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9.30.08

NBA LIVE 09 Producer Blog -- Sean O'Brien (NBA LIVE 365)

A lot of people have been asking us lately about competitors coming out with in-season updates to try and compete with **Dynamic DNA** and **NBA LIVE 365**. When we announced it at **E3** we knew it was such a groundbreaking idea that our competitors would try to come up with some kind of response or claim to have some kind of similar feature to this. But what we also knew is that given the amount of time left in the development cycle for this year, and the fact that we had an exclusive deal with Synergy Sports Technology, that there was no way they would be able to build anything close to this, and have it fully automated into the code in such a way that would allow for seamless, daily updates.

We were a little surprised when there was a BIG announcement from a competitor saying that they were going to have 'the human touch' - basically someone who will be updating the rosters, stats and ratings whenever it was felt it was meaningful to do so. There's just no way any one person, or even a team of people, could possibly keep up with the quality of data that Synergy are producing. It's one person with a pad and paper versus an entire team using the best technology ever created for this, no comparison. Needless to say, we were very confident that there was going to be nothing close to something that could compare in any meaningful way to **Dynamic DNA**.

For us to understand why the concept of **Dynamic DNA** is so powerful you have to go back to where the entire concept originated. I think it's a great example of the overlap between the worlds of sports and sports video games. Gone are the days of throwing some uniforms on some guys, putting a ball in play and AI that doesn't really care who passes the ball to who or who attempts to make plays at the basket. Our EA SPORTS games are so deep...from the nuts and bolts recreation of **NBA** arenas to the way a player sweats throughout the course of a game while he runs around in his special makeup Nike Hyperdunks to in this case, (and probably the coolest thing we've done to date) the tendencies that each player and team exhibits on the court every night. And at the end of the day we think the more realistic the game can be the more fun it will be for our fans.

I smile every time I think about how **NBA LIVE 09** will change every day based on what's happening in the real **NBA** season. I mean, I'm going to be reading about something on espn.com or watching something on SportsCenter and then seeing that same thing in **NBA LIVE** and having the fun of actually play with teams and players that line up to what you see. Never have those mediums been more closely tied together and never has what happens during the real **NBA** season, or any professional sports season for that matter, had such an impact on what happens in a sports video game.

And not to mention, this has nothing to do with a designer or producer's subjective opinion as we've tried to do in years past with updating roster and ratings. The game is changing daily based on statistical information and tendencies being tracked and downloaded from Synergy Sports Technology. The same company that 23 **NBA** teams are using to scout their opponents and track their own progress throughout the season. Are you kidding me? The SAME information.

Oh ya...back to how this relationship began. Last summer, after the team finished 08, brainstorming began on what direction the 09 product should take. We were extremely focused on getting our basketball products as authentic as possible. I believe that we have an extremely savvy consumer that is craving depth with authenticity across the board. We have delivered that visually to a certain extent, but I (along with others) wanted gameplay to get to that next level as well.

I started speaking to a good friend of mine, Jay Triano, who is an assistant coach with the Toronto Raptors as well as the USAB Select team. I asked him to walk me through the process of how they prepare their players for games, what sort of things they focus on in scouting reports and how they obtain all of that information. Within those conversations he mentioned Synergy Sports Technology and went off on how great they were and the unbelievable depth that they are able to provide their clients. He said that they were the talk of the **NBA** and that I should speak with the Raptors video guy (who works with the coaches to put together scouting reports), Casey Whalen to learn more about them and get a contact at Synergy. After speaking with Casey, it quickly became apparent to me that we needed to work with these guys. This was starting to sound big.

I made initial contact with Andy Graham, Synergy's VP of Basketball, to discuss and learn more about Synergy. Andy is a great guy and an avid sports gamer so he got it right away. One of the first things that he said to me was that he had always felt that their data had an application with video games.

And so it began...we had numerous phone calls which lead to numerous brainstorming sessions with Andy, Garrick Barr (the founder and CEO of Synergy as well as a former assistant coach with the Phoenix Suns) and CTO, Nils Lahr (who is by the way...way too smart...) and the **NBA LIVE** design and production team.

These guys get it and it was (and will continue to be) a real pleasure working with them to figure out just what their company was all about, what sort of data they track and have, how they track it and compile it for their **NBA** clients and how we can get all of that fantastic data into **NBA LIVE** every single day throughout the **NBA** season and playoffs to provide our consumer with the most amazing basketball video game experience to date.

That experience is **Dynamic DNA** in **NBA LIVE 09**.

And you know what? This is currently a five year exclusive deal between **NBA LIVE** and Synergy Sports which means you can expect more **innovation** and gameplay that evolves daily throughout the **NBA** season mirroring what exactly what is actually happening for the next five years. So along with the rest of the GMs, coaches and scouts in the **NBA**, get used to Synergy Sports in your living room...only

in **NBA LIVE**.

EA SPORTS...once again proving that if it's in the game, it's in the game.

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