



**MLS IS BACK**  
**SEASON 24**  
**2019**



# A LEAGUE FOR A NEW NORTH AMERICA

With the highest percentage of millennial audience of any major U.S. professional sports league, in addition to the most diverse and tech-savvy fans, Major League Soccer has continued to emphasize digital and social media content to further engage fans. MLS is the fastest-growing league on social media.

**39%**

**MILLENNIAL**

**34%**

**HISPANIC**

**41%**

**FEMALE**

**YOUNGEST  
AVERAGE AGE  
OF TV VIEWERS**

**40**

**LOWEST OF ALL  
U.S. PROFESSIONAL  
SPORTS LEAGUES**

**HIGHEST OF ALL U.S.  
PROFESSIONAL SPORTS LEAGUES**





# POWERFUL NEW OWNERSHIP GROUPS & EXCITING EXPANSION TEAMS

MLS has expanded more than any major global sports league during the last decade. Several dynamic new MLS ownership groups and expansion teams will join MLS in the next few years.



After smashing attendance records with an average of more than 25,000 fans per game in the second division, FC Cincinnati joins MLS in 2019 as the League's 24<sup>th</sup> club.



The culturally-dynamic city of Austin will have its first major professional sports team, Austin FC, when MLS and Precourt Sports Ventures bring a team to town in 2021.

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

Club Internacional de Fútbol Miami's launch celebrated the organization's ownership group, a diverse team that combines strong local connections and global star power, including MasTec's Chairman of the Board and CEO, Jorge and Jose Mas, CEO of Sprint Corporation, Marcelo Claure, SoftBank founder Masayoshi Son, and soccer and cultural icon David Beckham.

## VALUATION OF MLS CLUBS IS SOARING

**\$240M**

Average worth of an MLS team according to Forbes

**30%**

Increased value of MLS clubs since 2016

**648%**

Forbes increased valuation of an MLS club from 2008 – 2018

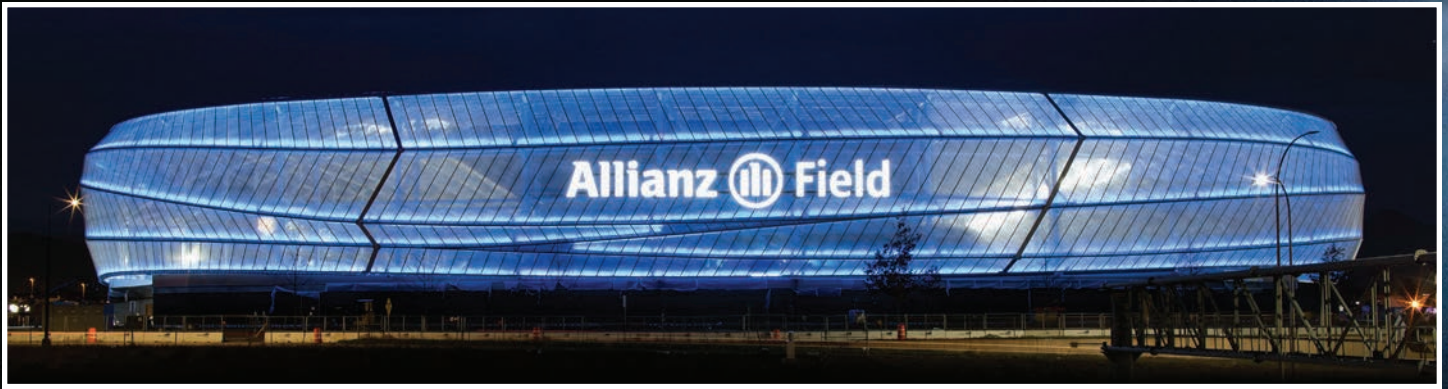


# ***MLS STADIUM BOOM CONTINUES***

World-class soccer stadiums have been a key focus of MLS. Minnesota United FC's Allianz Field opens this season, becoming the league's 20<sup>th</sup> stadium built or transformed for soccer. Six more world-class stadiums will debut in the next few years in Miami, Nashville, Cincinnati, Columbus, Austin and a yet-to-be-named expansion club. D.C. United's \$500 million state-of-the-art soccer stadium, Audi Field (pictured below), opened in July of 2018 in our nation's capital.











Engaging with MLS' digital-centric fans through gaming is one of the many ways MLS is delivering the sport to fans. MLS unveiled a competitive *EA SPORTS™ FIFA* league, eMLS, in January 2018. In its first year, eMLS has been a groundbreaking addition, sitting at the cross-section of gaming and soccer culture. MLS is utilizing gaming to reach global audiences, raise the profile of MLS, and grow its next generation of fans.



- MLS fans are **two times** more likely to be gamers than the average sports fan

- **65%** of MLS fans highlight FIFA, the video game, as a driver of their interest in soccer

- eMLS won **Best New Event Stream** for eMLS All-Star Challenge presented by Wells Fargo at the Tempest Esports Awards

- **MLS was the only traditional professional sports league** to receive an honor at the Tempest Awards

# MAJOR LEAGUE SOCCER CONTINUES TO GROW



## EXPANSION TEAMS

2020



2021





**IN 2018, AN MLS CUP  
RECORD WAS SET  
AT MERCEDES-BENZ  
STADIUM WITH  
73,019 FANS  
ATTENDING THE TITLE  
GAME FEATURING  
ATLANTA UNITED'S  
2-0 WIN OVER THE  
PORTLAND TIMBERS.**

Atlanta United has the highest average attendance of any North American professional sports team outside of the National Football League and the highest attendance of any soccer club in the Americas.

