



**25<sup>TH</sup> SEASON**

**2020**



# 25<sup>TH</sup> SEASON CELEBRATION

Major League Soccer will celebrate 25 seasons in 2020 with marquee events, robust content, innovative programming, unique experiences, and a special 25<sup>th</sup> season commemorative crest integrated throughout the league and partner initiatives.

The season will celebrate the league's rich history, while expanding on the foundation it has built during an extensive period of explosive growth. In addition, MLS will welcome new clubs in Inter Miami CF and Nashville SC for the 2020 season.



## MLS CUP



The landmark season will culminate with a special celebration at the 2020 MLS Cup championship game.

## ALL-STAR GAME



The MLS All-Stars will wear a commemorative 25<sup>th</sup> Season Celebration uniform when they take on Mexico's LIGA MX All-Stars at the 2020 MLS All-Star Game presented by Target on Wednesday, July 29.

The league's complete collection of 2020 jerseys was unveiled at a star-studded celebration in advance of New York City's Fashion Week.



## FORWARD25 EVENT



# A LEAGUE FOR A NEW NORTH AMERICA

As MLS has more than doubled in size during the last decade, the popularity of soccer has reached an all-time high in the United States and Canada. A recent Gallup poll stated that soccer ranks second in popularity as a “sport to watch” among people 18–34 in the U.S., behind only football. During the last decade, soccer’s popularity in the U.S. has tripled, and the sport has also seen similar growth in Canada.

**AVERAGE AGE OF  
MLS TV VIEWERS**

**40**

**THE YOUNGEST OF  
U.S.-BASED PROFESSIONAL  
SPORTS LEAGUES**

**MLS HAS THE HIGHEST BRAND  
MOMENTUM AMONG NORTH  
AMERICAN PROFESSIONAL  
SPORTS LEAGUES**

**39%**

**AGREE THAT MLS IS A  
LEAGUE WITH MOMENTUM**

**FASTEST GROWING  
LEAGUE IN NORTH  
AMERICA DURING THE  
PAST FIVE YEARS**

## MLS FAN BASE

**40%**

**HISPANIC**





**42%**

**FEMALE**

**39%**

**MILLENNIAL**

## SOCCER'S RISING POPULARITY

	18-34 YO	TREND YOY
	<b>30%</b>	↓
	<b>11%</b>	↑
	<b>11%</b>	↓
	<b>06%</b>	↓

*\*Source: Gallup Poll; “What is your favorite sport to watch?”, Dec 4–11, 2017*

With the highest percentage of millennial audience of any major North American professional sports league, in addition to the most diverse and tech-savvy fans, MLS continues to emphasize digital and social media content to engage fans. MLS is the fastest-growing league on social media.

