



MLS IS BACK
SEASON 23
2018

MAJOR LEAGUE SOCCER IN 2018: DRIVING THE GROWTH OF SOCCER IN THE U.S. AND CANADA

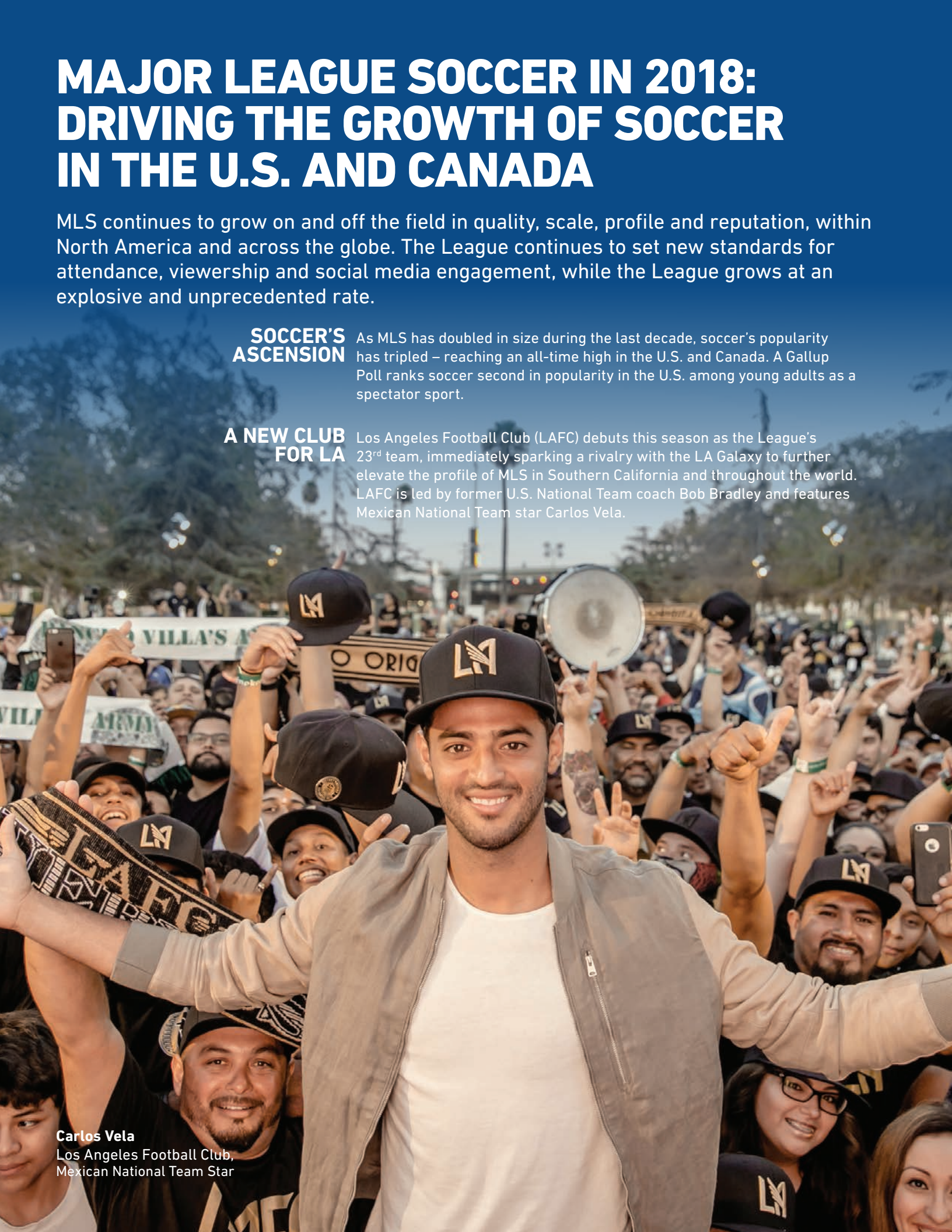
MLS continues to grow on and off the field in quality, scale, profile and reputation, within North America and across the globe. The League continues to set new standards for attendance, viewership and social media engagement, while the League grows at an explosive and unprecedented rate.

