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## **Stadium Case Study**

### **Scenario**

Your consulting group, “Media Moguls Inc.” is a well-respected sports media firm that has an expertise within the digital sports marketplace, including rights acquisition, streaming, and content creation.

### **The Client**

Stadium is the sports network built for today’s fans and video platforms, delivering TV-quality programming - anchored in a free experience - to fast-growing audiences consuming video on platforms where traditional sports network content is lacking. Stadium has engaged Media Moguls Inc. to create and assess how Stadium can best position itself within the sports television landscape while engaging its fans. Located inside Chicago’s United Center, Stadium was created in 2017 after 120 Sports, Campus Insiders, and American Sports Network merged, forming the new digital sports network. With a staff over 100, Stadium is the only national sports network located in the Midwest and aims to serve the underserved with content not found on traditional sports networks.

Link for more information on Stadium: <https://watchstadium.com/where-to-watch/>

### **Who Needs Stadium?**

Stadium is the only sports network available for distribution into growing video platforms (XUMO, VidGo, SamsungTVPlus).

- Distributors need Stadium
  - Live sports remains a core programming pillar in the entertainment mix.
  - Traditionally, premium sports content (live games, exclusive original programming) are not available on a free platform, but instead are behind a pay wall or subscription service. Stadium can provide content that can be run on all platforms, which is scarce and in demand.
- Fans need Stadium
  - Only first-class sports network available for free on their preferred cord cutter platforms.
  - Supplants or supplements premium sports subscriptions.
  - Compelling, exclusive content.

### **Stadium Offering**

- TV-quality linear network
  - Daily, live studio programming
  - Exclusive, live games
  - Full-length classic games
  - Original series and specials
- Real-time Video on Demand (VOD) built for social and digital audiences

Additionally, WatchStadium.com features written articles from a handful of college sports writers, including Brett McMurphy and Jeff Goodman. Stadium also is home to NBA Insider, Shams Charania, who produces video content exclusively for Stadium (and writes exclusively for The Athletic). All of this content is free and behind no pay wall.

### **Stadium Content**

Stadium's content has proven important in the world of sports. Some highlights include:

- Stadium's Brett McMurphy breaking the Urban Meyer/Zach Smith story surrounding the Ohio State assault scandal
- Stadium leading coverage with NBA trade deadline, free agency, and draft coverage centered around Stadium's Shams Charania
- Exclusive live events including 12 2018 CFB bowl participants, 12 2018 NCAA CBB tournament teams, and over 100 games annually featuring ranked teams in their respective sports
- First network to air college football and basketball games exclusively on Facebook and Twitter

- Fully producing “Pooh: The Derrick Rose Story” as a full-length feature film and debuting on the Stadium platform, free to the public

Stadium’s programming is currently made up of live events from multiple conferences.

Stadium airs 31 college football games a season with games from Conference USA, Mountain West, and the Patriot League. 15 of those games will air exclusively on Stadium’s College Football Facebook page. Stadium will also air 55 college basketball games from Conference-USA, Mountain West, Patriot League, Atlantic 10 and the West Coast Conference. 18 of those games will air exclusively on Stadium’s Facebook College Basketball page.

In total, Stadium airs over 3,000 live events (most from WatchStadium.com) across five conferences spanning most Olympic sports (lacrosse, wrestling, volleyball, field hockey, soccer.)

Stadium also features live studio programming Monday-Friday:

- **The Territory**: Airing weekdays 9am - 10am ET, The Territory sets the editorial cycle for the day with a fast-paced, expansive look at the sports landscape, featuring news and storylines from coast-to-coast. Hosted by renowned sports news personality Michael Kim (@MichaelKimHD).
- **Sauce & Shram**: Airing weekdays 11am - 12pm ET, Sauce & Shram showcases an irreverent and interactive conversation between Dave Ross (@DRossSports) and Tyler Jacobs (@TylerJacobsSTAD) along with user generated social media commentary and callers. *“Come for the sports, stay for the fun.”*
- **Emerge**: Airing weekdays 10am - 10:30am ET, Emerge spotlights the best high school talent across the country, featuring athlete-submitted training, game, and social content while also featuring interviews with players and coaches throughout prep sports. Emerge is also the home for recruiting news, with daily segments on where tomorrow’s stars are headed. Emerge is hosted by Amina Smith (@AminaJadeTV) and Michael Felder (@InTheBleachers) and features regular guests and experts from across the high school sports landscape.
- **Campus Insiders**: Airing weekdays 10:30am - 11am ET, Campus Insiders continues to focus on college conferences across the nation, including the SEC, Pac-12, Big 10, Big 12, ACC, Mountain West, Conference USA, Patriot League and the West Coast Conference. Each day, a different conference is highlighted with exclusive interviews, Top 25 breakdowns, game picks and more. Kristen Balboni (@KristenBalboni) anchors the coverage, and is joined by various Stadium insiders and analysts.