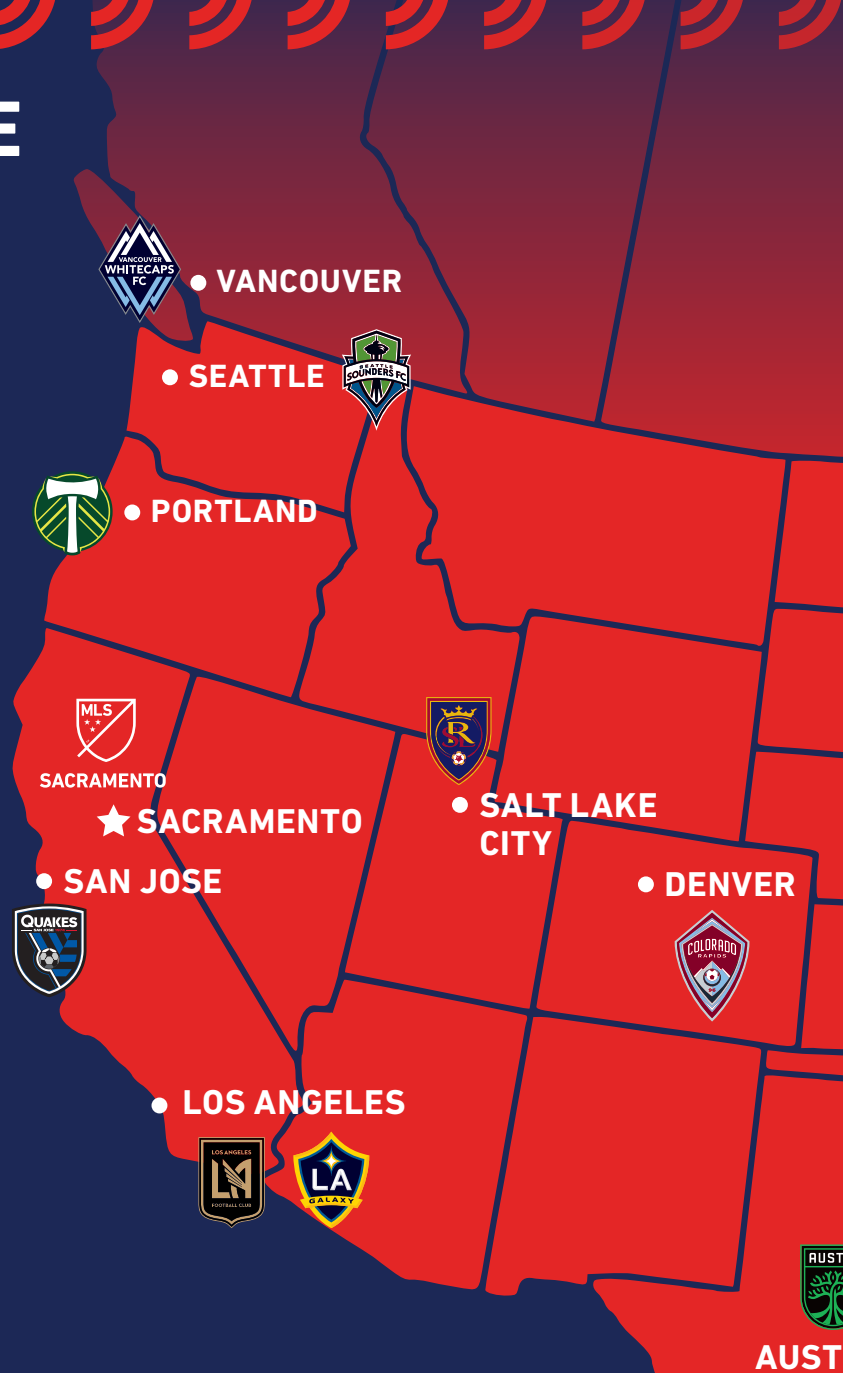
*\*Demographic information about MLS fans from Nielsen Scarborough, Simmons Research and Magna Global.*



# A GROWING LEAGUE

Since 2005, 20 teams have joined Major League Soccer — an unmatched run for a major professional sports league in this century. With the December 2019 announcement that Charlotte will be MLS' 30th team, the league capped off a period of strategic expansion as soccer's popularity has exploded across the United States and Canada.

With six new teams scheduled to debut in the next three years and seven more stadiums opening during that time, MLS remains a growth story.