**NEW UNITED &  
NEW MLS RECORD  
ATTENDANCE**

**55.7k**

Average fans  
per game in 2018

**1.11M**

Fans attended  
the club's 17 regular  
season and three  
postseason matches







73,019

Mercedes-Benz Stadium

70:21

70% STADIUM ATTENDANCE, 88%  
MLS CUP ATTENDANCE RECORD TIED





# ONE OF THE MOST ENTERTAINING LEAGUES IN THE WORLD

MLS IS THE YOUNGEST, MOST DIVERSE AND ENTERTAINING LEAGUE IN NORTH AMERICA WITH PLAYERS FROM MORE THAN 70 COUNTRIES.

**Bill Hamid**  
United States  
D.C. United



**MOST  
GOALS  
3.2**

MORE GOALS  
PER GAME THAN ANY  
MAJOR INTERNATIONAL  
SOCCER LEAGUE

**Josef Martinez**  
Venezuela  
Atlanta United



**MORE  
SHOTS  
27**

HIGHEST AVERAGE  
ATTEMPTS AT GOAL PER  
GAME IN A DECADE



## GLOBAL REACH

MLS matches are broadcast in more than 170 different countries.



**Carlos Vela**  
Mexico  
LAFC



**Zlatan Ibrahimović**  
Sweden  
LA Galaxy



**MORE  
QUALITY  
CHANCES  
10**

MORE QUALITY GOAL-SCORING  
CHANCES CREATED PER  
GAME THAN ANY OTHER  
TOP LEAGUE

**MORE  
COMPLETED  
PASSES**

MORE PASSES COMPLETED IN  
THE FINAL THIRD THAN ANY  
OTHER TOP LEAGUE



# CAMPEONES CUP

Major League Soccer and Liga MX launched a new partnership in 2018 designed to build on the growing rivalry between MLS and Liga MX clubs in the CONCACAF Champions League. The partnership features a match between the champions of MLS and Liga MX. The inaugural match featured Toronto FC and Tigres. This unique annual event also includes a sharing of best business practices and a collaboration around social responsibility efforts to drive positive social change across borders.



The second edition of the competition will be hosted by Atlanta United, the 2018 MLS Cup winner, on Wednesday, August 14.

The partnership includes commitment for a future MLS All-Star Game presented by Target featuring the best players from both leagues facing off in an epic clash.



# INNOVATION

MLS sets a global standard of excellence when it comes to forward thinking on and off the field. 2018 was an unprecedented year for the League with innovation fueling strategic partnerships with Twitter and R/GA. MLS was also the first soccer league globally to implement Video Review technology into live competition.



Major League Soccer was named to Fast Company's list of World's Most Innovative Companies for 2019.



MLS and Twitter made history debuting a Twitter-powered camera for the first time during a major professional sporting event. The camera saw more than double the engagement at an MLS match than when used at *ESPN's College Gameday*.

More than 150 industry thought leaders attended the inaugural MLS Innovation Showcase in collaboration with R/GA Ventures at the 2018 All-Star Week in Atlanta.





# MLS WORKS

**MLS  
RECOGNIZED  
AS MOST  
RESPONSIBLE  
FOOTBALL  
LEAGUE IN THE  
WORLD**

Built on the core values of diversity and inclusion, MLS stands behind utilizing sport as a vehicle for positive social change. MLS WORKS, the league's community outreach initiative, leverages sport to address unique social issues. Anchored by annual campaigns such as *Greener Goals*, *Kick Childhood Cancer* and *Soccer For All*, MLS WORKS and our clubs continue to make a measurable impact in the communities where we live and play.





# 2019 KEY SOCCER DATES\*

<b>February 13 – May 7:</b>	Primary Transfer Window
<b>February 19 – 28:</b>	Concacaf Champions League Round of 16
<b>March 1:</b>	MLS Roster Compliance
<b>March 2 – 3:</b>	MLS Opening Weekend
<b>March 5 – 14:</b>	Concacaf Champions League Quarterfinal
<b>April 2 – 11:</b>	Concacaf Champions League Semifinal
<b>April 13 – 20:</b>	Generation adidas Cup
<b>April 23 – May 1:</b>	Concacaf Champions League Final
<b>May:</b>	MLS clubs join Lamar Hunt U.S. Open Cup play
<b>May 23 – June 15:</b>	2019 FIFA U-20 World Cup
<b>June 7 – July 7:</b>	2019 FIFA Women's World Cup France
<b>July 9 – August 7:</b>	Secondary Transfer Window
<b>July 10:</b>	Canadian Championship Third Qualifying Round Leg 1
<b>June 15 – July 7:</b>	2019 Concacaf Gold Cup
<b>July 24:</b>	Canadian Championship Third Qualifying Round Leg 2
<b>July 31:</b>	2019 MLS All-Star Game presented by Target (Orlando City Stadium   Orlando, FL)
<b>August 7:</b>	Canadian Championship Semifinal Leg 1
<b>August 14:</b>	Canadian Championship Semifinal Leg 2
<b>August 14:</b>	Campeones Cup
<b>August 21 – 25:</b>	MLS Heineken Rivalry Week
<b>September 14:</b>	Roster Freeze Date
<b>September 18:</b>	Canadian Championship Final Leg 1
<b>September 25:</b>	Canadian Championship Final Leg 2
<b>September 26:</b>	Lamar Hunt U.S. Open Cup Final
<b>October 5 – 27:</b>	2019 FIFA U-17 World Cup
<b>October 6:</b>	MLS Decision Day presented by AT&T; MLS regular season ends
<b>October 19 – November 10:</b>	Audi 2019 MLS Cup Playoffs
<b>November 10:</b>	2019 MLS Cup

\*Dates subject to change