SOCCER'S ASCENSION

As MLS has doubled in size during the last decade, soccer's popularity has tripled – reaching an all-time high in the U.S. and Canada. A Gallup Poll ranks soccer second in popularity in the U.S. among young adults as a spectator sport.

A NEW CLUB FOR LA

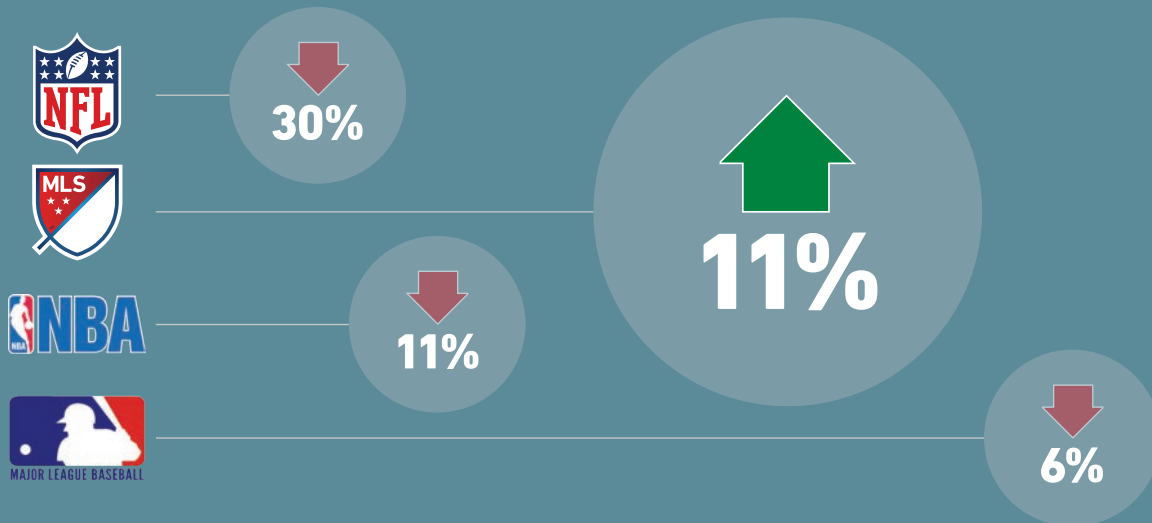
Los Angeles Football Club (LAFC) debuts this season as the League's 23rd team, immediately sparking a rivalry with the LA Galaxy to further elevate the profile of MLS in Southern California and throughout the world. LAFC is led by former U.S. National Team coach Bob Bradley and features Mexican National Team star Carlos Vela.



Carlos Vela
Los Angeles Football Club,
Mexican National Team Star

SOCCER'S RISING POPULARITY

A Gallup poll in December 2017 stated that soccer ranks second in popularity as a spectator sport among people 18–34 in the U.S., behind only gridiron football.



SPECTACULAR SOCCER STADIUMS

MLS now has 19 stadiums built for soccer, with two opening this season — LAFC's Banc of California Stadium and D.C. United's Audi Field. Minnesota United's Allianz Field opens in 2019.

DYNAMIC ATHLETES IN THEIR PRIME

As MLS has quickly become one of the world's top soccer leagues, it has become a League of Choice for dynamic players in the prime of their careers. These players combine with a passionate, millennial-fueled supporter culture to provide an exhilarating live experience at every match.