## 2020 MIAMI & NASHVILLE



## 2021 AUSTIN & CHARLOTTE

## 2022 SACRAMENTO & ST. LOUIS

## ATLANTA UNITED

\$ **500M**

VALUATION ACCORDING TO  
2019 FORBES STUDY





**VALUATION OF MLS CLUBS IS SOARING**

**\$ 313M**

AVERAGE WORTH OF AN MLS TEAM ACCORDING TO FORBES

PER FORBES, THE VALUE OF MLS CLUBS HAS DOUBLED DURING THE PAST FIVE YEARS





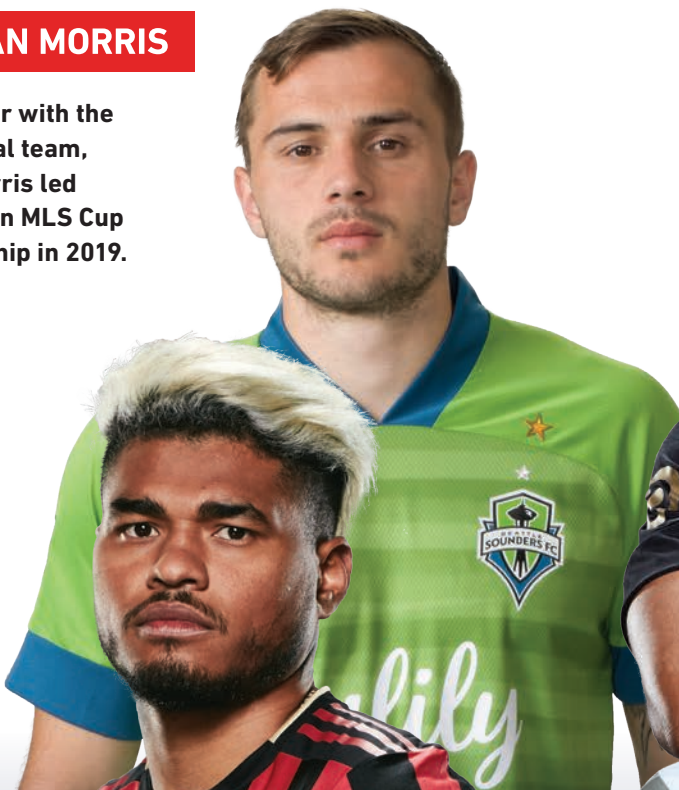
# A LEAGUE OF CHOICE

MLS is a league of choice for world-class players. An influx of attacking players has helped MLS become one of the highest scoring soccer leagues in the world.

With players from 75 countries, MLS is the youngest and most diverse league in North America.

## JORDAN MORRIS

A rising star with the U.S. national team, Jordan Morris led Seattle to an MLS Cup championship in 2019.



## CARLOS VELA

After scoring an MLS-record 34 goals, LAFC's Carlos Vela was named the 2019 Landon Donovan MLS Most Valuable Player.



