



22<sup>ND</sup> SEASON  
2017



# MLS IN 2017: A LEAGUE AND A MOVEMENT

Major League Soccer enters its 22nd season stronger than ever while continuing to grow on and off the field in quality, scale, profile and reputation—within North America and across the globe.

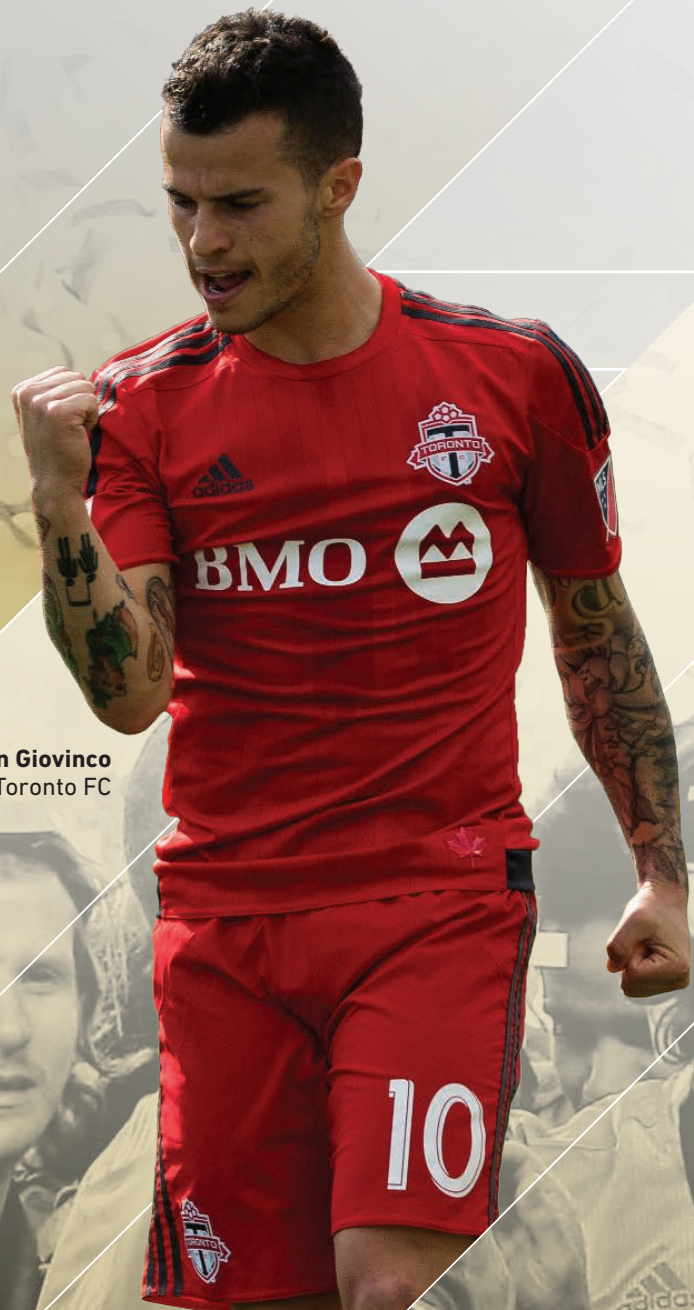
## TWO NEW CLUBS, WITH MORE TO COME, WHILE VALUES SOAR

Responding to the demand for major markets to become part of MLS, the League adds its 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> clubs in 2017 with Atlanta United and Minnesota United FC, with an additional club in Los Angeles (LAFC) joining next season. In the coming years, MLS will have 28 clubs across the U.S. and Canada. According to Forbes, valuations of MLS clubs are at an all-time high—up 18% over a year ago, 80% from 2013, and up 400% from 2008.

