

A.R.I. Announces Major Investment in Shawne Merriman's Lights Out Sports to Fuel Explosive Growth Across Sports Media

A.R.I. Senior Secured Growth Credit Fund Invests Significant Capital to Accelerate Expansion of Lights Out Sports TV and Lights Out Xtreme Fighting

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, October 1, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Applied Real Intelligence \(A.R.I.\)](#), a rapidly growing provider of venture debt and growth capital, announces its strategic partnership with [Lights Out Sports TV](#) and [Lights Out Xtreme Fighting](#), founded by NFL legend Shawne Merriman, a three-time All-Pro Linebacker with the Chargers. Through a senior secured term loan from the A.R.I. Senior Secured Growth Credit Fund, this partnership aims to drive rapid growth across the Lights Out brand, expanding its live sports and entertainment events, while scaling its digital content offerings across OTT (Over-The-Top) and FAST (Free Ad-Supported TV) channels.

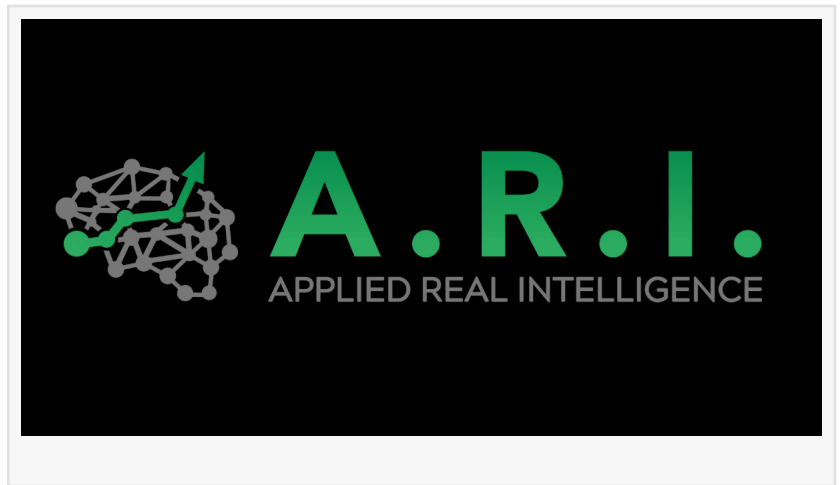
This marks A.R.I.'s first publicly announced investment, signaling the firm's commitment to backing high-growth, innovative companies. A.R.I. has previously invested in sectors such as AI, climate technology, Software as a Service (SaaS), and a technology-enhanced roll-up strategy of HVAC,



A.R.I.'s Zack Ellison with Shawne "Lights Out" Merriman



electric, and plumbing businesses. With a robust pipeline of deals in the American innovation economy, A.R.I. is establishing itself as a key player in venture debt and growth credit, helping companies scale while minimizing ownership dilution for founders and their teams.



A.R.I.'s transaction counsel was DLA Piper, the largest law firm in the United States. Partner Parker Zangoei led the

deal team, with support from Associate Josh Robinson. Zangoei commented: "The partnership between A.R.I. and Lights Out Sports demonstrates how growth credit can drive innovation in high-potential sectors like sports, digital media, and streaming entertainment. It's been a pleasure working with Zack Ellison and A.R.I. on this transaction."

“

Zack Ellison and A.R.I. are fantastic partners and have been a game-changer for Lights Out Sports TV and Lights Out Xtreme Fighting.”

*Shawne Merriman, CEO of
Lights Out Sports & Former
NFL All-Pro Linebacker*

Matt Schwartz, DLA Piper's U.S. Finance Group Leader, added: "This collaboration underscores how well-structured growth-stage debt can unlock significant value for both companies and investors in the innovation economy. We look forward to representing A.R.I. as they continue funding growth in these dynamic sectors."

Capitalizing on the Explosive Growth of Sports Franchises and Streaming Media

A.R.I.'s investment comes at an opportune time for the sports and streaming entertainment industries. The value of professional sports franchises has reached record highs and is expected to increase further given private equity inflows and surging consumer demand for live sports and on-demand streaming content.