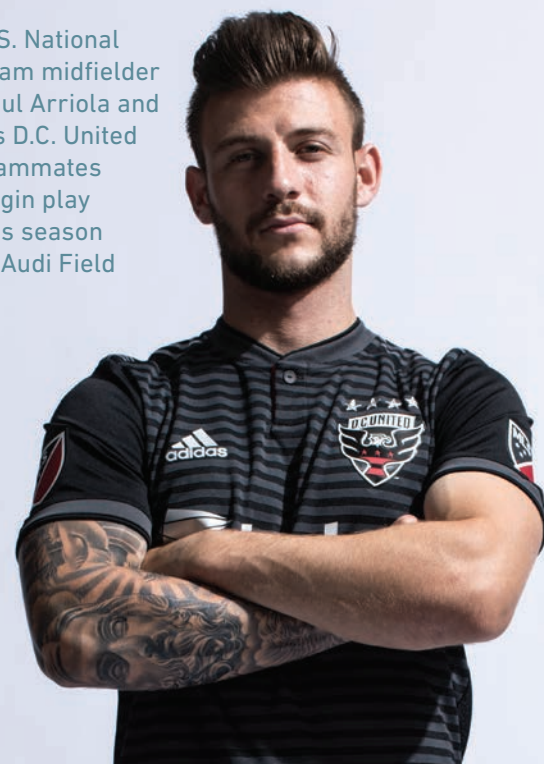
THE WORLD COMES TO MLS

With players from more than 70 different countries competing, MLS is the most diverse sports league in the world.



Opening in 2018: LAFC's Banc of California Stadium

U.S. National Team midfielder Paul Arriola and his D.C. United teammates begin play this season at Audi Field



23 MLS CLUBS IN 2018



STRATEGIC EXPANSION: A FOOTPRINT ACROSS NORTH AMERICA

Continuing a period of explosive growth, MLS will increase to 28 clubs in the next four years. In 2015, the steady, selective expansion process began when the League had 18 clubs. A timeline:

2015 Orlando City SC: A major success as MLS planted roots in Florida, the club opened a world-class soccer stadium in downtown Orlando and plays to 100 percent capacity crowds.

New York City FC: A second team for the New York market became an immediate rival for the New York Red Bulls and an instant hit, filling Yankee Stadium on a regular basis.

2017 Atlanta United: With crowds exceeding 70,000 for MLS games at Mercedes-Benz Stadium, Atlanta United has become one of the most extraordinary success stories in professional sports in North America.

Minnesota United FC: From its debut match, Minnesota United FC captured the imagination of the Twin Cities. In 2019, the club opens a beautiful new soccer venue, Allianz Field.

2018 LAFC: The new club for LA (and rival for the Galaxy) debuts this season and its state-of-the-art Banc of California Stadium opens in the heart of Los Angeles.

COMING SOON Miami and Nashville: The League's Southeast expansion, so successful in Atlanta and Orlando, continues with the debut of clubs in Miami and Nashville in the coming years.

Interest in MLS expansion is at an all-time high, with the selection of three more major cities for MLS expected in the near future from eleven markets that have applied. As an illustration of the demand, the fee for expansion clubs in 2007 was \$10 million. Today, it is \$150 million.



Commissioner Don Garber welcomes John Ingram and the city of Nashville to Major League Soccer

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TUESDAY JANUARY 30 2018

\$2 Sunny
68°/56° See 88

Miami Herald

SOCCER | MIAMI'S MAJOR LEAGUE SOCCER TEAM

Beckham's team will debut in 2020

IN MY OPINION

**Big goal:
Matter
like Heat,
Dolphins**

BY GREG COTE
[grec@miamiherald.com](#)

There were barely clad women dancing in feather headresses, like a casting call for Carnival in Rio. Hip-hop and Latin music pounded loud, like it would in South Beach clubs at 3 a.m.

Confetti cannons boomed to punctuate the event. Hundreds of fans waiting for this day to finally arrive chanted and cheered. One held a sign that read, MIAMI. PREPARE FOR GLORY, with a picture of the cause of this celebration in dramatic, heroic profile, wearing a Roman gladiator's helmet.

A photograph showing four men sitting on a stage during a press conference. David Beckham is standing on the right side of the stage, speaking into a microphone. The other three men are sitting in chairs, listening. The background is a blue wall with the MLS logo and the word 'MIAMI' repeated.

From left, MasTec Chairman and co-founder Jorge Mas, Sprint CEO Marcelo Claure and MLS commissioner Don Garber listen as David Beckham announces that Miami will have a Major League Soccer franchise starting in 2020 during a ceremony on Monday at the Arsht Center.





