

Client Case



INTRODUCTION

Football Canada Background

Football Canada is the national-governing body for all Canadian amateur football. In partnership with each of the provincial football associations, they are responsible for overseeing the football experience for 12,000+ coaches and 110,000+ football players to ensure their sport remains a safe and enjoyable experience for all Canadian citizens. In order to do this, they work directly with their provincial member associations to provide various levels of support to local football league administrators, coaches and teams.

Football Canada's Challenges

Football Canada recently completed a competition review and released the results in 2016. The competition review determined that considerable changes needed to be made regarding how football was being delivered at multiple levels in order to re-align their sport with the Canadian long-term athlete development (LTAD) model framework. They began investing significant time and resources into creating new age appropriate programs & curriculum, modified game types & rules, coaching education strategies and skill development matrices, all in hopes that this would help football leagues across the country adapt to this improved 21st century model for delivering their sport.

The director of sport for Football Canada, Aaron Geisler, was responsible for leading this transition. In addition to this, Aaron was heavily involved in his community football programs as a volunteer coach. After two years of Football Canada investing in the creation of new programming, support resources, and coaching education, Aaron could tell their work was not getting through to the grassroots level at all. Youth leagues and programs were continuing to run the same way they had been for years. If Football Canada truly wanted to achieve their goals and mandates set out in their competition review, they needed a more innovative way to deliver their programming, support resources, and coaching development.

Their Old Approach

Creation of Resources

To create new resources, Football Canada was using a variety of tools. For program information and curriculum, they were creating content using Microsoft word then having designers package it up into 80+ page pdf documents. For coaching education and support materials to help deliver their LTAD model, they were using a combination of written text documents, spreadsheet skill matrices and video-based skill development tutorials. The primary challenge of these formats was that once content was created, it was incredibly time consuming to make any modifications or updates to the original content. Most of the time if something small needed to be changed, it meant starting over from scratch.

Distribution of Resources

When it came to distributing these resources for use by administrators, coaches and teams, Football Canada was using multiple approaches. Free pdf resources to support some of their coaching education initiatives were available to download from their website. Premium pdf resources (such as full program curriculum) were shared with association administrators through private Dropbox folders. Video-based content was being uploaded and shared through the Football Canada YouTube channel. Online coach training courses were being delivered through a combination of their own online e-learning platform and courses offered in variety of formats through the Canadian National Coaching Certification Pathway (NCCP). Lastly, rulebooks were still be distributed in printed textbook format. This fragmented distribution of resources and information created several issues. For coaches, it was becoming difficult and confusing to navigate the various forms of resources to find what they needed. This was leaving them frustrated and unlikely to continue utilizing the resources at all. For administrators, it was becoming difficult to effectively communicate the information about the various resources with coaches and parents involved in their league. As a result, it just created further confusion regarding program and coaching education changes recommended by Football Canada. Lastly, these distribution methods provided very little data to show Football Canada if their resources were being utilized as intended and whether that use was resulting in improved delivery of their LTAD model.

SOLUTION & IMPLEMENTATION

Athlete Era Mobile Learning Platform

Athlete Era proposed that if Football Canada implemented a mobile learning solution using the Athlete Era platform, it could address several of the challenges they were facing in regards to creating, modifying and updating a variety of new educational content while simultaneously improving the distribution of this content to administrators, coaches and parents. This would provide them with a pathway to easily keep content up-to-date and ensure their educational resources were being utilized by their target audience, helping drive adoption of their new football standards at the youth level.

Account Setup & On-boarding

The transition to this mobile learning approach began by completing a content audit. Football Canada provided Athlete Era with access to all of their various educational resources so they could be reviewed to identify an appropriate content management structure to automatically align resources with the various stages in their LTAD model. Athlete Era then re-formatted all text and video content and integrated them into the Football Canada account on their client portal. This new content management and creation structure would make it more efficient for Football Canada to develop new resources, provided a single access point for several type of resources (drill, plans, skill development, strategy, rules, etc.) and allowed content delivery to be automatically personalized for coaches and teams depending on what stage of the long-term player development model they were in currently and the type of league or program they were running.

App Release & Promotion

Athlete Era then packaged up a single mobile learning app to be used by coaches and teams as their centralized educational tool for delivering any Football Canada program or coaching a youth football team (tackle, flag, etc.). This new app allowed coaches to conveniently filter all content to only get what they needed and have all information accessible whether at home, in the parking lot 10-minutes before practice, or on the field during practice. It also provided league administrators with a single resource that could support all types of programs and made it simple to communicate their league standards for best-practice with coaches and parents.

Once the app was released, Athlete Era supported in the promotion of the resource to the provincial associations and league administrators. This was done through providing a basic website to communicate the new mobile learning app with administrators and coaches, along with a pre-designed coaches presentation that administrators could use to implement the mobile learning resource in their league. They also provided call support for provincial associations looking for additional support when implementing the new mobile learning app. The resource was promoted through a presentation at the Football Canada member AGM, email campaigns to coaches and administrators, and in-person to coaches during their leagues coaching orientation meeting for the season started.

RESULTS

Adoption By Associations

The new mobile learning app was promoted nationally by Football Canada and Athlete Era in 2019. In the first year, the app was adopted by five of the ten provincial football associations who began the transition towards implementing this new digital resource to improve to quality of all football leagues and programs within their provinces. Additionally, Football Canada was able to structure a content sharing agreement with USA Football, allowing both organizations to work more collaboratively in sharing educational resources,

best-practice and improving the delivery of youth football through Athlete Era's mobile learning platform.

4x

increase in content views
compared to videos shared
through YouTube

92%

of coaches preferred the mobile
learning app over previous forms
of training and support resources.

50%

resource adoption by other
provincial football association
members of Football Canada

Adoption & Use By Coaches

In 2019, the mobile app was utilized by a total of 1,700 youth football coaches across Canada. The two leagues who initially championed the integration of this new resource were Saskatoon Minor Football (SMF) and Regina Youth Flag Football League (RYFFL). Saskatoon Minor Football first integrated a pilot version of the mobile learning app in the fall of 2018. Both leagues implemented the full version in the spring of 2019. RYFFL had 122 of their 125 novice coaches (0-2 years coaching experience) access the resource during the season, seeing on average 43% of these coaches use the app weekly. Of the coaches surveyed, 92% said they preferred the new mobile learning app over previous types of resources provided by Football Canada. SMF reported that the mobile app had allowed them to decrease their volunteer coaching shortage by 29% within one year of implementing the resource. Content items (drills, plans, skills, etc.) distributed through the mobile app were viewed over 16,000 times in the spring of 2019. All video resources released on the Football Canada YouTube channel received ~4,000 total views over the same amount of time. For a more detailed description of the positive impact this resource had on these leagues, please view the full league integration case study [here](#).

Cost Recovery & Future Growth

Football Canada was able to generate enough revenue through reselling this mobile learning resource to other football associations to recover their initial investment into developing it within 18 months of starting their account setup and on-boarding process with Athlete Era. Now that they have surpassed their break-even point to create long-term sustainability for their new mobile learning approach, they are able to re-invest additional revenues into improving the educational content distributed through the app to continually improve their sport delivery and provide value to member associations.

Summary

Football Canada was able to create an innovative digital learning resource that's valued by their member associations and utilized regularly by youth football coaches. In doing so, this has created an effective channel for them to reach more coaches and teams with quality educational resources and improve the delivery of Football programs nationally for years to come.

Learn more at athlete-era.com