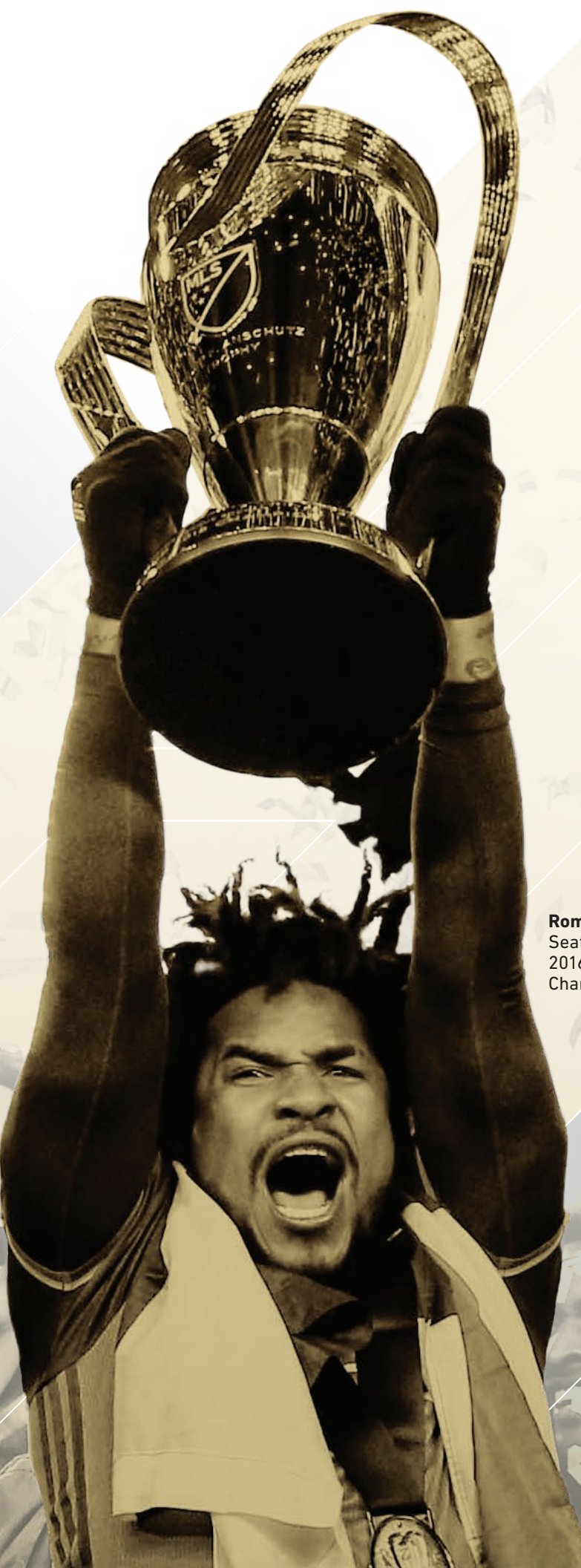
## MAGNIFICENT STADIUMS, BUILT FOR SOCCER

Orlando City SC moves into its new, state-of-the-art soccer stadium in March, followed by the debut of Atlanta United's world-class new home at Mercedes-Benz Stadium in July. With ground already broken on soccer cathedrals for Minnesota United FC and LAFC, 21 MLS clubs will soon be playing in stadiums built for soccer.

Sebastian Giovinco  
Toronto FC







**Román Torres**  
Seattle Sounders FC,  
2016 MLS Cup  
Champions

### **RECORD-BREAKING ATTENDANCE...**

Year after year, fans come out in record numbers to MLS matches. The League's average of more than 21,692 fans per game ranks third among U.S.-based professional sports leagues, and places MLS sixth in average attendance among soccer leagues around the world. During the last decade, MLS attendance has grown more than 40 percent.

### **AND VIEWERSHIP...AND ENGAGEMENT**

More people are watching MLS matches on national television networks in the U.S. and Canada than ever before, and 170 countries now broadcast live matches each week—a powerful international presence. MLS is also the fastest-growing major pro sports league in North America in social media engagement, with followers up an astounding 687% since 2013.

### **ELITE TALENT**

MLS has become a "League of Choice" for many top players from around the world in the prime of their careers. As of February 2017, the average age of the foreign signings during the 2017 winter offseason was 25.7. The competition level rises every season, with deeper rosters showcasing rising young talent and dynamic stars resulting in MLS continuing to produce the most exciting moments in its history.