IN 2017 AT THE NEW MERCEDES-BENZ STADIUM, FIRST-YEAR EXPANSION CLUB ATLANTA UNITED BROKE THE MLS RECORD FOR LARGEST REGULAR SEASON SINGLE-MATCH CROWD (71,874).

MOST DIVERSE LEAGUE IN THE WORLD

MLS FEATURES PLAYERS REPRESENTING MORE THAN 70 COUNTRIES, AND HAS 17 KEY STRATEGIC MEDIA PARTNERSHIPS BROADCASTING IN 90 LANGUAGES TO 170 NATIONS AROUND THE GLOBE



Tyler Adams
United States
New York Red Bulls



Alberth Elis
Honduras
Houston Dynamo



Ezequiel Barco
Argentina
Atlanta United



Alphonso Davies
Canada
Vancouver Whitecaps FC



Kellyn Acosta
United States
FC Dallas



Nemanja Nikolić
Hungary
Chicago Fire



Albert Rusnák
Slovakia
Real Salt Lake



Miguel Almirón
Paraguay
Atlanta United



Jonathan Mensah
Ghana
Columbus Crew SC



Diego Valeri
Argentina
Portland Timbers
2017 MLS Most Valuable Player



GLOBAL REACH



MLS FEATURES WORLD CUP CHAMPIONS

AND RISING TALENT THAT WILL PLAY IN THE 2018 FIFA WORLD CUP THIS SUMMER



Yoshimar Yotún
Peru
Orlando City SC



Jonathan dos Santos
Mexico
LA Galaxy

Giovani dos Santos
Mexico
LA Galaxy
Played in two FIFA World Cups



Francisco Calvo
Costa Rica
Minnesota United FC



Aníbal Godoy
Panama
San Jose Earthquakes





UNITED2026



BIDDING NATIONS
CANADA • MEXICO • UNITED STATES

THE UNITED BID FOR WORLD CUP 2026

Making a statement of how our sport can bring people together, the U.S., Canada and Mexico have presented a joint bid to host the 2026 FIFA World Cup. The United Bid Committee is based in the offices of MLS, which believes this is a perfect opportunity to unite people at the northern and southern borders of the U.S., while further accelerating the growth of soccer across North America. FIFA is expected to select the host for the 2026 World Cup on June 13.

Omar Gaber
Egypt
LAFC



David Villa
Spain
NYCFC
2010 FIFA World Cup Champion



Bastian Schweinsteiger
Germany
Chicago Fire
2014 FIFA World Cup
Champion



Nicolás Lodeiro
Uruguay
Seattle Sounders FC
2010 World Cup
Semifinalist



2018 KEY SOCCER DATES*

February 7 – May 1:	Primary Transfer Window
February 20 – 22:	CONCACAF Champions League Round of 16 Leg 1
February 27 – March 1:	CONCACAF Champions League Round of 16 Leg 2
March 1:	MLS roster compliance
March 3 – 4:	MLS Opening Weekend
March 6–8:	CONCACAF Champions League Quarterfinal Leg 1
March 13–15:	CONCACAF Champions League Quarterfinal Leg 2
April 3–5:	CONCACAF Champions League Semifinal Leg 1
April 10–12:	CONCACAF Champions League Semifinal Leg 2
April 17–19:	CONCACAF Champions League Final Leg 1
April 24–26:	CONCACAF Champions League Final Leg 2
June 13:	2026 FIFA World Cup host country announcement
June 14 – July 15:	2018 FIFA World Cup Russia (June 14 – 22: MLS break for FIFA World Cup)
July 10 – August 8:	Secondary Transfer Window
August 1:	2018 MLS All-Star Game presented by Target (Mercedes-Benz Stadium Atlanta, GA)
August 8:	Canadian Championship Final Leg 1
August 15:	Canadian Championship Final Leg 2
August 22 – 26:	MLS Heineken Rivalry Week
September 14:	Roster Freeze Date
September 26:	Lamar Hunt U.S. Open Cup Final
October 28:	MLS Decision Day presented by AT&T; MLS regular season ends
October 31 – December 8:	Audi 2018 MLS Cup Playoffs
December 8:	2018 MLS Cup

*Dates subject to change