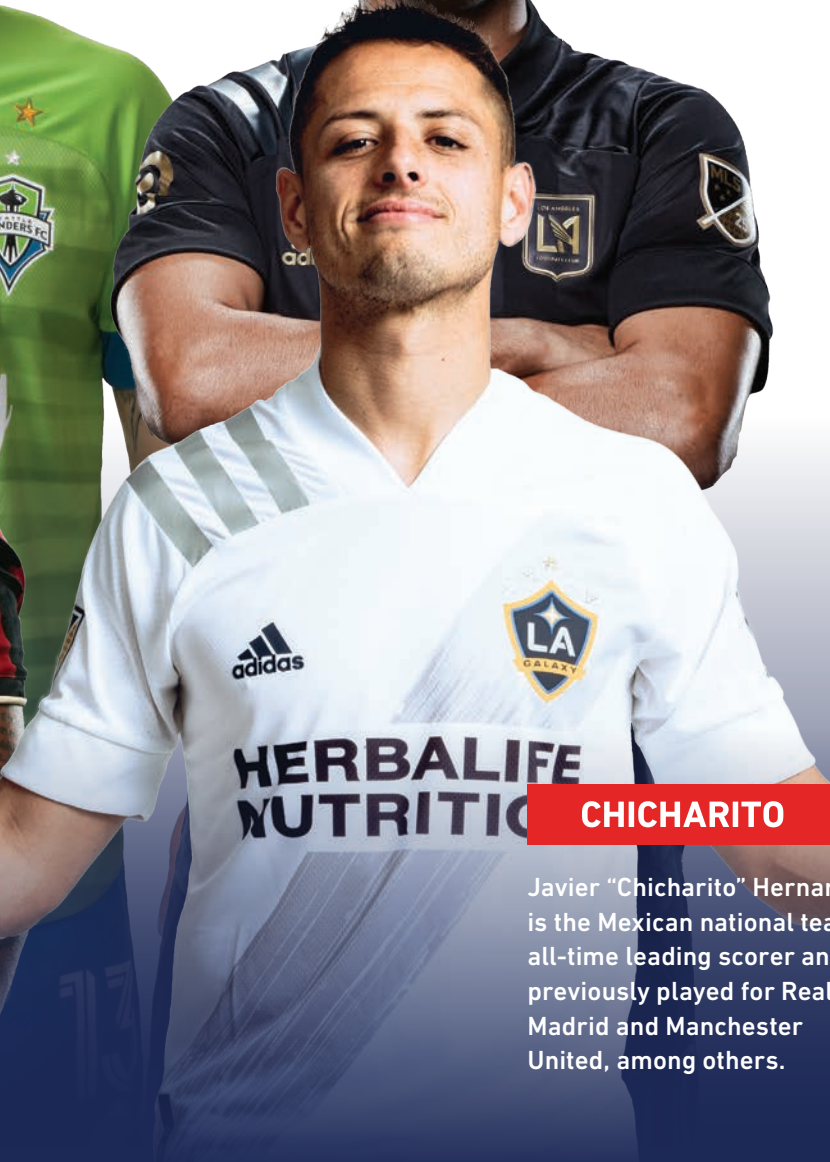
## JOSEF MARTINEZ

Atlanta's Josef Martinez has scored 63 regular season and playoff goals during the past two years.



## CHICHARITO

Javier "Chicharito" Hernandez is the Mexican national team's all-time leading scorer and previously played for Real Madrid and Manchester United, among others.



# COMMITMENT TO DEVELOPING WORLD-CLASS PLAYERS

MLS clubs are taking a leadership role in developing world-class players, and the investment in youth development is making a significant impact on the field. With each season, more young players are making their mark on first-team rosters. MLS players developed in club youth academics produced more goals, assists and played more minutes in 2019 than ever before. And seven of the top nine teams in Homegrown Player minutes qualified for the Audi MLS Cup Playoffs last season.

**MLS IS THE HIGHEST SCORING TOP-FLIGHT SOCCER LEAGUE OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS**

5-YEAR AVERAGES		
TEAM		GOALS PER GAME
	MLS	2.97
	Bundesliga	2.88
	La Liga	2.72
	Serie A	2.72
	EPL	2.71
	Liga MX	2.66
	Ligue 1	2.58

**JONATHAN OSORIO**

Toronto FC academy product Jonathan Osorio is a key reason why the club has competed in three of the past four MLS Cups.

**GIANLUCA BUSIO**

17-year-old Gianluca Busio played in 22 matches for Sporting Kansas City in 2019 and is a rising star within the U.S. national team system.





# STADIUM BOOM

Nearly 70,000 fans attended the 2019 MLS Cup in Seattle, setting a record for the largest crowd for a sporting event at CenturyLink Field.







SOUNDERS FC 3 90:00 1 TORONTO FC

#MLSCUP

BIECIU

CenturyLink

AWS Amazon Web Services

DELTA

verizon

BOEING

HOME DE

MGM RESORTS

Captain More





# INNOVATIVE ALL-STAR GAME

## MLS VS. LIGA MX



ALL-STAR  
GAME

PRESENTED BY



LOS ANGELES  
2020

The 2020 MLS All-Star Game presented by Target will feature a first-of-its-kind summer showdown: The MLS All-Stars will face the Liga MX All-Stars on July 29 at Banc of California Stadium in Los Angeles. The game will be the culmination of a week-long series of experiences and events taking place throughout Los Angeles that showcase the unique soccer culture in North America, including concerts and parties, the MLS All-Star Skills Challenge, as well as the MLS Innovation Showcase.



The MLS All-Star Skills Challenge was a highlight of the 2019 All-Star Week. Developed in collaboration with the F2, a duo of skills specialists with a YouTube following of more than 20 million fans, the event highlighted soccer culture in front of a **sold-out crowd** and engaged audiences around the world through **one of the broadest digital-first distributions in North American sports.**



2019 ALL-STAR SKILLS CHALLENGE



# MLS AND LIGA MX

## A GROWING PARTNERSHIP

Two years ago, Major League Soccer and LIGA MX joined forces in a historic collaboration between the two top soccer leagues in North America, forming a strategic partnership to focus on sharing best practices, prioritizing social responsibility efforts, and creating new competition to fuel the existing rivalry between countries on the field.

Since that time, the two leagues have created Campeones Cup and Leagues Cup, collaborated on many community projects, and come together for the first time to have the best in MLS take on the top players from LIGA MX in the 2020 MLS All-Star Game presented by Target.