# MLS 2016 BY THE NUMBERS

## RECORD ATTENDANCE

**21,692**

AVERAGE ATTENDANCE OF FANS PER GAME

**40%**

INCREASE OVER AVERAGE 10 YEARS AGO

**7M+**

TOTAL FANS ATTENDED MATCHES

**162**

RECORD SELLOUTS ACROSS THE LEAGUE IN 2016

## CONTINUED GROWTH THROUGH 2020

MLS CLUBS



## FASTEST-GROWING LEAGUE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

**687%**

INCREASE IN FOLLOWERS OF MLS  
SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS SINCE 2013

## RECORD VIEWERSHIP

**25M+**

TV VIEWERS IN 2016; AN INCREASE OF 8% OVER 2015

**170**

COUNTRIES IN WHICH MLS MATCHES  
ARE NOW AVAILABLE

## INCREASED MERCHANDISE SALES



**21%**

ALL-TIME HIGH IN MERCHANDISE  
SALES YEAR-OVER-YEAR

## RECORD DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

**30%**

INCREASE IN MOBILE AUDIENCE YEAR-OVER-YEAR

**45%**

INCREASE IN TOTAL VIDEO VIEWS YEAR-OVER-YEAR  
ON [MLSSOCCER.COM](http://MLSSOCCER.COM)

**70%**

MOBILE USAGE IN TOTAL DIGITAL CONSUMPTION  
UP FROM 45% IN 2014







**A RECORD CROWD OF 61,004 FANS ATTENDED THE EASTERN CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIP LEG 1 MATCH BETWEEN TORONTO FC AND MONTREAL IMPACT, TYING THE PROFESSIONAL SOCCER ATTENDANCE RECORD IN CANADA.**







# STRATEGIC EXPANSION: A FOOTPRINT ACROSS THE U.S. AND CANADA

Through a detailed and comprehensive expansion process, Major League Soccer has grown from 10 teams in 2004 to 22 teams this season. The League's plan is to expand to 28 clubs in the coming years.

## THIS SEASON: ATLANTA AND MINNESOTA

Having already broken the MLS record for most season ticketholders for an inaugural season (27,000 and counting), Atlanta United opens a state-of-the-art sports and entertainment venue—featuring a retractable roof—on July 30.

While Minnesota United FC begins play this season, ground has already been broken on a first-class soccer-dedicated stadium, a true gem for the Twin Cities that is expected to be ready within two years.

## NEXT SEASON: LOS ANGELES

Los Angeles Football Club: The new team for LA, and crosstown rival for LA Galaxy, begins play next season. LAFC's design for its soccer-specific stadium in South Los Angeles is spectacular.

## THE FUTURE: TEAMS 24–28

- With an ownership group led by soccer icon David Beckham, progress continues on a new team for Miami—targeted as the 24<sup>th</sup> club for MLS.
- Interest in MLS expansion is at an all-time high, as 12 applications were submitted this January by prospective communities and ownership groups to become clubs 25, 26, 27 and 28.
- MLS plans to award at least two expansion teams in 2017, and two more in the future.