- **The Fantasy Sportsbook:** Airing weekdays 6pm - 7pm ET, The Fantasy Sportsbook offers sports fans everything they need to know to compete, play, and win off the field. Hosts Dave Ross and Tyler Jacobs along with experts Michael Beller and Sam Panayotovich provide viewers with news, information, strategy and analysis surrounding fantasy and gaming.

To better understand Stadium programming, please watch: <https://youtu.be/Fir4-giBofw>

Along with live games and studio programming, Stadium has the rights to a number of sports documentaries, classic game archives (NCAA, MLB, NHL) and combat sporting events. Additionally, Stadium has highlight rights for MLB, NHL, NCAA and high school sports.

Stadium distribution partners include: The Roku Channel, Pluto, Twitch. VOD: DailyMotion, MSN, ReachME.TV, Gas Station TV, Youtube. MVPD's: FuboTV, PlaystationVue, Samsung TV Plus, Sling TV, STIRR, VidGo.

Stadium multiplatform strategy includes the following distribution platforms

- Over-the-air (OTA) channels distributed in over 85 markets (62% of the country) via digital antenna including New York, Chicago, Dallas and Atlanta.
- Over-the-top (OTT) including the 24/7 network can also be found on WatchStadium.com as well as Sling TV, PlaystaionVue, PlutoTV FuboTV, Samsung TVPlus, and XUMO.
- Social media platforms including Twitter, Facebook and Instagram (over 1.2 million followers combined).

### **Best performing content on Stadium:**

#### **Over-the-Air:**

- Combat Sports
- Ring of Honor
- High School Football
- Documentaries

#### **Digital:**

- Live Football
  - Conference USA
  - Mountain West (On Facebook)
  - Patriot League
- Olympic events
- Reactions to news events

Social:

- Live games
- Long form content series

## **Stadium Revenue**

Currently, Stadium has multiple revenue streams as a digital sports network:

- Commercials – Commercials are sold within programming blocks, based on rating information
- OTT – Sponsorship of certain segments or shows, subscription fees from providers to carry Stadium on their platform, and commercial inventory.
- Digital video/social – Sponsored branded content, pre-roll sponsorship, licensing branded content, all based on watch hours/viewership
  - For example, Stadium has a partnership with Facebook. Within the partnership, Facebook pays Stadium to produce exclusive football and basketball for the Facebook platform.

## **The Industry**

The sports media industry is ever-changing with new competition regularly entering the ecosystem. While many try to serve the same audience, each is unique despite a singular goal: create and produce content viewers want to consume.

Because of the unique nature of Stadium, competitors can range from other sports TV networks to digital media companies. Competitors to Stadium are:

- CBSSports HQ
- NBCSports Network
- Fox Sports
- FloSports
- Barstool Sports
- TheRinger
- The Athletic
- ESPN+

## **The Challenges**

Stadium faces a number of challenges within the sports media industry, not unlike any of their competitors. It's not enough to keep up with changing technology and evolving watch habits, but also understanding consumer needs and where voids in the marketplace may develop. Some of the challenges facing Stadium include:

- Being a competitive sports network without having unlimited funds to purchase rights to NFL-NBA-MLB-NHL-NCAA (Power 5 conferences).
- Acquiring and developing talent that consumers want to watch/care about.
- Stadium is made up of more educated, thoughtful sports conversation, rather than hot takes or controversies of the day. Such content can often set conversation, but must compete against other information sources with more brand awareness who also offer hot takes.
- While multi-platform distribution is a strength and differentiator, it also dilutes message of where to send fans. Audiences also vary on different platforms, with OTA skewing towards older consumers and social skewing to younger viewers.
- Uncertainty on what the consumer ultimately wants? Highlights and traditional sports coverage, or more behind the scenes/access driven content? How does a network best serve fans who are underserved?

## **Questions to Address in Case Response**

1. What sort of content can be altered for Stadium, assuming rights partners and general network structure stays consistent (Please keep in mind budget limitations. Acquiring NFL rights isn't realistic to Stadium. Stay within a seven figure per year rights agreement for any new property airing on Stadium)?
2. Is there a niche that is currently being underserved to audiences (e.g., gambling, high school sports, eSports)?
3. Moving forward, what marketing tactics should Stadium employ around content?
4. What marketing messaging should Stadium use to appeal to fans and grow its audience?
5. How can Stadium retain fans who watch its content?