



Welcome to the new and improved USPORTS.ca

September 13, 2017

TORONTO (U SPORTS) – U SPORTS has a new look for telling the stories of its schools, its programs, and most importantly, its student-athletes.

The national brand for university sports in our home and native land is launching its new website on September 14, near the start of the 2017-18 season. A new USPORTS.ca represents the latest phase in the U SPORTS rebrand, providing a completely revamped digital experience for university sports in Canada through a fan-friendly interface. It also presents centralized access to core administrative functions with the new U SPORTS HQ.

The new platform strategically aligns with the U SPORTS brand codes through sharp high-impact visuals as well as the brand's key messaging through more story-oriented content.

"We wanted to make the U SPORTS site feel like a fan-based website," said Graham Brown, President and Chief Executive Officer of U SPORTS. "Most of all, we wanted to have a more dynamic platform to profile our student-athletes. "Taking the full year to rebrand has allowed us to improve the presentation of our primary communications vehicle, USPORTS.ca, and integrate it with all of our social media channels."

The new USPORTS.ca was designed to give each sport its own unique colour, inspired by the field of play. These include various shades of green for the outdoor field sports of football, soccer, cross country and rugby, orange for basketball, different blue shades for swimming, curling and wrestling, red for hockey's goal light, etc.) This new colour code, which also applies to U SPORTS' social channels, will be seen throughout the website and the 12 sports, 16 disciplines and 21 national championships that make up the organization's profile.

U SPORTS partnered with Locomotive on the redesign of the website. The Montreal-based agency has worked on similar projects with Canadian national sport organizations such as Swimming Canada and Volleyball Canada. The USPORTS.ca redesign presented a special challenge to Locomotive, given the number of sports and leagues it covers and its extensive offering of statistics. The new website is different from the previous incarnations not only by its look and its editorial content, but also in terms of architecture, features, and user experience.

"Drawing on the existing structure of information for each sport, we built a new way of presenting more user-friendly information with practical tools to improve usability and retention," said



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Frederic Marchand, President and Creative Director of Locomotive. “We also focused on providing more visuals for presenting athletes and teams by aligning with new branding that's fresher and more human. Additional focus was placed on scores, statistics, and the concept of a live event to engage users and invite them to participate live or through U SPORTS' digital platform.”

“The new USPORTS.ca will be completely responsive, mobile-friendly, and more user-friendly,” said Renée Ridout, Web and Statistics Specialist at U SPORTS. “The navigation will make things easier to find, and when you land on the website, you'll know it's U SPORTS.”

The new website features a broad statistics platform that is both up-to-date and flexible enough to allow for technical upgrades as well as accommodate changes at the 56 schools and/or four conferences. The main challenge in the development of the new USPORTS.ca was capturing statistics from the schools and conferences from different sources while ensuring a consistent display of the data for every single sport.

After months of consulting experts, media groups and national sport organizations, including the NCAA, Soho Media Solutions emerged as the best partner to support Locomotive in developing the stats component of the new USPORTS.ca. Soho Media Solutions, which has worked with Canadian media outlets such as The Globe and Mail, TVA Sports, La Presse, Le Journal de Montreal and Yahoo Canada, worked with U SPORTS to produce a uniform, easy-to-access statistics platform for fans of Canadian university sport.

“We are providing U SPORTS with a system of similar quality to major leagues such as the NHL for all 12 sports. The data collected from each venue will be updated live on the new USPORTS.ca, and of course, it will be compatible with both desktop and mobile,” said Guillaume Delannoy, CEO at Soho Media Solutions. “All the statistics collected from each venue are agglomerated into a big data system. The system takes the data, recalculates it, and consolidates it in real time. The statistics are then taken by the U SPORTS website and updated live for viewers. This is one of the functions of the new statistical system, but not the only one. The system can also send data to print publications to publish, for example, hockey recaps, or trigger sponsor ads when a particular team wins.

“The key word here is 'live' - all of this is done in real time.”

“Statistics was going to be a big piece of the website, so we needed to find a strategy that aligned with today's digital landscape as well as the messaging of the new brand,” added Ridout. “We wanted stats to be personalized and better-looking, but also focused on student-athletes while being accurate, dynamic, and up to date.”





U SPORTS aims to integrate live statistics into its new website for all sports within the next three to five years.

With the new website comes an entirely revamped editorial strategy.

“We want the new website to be a media hub, where the public can get statistics and results but also have greater access to U SPORTS as a whole, on and off the field of play,” said Ken Saint-Eloy, Manager of Communications at U SPORTS. “Season previews, national championship previews, game recaps, and Top 10 rankings will remain as regular features, but U SPORTS.ca will feature exclusive stories on student-athletes and other influential figures in Canadian university sport on a weekly basis. The objective is to reach a wider audience by highlighting our student-athletes, our competition and our institutions in a new way.”

In order to satisfy this growing need for content, U SPORTS is continuing its **Contributor Program** created last season, providing student-journalists and recent graduates who are passionate about the sports industry an opportunity to write stories for a national platform. In addition, the new website will offer a new weekly column written by Andrew Bucholtz, editor at Sporting Madness and former lead writer for Yahoo Canada’s 55-Yard Line football blog.

U SPORTS will continue to work closely with all four conferences (Canada West, Ontario University Athletics, Réseau du sport étudiant au Québec, and Atlantic University Sport) and all 56 schools to highlight the stories of over 12,000 student-athletes at the national level.

“I want to emphasize that conferences do a great job of highlighting conference information, and the schools do a great job of creating content for their teams,” Brown said. “We want USPORTS.ca to be a hub where information can be aggregated from a national perspective. We’ll keep looking for improvements to the website, and evaluate if the content we’re focusing on is what student-athletes, family, friends, alumni, faculty, staff, and other students actually want to see.

“Our latest digital initiative completes the first phase of our online transformation, one that will continue to evolve in a fast-changing world of technology and content,” added Brown. “We’ll keep looking for improvements to the website, and evaluate if the content we’re focusing on is what student-athletes, family, friends, alumni, faculty, staff, and other students actually want to see.”

The U SPORTS website has undergone considerable technical changes over the past several years. In 2009, the website went from being powered by DodgeInk to PrestoSports, the platform which U SPORTS and the majority of its 56 member institutions currently use for their respective





websites. After a redesign in 2014, the U SPORTS website underwent a revamp in January 2017 to reflect the new branding. With the new USPORTS.ca the transformation of the organization is now complete.

We are entering a new era for university sports in Canada.

About U SPORTS

U SPORTS is the national brand for University Sports in Canada. Every year, over 12,000 student-athletes and 500 coaches from 56 universities vie for 21 national championships in 12 different sports. U SPORTS also provides higher performance international opportunities for Canadian student-athletes at Winter and Summer Universiades, as well as numerous world university championships. For further information, visit usports.ca or follow us on:

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About Locomotive

Locomotive stands apart from other agencies and offers a wide array of creative and strategic services for brands, companies, foundations and other remarkable organizations. We assist and educate our clients in making the best use of the solutions we build with them.

About Soho Media Solutions

Soho Media innovates at the intersection of advertising technology, content publishing and real-time data. Soho Media's products help publishers monetize their content and connect brands with consumers. Soho Media has offices in North America and Europe. Learn more at ingame.ad



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