### CAMPEONES CUP

Atlanta United defeated Mexico's Club América 3-2 in front of more than 40,000 fans to win the 2019 Campeones Cup.

CLUB AMERICA

#CAMPEONESCUP

ATLANTA UNITED



### LEAGUES CUP



Launched last year, the 2020 Leagues Cup will feature 16 clubs from MLS and LIGA MX in a summer tournament.

Atlanta United and Club América refurbished a youth soccer field in Atlanta prior to the 2020 Campeones Cup.







## MAJOR BRANDS PARTNERING WITH MLS

As Major League Soccer celebrates its 25<sup>th</sup> season, major corporations continue to take notice of the opportunity to partner with the league and its clubs to connect with a young, diverse fan base. MLS has more than 20 blue chip corporate partners that deeply engage with the league throughout the year and at major tentpole events including the MLS All-Star Game presented by Target, Heineken Rivalry Week, Decision Day and Audi MLS Cup Playoffs. Captain Morgan, Headspace and MGM Resorts International joined the league's roster of partners in 2019, and BODYARMOR kicked off their multi-year partnership in early 2020.

On the consumer product side, MLS and adidas will feature commemorative MLS sleeve crests on the new 2020 club jerseys in honor of the league's 25<sup>th</sup> season. In addition, soccer fans will have the opportunity to showcase their club pride through collections from Fanatics, New Era, Mitchell & Ness, Vineyard Vines, Columbia, Original Retro Brand and Corkcicle.

**MORE PEOPLE  
PURCHASED  
MLS GEAR THAN  
EVER BEFORE ON  
MLSSTORE.COM IN  
2019. SALES WERE  
UP 25% VS 2018.**





# eMLS

Gaming is core to the North American soccer fan experience. In January 2018, MLS launched eMLS, a competitive EA SPORTS™ FIFA league, to build new ways to engage fans through gaming. As it enters its third season in 2020, eMLS has been a groundbreaking platform sitting at the intersection of gaming and soccer culture. eMLS is a major component in how MLS utilizes gaming to reach global audiences, raise the profile of MLS, and grow the league's next generation of fans.



MLS fans are **2X** 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

eMLS Cup presented by PlayStation **doubled in average** and peak concurrent viewers on Twitch for 2019 compared to the 2018 event





# MOST EXPANSIVE BROADCAST COVERAGE IN LEAGUE HISTORY

Major League Soccer had another record-breaking year in 2019 with increases in ticket revenue, consumer products sales, broadcast viewership, social/digital engagement, and all levels of consumption. MLS' new playoff format was a massive success, as the league set a new record for average playoff attendance and overall playoff viewership was up more than 30% across ESPN and FOX.

With the addition of two new expansion teams, an influx of dynamic talent and the most expansive broadcast schedule in league history, the 2020 season will see more fans engaging with MLS content than ever before. An all-time high 46 network broadcast windows across ABC, FOX, Univision and UniMás in the U.S. will be complemented by eight matches broadcast on CTV in Canada. In the U.S., the nationally broadcast matches will be available in both English and Spanish-language through ABC, ESPN, ESPN2 and ESPN Deportes as well as FOX, FS1 and FOX Deportes. Matches will also air in Spanish on Univision, UniMás, and TUDN. Canadian coverage will feature the return of TSN and TVA.



**31,000**

FANS PER GAME IN A POSTSEASON AVERAGE ATTENDANCE RECORD

**190**

COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES WHERE SOCCER FANS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD CAN WATCH MLS MATCHES VIA THE LEAGUE'S INTERNATIONAL BROADCAST PARTNERS

**96%**

INCREASE IN MLS' FOLLOWING ACROSS FACEBOOK, TWITTER AND INSTAGRAM, GROWING AT A HIGHER RATE THAN ANY OTHER MAJOR SPORTS LEAGUE SINCE 2015



# MLS WORKS

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

MLS is dedicated to addressing important social issues and improving communities where we live and play our games. Through MLS WORKS, the League's social responsibility platform, Major League Soccer and its clubs seek to enrich the lives of those in need across the United States and Canada.