## EXPLOSIVE GROWTH THROUGH EXPANSION

**185M**

THE AVERAGE VALUE OF AN MLS TEAM

**400%**

INCREASE OVER 2008

**18%**

INCREASE OVER 2015

**80%**

INCREASE OVER 2013

via Forbes



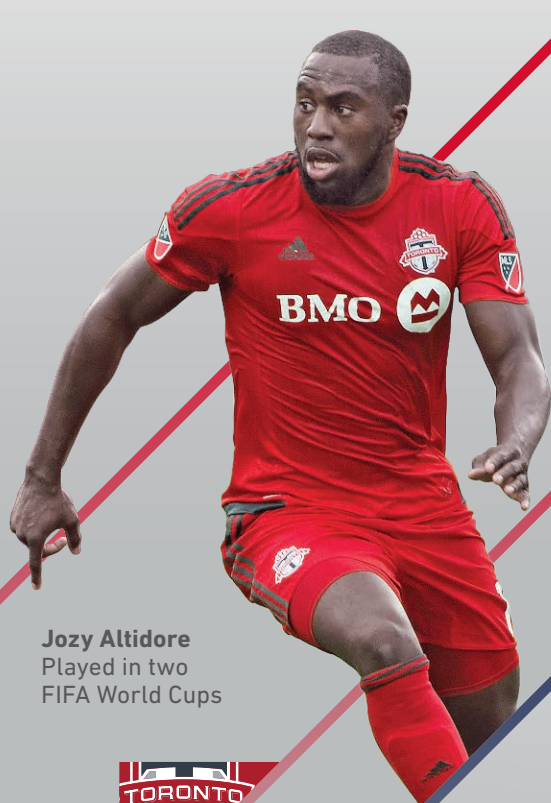
# MLS TELEVISED IN 170 COUNTRIES

KEY STRATEGIC MEDIA PARTNERSHIPS HAVE ELEVATED THE LEAGUE'S VISIBILITY:  
16 PARTNERS, 90 LANGUAGES, +500 MILLION VIEWERS





# UNITED STATES STARS IN MLS



**Jozy Altidore**  
Played in two  
FIFA World Cups



**Alejandro Bedoya**  
2014 FIFA World Cup team



**Michael Bradley**  
U.S. Men's National  
Team Captain



**Tim Howard**  
Played in three  
FIFA World Cups







**Sacha Kljestan**  
2016 MLS  
MVP finalist



**Jordan Morris**  
2016 MLS Rookie of the Year;  
Homegrown Player



**Jermaine Jones**  
2014 FIFA  
World Cup team



**Gyasi Zardes**  
Rising star and  
Homegrown Player



# INTERNATIONAL STARS IN MLS



**Miguel Almiron**  
Paraguayan  
National Team  
standout



**Giovani Dos Santos**  
Played in two FIFA  
World Cups



**Sebastian Giovinco**  
2015 MLS MVP



**Kaká**  
Former FIFA World Player  
of the Year and FIFA  
World Cup winner





**Cyle Larin**  
2015 MLS Rookie  
of the Year



**Nicolas Lodeiro**  
Uruguayan National  
Team playmaker



**Diego Valeri**  
Two-time  
MLS All-Star



**David Villa**  
2016 MLS MVP; Spain's  
all-time leading scorer  
and FIFA World  
Cup winner



# ROAD TO 2017 CONCACAF GOLD CUP

## A CELEBRATION OF SOCCER, SPORTSMANSHIP AND CULTURE

This July, the CONCACAF Gold Cup comes to the United States and will draw large crowds and millions of television viewers across the region. The tournament will feature many players across MLS, including many of the best players in the League, representing the likes of the U.S., Mexico, Canada, Jamaica and the rest of the qualifying teams from North America, Central America and the Caribbean playing for this important championship.

Some additional things to know:

- The Mexican National Team is the current Gold Cup reigning champion, and will look to defend its seventh title as the United States National Team, now under the direction of Bruce Arena (former head coach of the five-time MLS Cup champions LA Galaxy), seeks to win the confederation championship for the first time since the 2013 edition of the tournament.
- The United States, Mexico or Canada have won every tournament since its inception in 1991.
- Showing the significance of the tournament and importance of League players to the national teams, MLS is taking a two-week break in July during the Gold Cup.
- Among the host cities for the 2017 CONCACAF Gold Cup: MLS cities New York, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Dallas, Denver, Houston and the San Francisco Bay Area; plus other strong soccer communities that have submitted bids to become MLS expansion cities—San Diego, Tampa Bay, Nashville, San Antonio and Phoenix.
- National Television Partners: FOX and Univision



**Giovani Dos Santos**  
Mexican National  
Team standout



**Cyle Larin**  
Canadian star



**Michael Bradley**  
U.S. Men's National  
Team Captain



**Ronald Mataritta**  
Costa Rica  
National Team





# MAJOR MEDIA COVERAGE

## The New York Times

DAVID VILLA  
New York City  
(NYCFC)  
FOLLOWERS  
7.56M  
2.7M  
14M  
LIVE IN TIMES SQUARE  
SOCCER STARS SCORE ON SOCIAL MEDIA  
THEIR SECRETS FOR TURNING FANS INTO FOLLOWERS  
GMA  
DURING TRAFFIC STOP SOUTH OF ATLANTA  
TWO-YEAR-OLD DETROIT GIRL SHOT DURING TRAFFIC STOP

Major League Soccer Bypasses Big Names for Big (and Young) Talent

By Brian Stastny

For a decade, Major League Soccer has been the league of the future, a place where young players can shine. But now, as the league enters its second decade, it is looking for a way to attract more fans and revenue. One way to do that is by signing big names, but the league has chosen to bypass the big names and focus on young talent.