As cord-cutting accelerates, advertisers are increasingly focusing on two of the most effective ways to reach their audiences: live sports and targeted digital ads. Lights Out Sports TV, a leader in the FAST (Free Ad-Supported TV) market, delivers both exclusive live sports coverage and a comprehensive library of 24/7 on-demand content.

Positioned as a key player in the OTT (Over-The-Top) and DTC (Direct-to-Consumer) streaming space, Lights Out Sports TV has secured partnerships with Apple, Google, Roku, Amazon, LG, Vizio, and Samsung, ensuring widespread access across major distribution channels. This multi-platform approach allows advertisers to connect with core demographics through live sports broadcasts and precision-targeted online ads, maximizing their reach in a highly engaged

market.

As Lights Out Xtreme Fighting prepares for its 20th live event on October 26, 2024, the brand continues to grow its fanbase and attract high-profile advertisers and partners, driven by thrilling content and top-tier production quality.

Strategic Capital to Drive Growth

The partnership with A.R.I. provides Lights Out with significant growth capital through a credit facility designed to scale its live events, streaming TV platform, and innovative content production, including The Ultimate Fan Zone, an exhilarating live pre-game streaming show featuring fans at the most exciting NFL tailgates. This funding will fuel the expansion of the entire family of Lights Out brands, positioning it as a leader in live sports and digital media.

“Shawne ‘Lights Out’ Merriman is the embodiment of success unleashed. His visionary leadership, strong operating capabilities, and relentless drive align perfectly with the qualities we seek in our partners,” said Zack Ellison, A.R.I.'s Founder and the Chief Investment Officer of the A.R.I. Senior Secured Growth Credit Fund.

A.R.I.'s Investment Strategy: Backing Visionary Founders

The A.R.I. Senior Secured Growth Credit Fund focuses on backing exceptional founders and business builders who have demonstrated success in rapidly evolving markets.

“We are industry agnostic and invest in high-growth, low-risk businesses in underserved parts of the American innovation economy,” Ellison added. “Our investments are structured to provide the capital necessary for sustainable growth while managing downside risks. We’re the antithesis of the ‘burn cash and hope to grow’ VC model – we focus on founder-led businesses that create lasting value. In doing so, we provide our fund’s investors with a much safer way to invest in innovation.”

Shawne Merriman on Partnering with A.R.I.

Shawne Merriman, CEO of Lights Out, highlighted the pivotal role A.R.I. has played in the company's growth:

“Zack Ellison and A.R.I. are fantastic partners and have been a game-changer for Lights Out Sports TV and Lights Out Xtreme Fighting. Their combination of capital and strategic expertise has empowered us to scale quickly and surpass key milestones. What sets Zack apart is his deep understanding of what founders truly need – it’s not just about funding, it’s about shared long-term vision, guidance, and unwavering support.”

Merriman added, “Our collaboration with A.R.I. sets up Lights Out for major success. We’re

excited for what's ahead."

Learn More and Get Involved with A.R.I. and Lights Out Sports

For investors seeking to safely invest in high-growth innovation, visit www.arivc.com to learn more about A.R.I.'s approach.

Discover the world of Lights Out Xtreme Fighting and watch live events and exclusive content on Lights Out Sports TV by visiting www.lightsoutxf.com and www.lightsoutsportstv.com. Follow Shawne Merriman on Instagram at @shawnemerriman for exciting updates and behind-the-scenes content.

About Applied Real Intelligence ("A.R.I.")

You built it. A.R.I. helps you keep it. At Applied Real Intelligence, we provide funding to fuel growth, empowering founders to retain control of the companies they've built through customized financing solutions that minimize equity dilution. For investors, A.R.I. creates a safer way to access innovation by investing in high-growth businesses with carefully managed risks in underserved segments of the American innovation economy. To learn more, visit www.arivc.com.

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