



Morrison racks up endorsements as draft nears

By Darren Rovell
ESPN.com

Adam Morrison might not be the No. 1 pick in next week's NBA Draft, but he seems to be at the top of the heap in the eyes of sports marketers.

The 6-foot-8 forward has already racked up endorsement deals with the likes of Topps, adidas and Electronic Arts, and is on the cusp of signing a Diabetes-related contract that might top the others in value.

Sources told ESPN.com that **Morrison's multi-year, seven-figure deal with adidas was signed this week.** With the deal, Morrison will join the ranks of the company's other NBA endorsers, which include Houston Rockets forward Tracy McGrady, Minnesota Timberwolves forward Kevin Garnett and San Antonio Spurs center Tim Duncan.

Morrison's deal with Electronic Arts will allow the company to use him in its marketing campaigns, including a commercial that the company shot earlier this month in Los Angeles with the former Gonzaga star. His contract with Topps is an exclusive autograph and memorabilia trading card deal. The company plans to use Morrison on product packaging and in national advertising.

Morrison was clearly helped along by embracing the spotlight in his final season at Gonzaga. He bested Duke's J.J. Redick to become the Division I scoring champ, averaging 28.1 points per game.

Morrison's marketing agent Rob Lefko of Priority Sports said that his client's recognition factor certainly didn't hurt when presenting him to companies.

Of the teams that are likely to draft Morrison, most do not play in large media markets. Aside from Chicago at No. 2, Toronto, Charlotte, Portland and Atlanta round out the top 5 picks in Wednesday's draft.

"I think people feel like a bigger market can help, but it's not necessary," Lefko said. "Any company he is aligned with knows that he will be on a team that will give him a lot of minutes early on his career and he will be a scorer, so he'll get a lot of attention."

One of Morrison's biggest endorsement deals is soon to come. At the age of 14, Morrison found out he had diabetes and has an insulin pump hooked into his body to regulate his blood sugar. He obviously takes it out for games, but frequently checks his blood sugar during timeouts.

Given his client's prominence, Lefko says he has had significant conversations with four pharmaceutical companies who are interested in using Morrison as a spokesperson. Morrison is also expected to play a big part in an educational campaign. Lefko said that all the companies that have thus far signed deals with Morrison are planning to donate a portion of his pay to Diabetes-related causes.