The league's strategy is to sign young players who are still developing and have a lot of potential. This allows the league to build a team that is both competitive and affordable. The league has also focused on marketing and fan engagement, which has helped to grow the league's fan base.

The league's success in attracting young talent is a testament to its commitment to the future of the sport. By focusing on young players, the league is ensuring that it has a steady supply of talent for the future.

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(NYCFC)  
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ESPN

Bloomberg

Buying a New Major League Soccer Team Now Costs \$150 Million

by Eben Novy-Williams

December 15, 2016, 4:30 PM EST Updated on December 15, 2016, 4:52 PM EST

League wants two more teams by 2020, followed by two more

Expansion fees are up 15-fold from \$10 million a decade ago

On the heels of a record-breaking season, Major League Soccer commissioner Don Garber announced the price to buy one of the league's planned expansion teams: at least \$150 million, a number that's risen exponentially since Toronto FC paid \$10 million a decade ago.

52 SPORTS

The Toronto Star

TORONTO FC

MLS CUP  
Seattle Sounders  
at Toronto FC  
Saturday, Dec. 10, 8:00 PM  
Free, 7:30, 7:00 &  
SAME DAY WEATHER  
-4C  
60% chance of snow

Toronto FC's Benoit Chappuis (center) celebrates with teammates after scoring the winning goal in the MLS Cup final against the Seattle Sounders.

TFC HAS ARRIVED

The Reds' East final win was a powerful response to all the haters and naysayers. Now TFC is on a mission for ultimate MLS glory

REPORT LARSON

After last night's Eastern Conference final, the Toronto FC's victory was a powerful response to all the haters and naysayers. Now TFC is on a mission for ultimate MLS glory.

# 2017 KEY SOCCER DATES\*

<b>March 1 – 2</b>	CONCACAF Champions League Quarterfinals – Leg 2
<b>March 3 – 5</b>	MLS Opening Weekend
<b>March 14 – 16</b>	CONCACAF Champions League Semifinals – Leg 1
<b>March 22</b>	International Friendly; Scotland vs. Canada Men's National Team
<b>March 24</b>	World Cup Qualifying; U.S. Men's National Team vs. Honduras
<b>March 28</b>	World Cup Qualifying; Panama vs. U.S. Men's National Team
<b>April 4 – 6</b>	CONCACAF Champions League Semifinals – Leg 2
<b>April 19</b>	CONCACAF Champions League Final – Leg 1
<b>April 26</b>	CONCACAF Champions League Final – Leg 2
<b>May 10</b>	Lamar Hunt U.S. Open Cup First Round (date tentative)
<b>June 8</b>	World Cup Qualifying; U.S. Men's National Team vs. Trinidad and Tobago
<b>June 11</b>	World Cup Qualifying; Mexico vs. U.S. Men's National Team
<b>June 23 – 25</b>	MLS Heineken Rivalry Week
<b>July 7 – 17</b>	MLS break for 2017 CONCACAF Gold Cup
<b>July 7 – 26</b>	2017 CONCACAF Gold Cup
<b>August 2</b>	2017 MLS All-Star Game presented by Target
<b>August 23 – 27</b>	MLS Heineken Rivalry Week
<b>September 1</b>	World Cup Qualifying; U.S. Men's National Team vs. Costa Rica
<b>September 5</b>	World Cup Qualifying; Honduras vs. U.S. Men's National Team
<b>October 6</b>	World Cup Qualifying; U.S. Men's National Team vs. Panama
<b>October 10</b>	World Cup Qualifying; U.S. Men's National Team vs. Trinidad and Tobago
<b>October 22</b>	MLS Decision Day; MLS regular season ends
<b>October and November</b>	Audi 2017 MLS Cup Playoffs (exact dates TBD)
<b>December</b>	2017 MLS Cup (exact date TBD)

\*Dates subject to change