of the opposing defence through movement.

The tool will be available to commentators, coaches, and fans

Until now, this information existed only within the internal analytics departments of the clubs. It is now part of the league's broadcast, app, and official website.

The **launch** of the "Play Finder" tool was also announced. It uses a machine learning model to identify similar situations from other games and eras. The tool will be available to commentators, coaches, and fans, meaning that for the first time, the history of the game is systematically opened up through data rather than memory.

A different rhythm of broadcasting

With this project, the NBA is changing the very principle of the broadcast.

Commentators and audience no longer have to guess the difficulty of a shot or the success of the defence — they have modelled probabilities and accurate data about the player's position, distance, and reaction in front of them. Each point receives context that was previously hidden.

The game becomes both a visual and analytical event, engaging the audience more deeply

The league thus creates a standard language for the game that is measurable and comparable. It is not just an extra chart on the screen but a new layer of the story.

The game becomes both a visual and analytical event, engaging the audience more deeply, and the league gains a product that is different from anything offered by traditional broadcasts.

The attention economy

This cooperation has not occurred by chance. The NBA is entering a new media rights cycle in which Prime Video becomes a strategic partner to **broadcast** 66 games per year.

AWS's technology and Prime's distribution create a unified platform where data becomes content, and content becomes a reason to retain an audience.

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At a time when most viewers only watch clips, the league is trying to offer something that cannot be downloaded or copied—a viewing experience with real value.

When the broadcast provides not only visuals but also explanations of what is happening on the court, it ceases to be ordinary content and becomes a product with deeper meaning and greater value.

A quiet shift within the teams

New technology is also **changing** how clubs operate. Tools such as “Play Finder” can become part of everyday match preparation and player development.

Teams that learn to interpret and apply these insights more quickly will gain a tactical advantage.

This alters the relationship between the league and the clubs. Instead of each team using its own closed analytics tools, a common platform is being introduced that everyone works on and depends upon.

The question of ownership and boundaries

This also raises questions about data ownership and transparency. Who owns the models generated from player tracking? How is this data used and shared with partners?

The players' union will, as expected, demand clear boundaries, especially if modules are developed that analyse physical conditions or risks of injury.

Therefore, the key to trust will be openness in explaining how the systems work and where their limits lie. The league is already signalling this by publishing publicly defined new metrics and a plan to introduce common standards for all users of the platform.

Sport as a digital product

This partnership demonstrates how sport is becoming a data-driven industry. Basketball is

no longer just a game — it is now a system in which every move, decision, and action leaves a digital footprint.

“Inside the Game” is changing not only how performance is measured but also how the game is discussed.

For AWS, this serves as a demonstration of infrastructure capabilities that go beyond the role of a technical partner

It also gives the league control over the market and the narrative. Data generated within the platform becomes part of the NBA's intellectual property, meaning any analysis, media display, or application using that information must operate within its framework.

For AWS, this serves as a demonstration of infrastructure capabilities that go beyond the role of a technical partner. The platform is not merely a showcase for machine learning but a case study in how the cloud is becoming a new form of media.

The future image of sport

In the coming period, the NBA will test the extent to which the audience accepts this new way of coverage. If it proves useful and unobtrusive, it will likely become a standard in other sports as well.

Football, tennis, and baseball are already experimenting with similar approaches, but none has yet achieved full integration of the technology into an official broadcast.



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If that occurs, future broadcast rights negotiations will depend not only on the number of matches and screen time but also on the depth of data tracking every second of the game.

Contracts will be measured by the level of access to that data, not just the duration of the broadcast.

The most significant change is not in the technology but in the very understanding of the game. Audiences **watching** basketball through "Inside the Game" no longer see only the result but also the series of decisions and moves that led to it.

This can also change the culture of watching sport. The audience becomes more aware of details, and teams become more conscious that their patterns are no longer hidden. The game acquires its own "code", and with it, a new kind of responsibility.

With this move, the NBA ushers in an era in which sport is not merely transmitted but interpreted. "Inside the Game" is not just an analysis tool but a message that sport is no longer confined to the court. It has become data, an algorithm, and a story within the same

frame. And within that framework, a new game begins.