MLS WORKS executes national programs and legacy projects, charitable giving campaigns, and undertakes various initiatives that enrich and educate our youth, create sustainable communities and promote inclusion at all levels of the game.



MLS WORKS, ESPN and Special Olympics have teamed up to promote an environment of social inclusion; (above) members of the 2019 Special Olympics Unified Sports® MLS All-Star team, comprised of individuals with intellectual disabilities (Special Olympics athletes) and without intellectual disabilities (Unified partners).





# 2020 KEY SOCCER DATES

## JANUARY

- 09** MLS SuperDraft presented by Adidas
- 10** eMLS League Series One presented by Coca-Cola and PlayStation in Philadelphia
- 18** MLS Official Preseason begins

## FEBRUARY

- 05** FORWARD25: MLS 2020 Jersey Reveal in NYC
- 15** eMLS League Series Two presented by Coca-Cola and PlayStation in Portland
- 18** Scotiabank Concacaf Champions League tournament begins  
Featuring clubs representing the best in North America, Central America and the Caribbean, this year's tournament features MLS teams Los Angeles Football Club, New York City FC, Seattle Sounders FC, Atlanta United and the Montreal Impact. The winner advances to the FIFA Club World Cup in Qatar in December.
- 28** MLS Roster Compliance Deadline
- 29** MLS 25<sup>th</sup> Season begins

## MARCH

- 21** eMLS Cup presented by Coca-Cola and PlayStation at SXSW in Austin

## APRIL

- 04 – 11** Generation adidas Cup in Frisco, Texas (just outside Dallas)  
Generation adidas Cup is one of the premier youth tournaments in North America, with 25 MLS teams of players ages 17 and under competing.
- 08 – 22** MLS WORKS Greener Goals Campaign

- 28 – 30** Scotiabank Concacaf Champions League Final Leg 1

## MAY

- 05 – 07** Scotiabank Concacaf Champions League Final Leg 2
- 01 – 31** Soccer For All Month

## JUNE

- 04 – 07** Concacaf Nations League Finals  
The championship games of the first-ever Concacaf Nations League tournament, which includes all 41 member national teams in Concacaf — the governing body of North America, Central America and the Caribbean. Teams include the U.S., Mexico, and Canada.

## JULY

- 21 – 22** Leagues Cup – Round of 16  
Leagues Cup returns in 2020 for its second edition, with 16 teams from MLS and Liga MX facing off in a single-elimination tournament to determine the champion.
- 28** MLS All-Star Skills Challenge in Los Angeles
- 29** MLS All-Star Game presented by Target in Los Angeles

## JULY 07 – AUGUST 05

**Secondary Transfer Window**  
MLS teams can register any new players previously under contract with clubs outside MLS. In-season trades between MLS clubs can also take place within this time period.

## JULY 22 – AUGUST 09

**Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games**

## AUGUST

- 04 – 05** Leagues Cup Quarterfinals
- 11 – 12** Lamar Hunt U.S. Open Cup Semifinals or Final  
The single-elimination tournament features professional clubs across the U.S., as well as amateur clubs in the earlier rounds of the tournament after qualifying through their leagues. This year's tournament features 23 MLS teams, including last year's Open Cup champions, Atlanta United.
- 12** Campeones Cup at CenturyLink Field  
This is the third annual single-game matchup between the reigning MLS cup champions (Seattle Sounders FC) and the winner of the Campeón de Campeones from Liga MX.

- 20 – 23** Heineken Rivalry Week

- 25 – 26** Leagues Cup Semifinals

## SEPTEMBER

- 01** Roster Freeze Date
- 15 – 24** Canadian Championship Final  
The annual tournament contested by the top Canadian teams, including MLS clubs Toronto FC, Montreal Impact and Vancouver Whitecaps FC. The winning team earns a berth in the Concacaf Champions League.
- 16** Leagues Cup Final
- 22 – 24** Lamar Hunt U.S. Open Cup possible Final

## OCTOBER

- 04** MLS Decision Day
- 17** Audi 2020 MLS Cup Playoffs begin

## NOVEMBER

- 08** 2020 MLS Cup