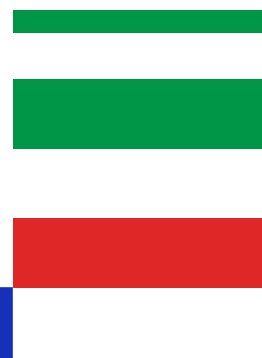




THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE FOR FOOTBALL ENGAGEMENT

Why the United Bid Committee for Canada, Mexico, and the United States presents FIFA with a unique opportunity to enhance/expand the world's most popular sport through an innovative and sustained fan engagement program in one of football's greatest areas of growth potential.

**UNITED
AS ONE**



16 MARCH 2018

INTRODUCTION

The United Bid believes everyone is a fan and that fans are one of the most important elements of a successful FIFA World Cup™. We are committed to working closely with FIFA to stage the 2026 FIFA World Cup™ to involve every fan, whether they attend in person or connect from afar. We want to support FIFA's vision and support the efforts to re-imagine fan engagement.

We want people to experience football and the extraordinary spectacle of the FIFA World Cup™ in ways that are both personally and collectively compelling for communities all across North America and around the world.

Combined, our three countries represent a population of 500 million people. This will approach 550 million by 2026, and a billion across the Americas, creating tremendous opportunity to grow the global football community. The United Bid will work throughout our region, linking our Candidate Host Cities with cities in countries across CONCACAF to recruit new support and drive activation – efforts that will help to drive fan development and engagement around the world.

Our region is uniquely suited to support FIFA in its efforts to further expand the global influence of football. North America has the potential to be an even larger – and much more economically significant – part of the global football community by deepening connections with existing fans, finding and recruiting new fans, and binding us all to the sport in new ways. Using our in-depth understanding of fan behavior and the cultural power of the sport, we will work closely with FIFA to craft new approaches to building fan interest and engagement, and serve as a laboratory for testing and refining new methods of fan activation that can benefit commercial partners and stakeholders.

The benefits football can bring are wide-ranging. The game offers people of every age an enjoyable route to all-around fitness, both physical and mental. Even passive participation through fan involvement can provide uplifting connections and rewarding opportunities.

As a global sport, football has proven its value as an instrument of social inclusion, improving relationships between and within communities. It is also a powerful way to shine a light on sustainability causes, achieving significant impact.

Fan-first engagement initiatives will be a vital part of this growth. The United Bid has outlined a comprehensive vision and hosting strategy for the 2026 FIFA World Cup™ that provides fans in and around the stadiums hosting matches with entertainment experiences powered by the latest technology available. We have also begun to explore concepts that will be woven into the planning and other efforts around the 2026 FIFA World Cup™ to empower fans to become a vehicle to harness football in ways that have never been attempted.

Becoming a dedicated fan is a journey and the United Bid invites the entire global football community, as well as all who will be connected to the world's game in the future, to join us on this journey.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

This supplement is offered in support of the United Bid's Vision and Hosting Strategy and outlines a series of fan engagement opportunities that we have researched – and in some cases initiated – in great depth as part of our bid preparations. This document will:

- Highlight the principles behind the United Bid's fan engagement approach and how we intend to drive growth across both the general population and specific target segments.
- Deconstruct and explain current levels of interest in football across North America; the target areas and the opportunities for growth.
- Outline a series of targeted activities that will achieve the United Bid's objectives in the preparations for the 2026 FIFA World Cup™, during the tournament itself and after as a legacy for the future.
- Identify the back-end requirements to allow all marketing processes and outreach to be executed successfully.

The report has used insight and information from a number of leading companies and organizations supporting the United Bid, and other organizations whose research has been made available as a contribution to this effort. The United Bid has collected insights from people and institutions who understand human behavior and sports audiences, specifically: who they are, what they want, and how you engage with them. These include:

- **Two Circles:** the WPP-owned, data-driven sports marketing agency that specializes in helping leading international rights-holders grow and engage more effectively with their audiences, in order to achieve commercial and developmental objectives.
- **Aspen Institute:** the international think tank that gathers diverse, non-partisan thought-leaders, creatives, scholars, and members of the public to address some of the world's most complex problems.
- **Academic Institutions** (e.g. Center for Decision Sciences, Columbia Business School).
- **Artificial Intelligence Experts** (e.g. IBM)
- **Member associations**
- **Strategic Intelligence** and data analysts dedicated to understanding and influencing casual sports fan behavior.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Football is the most popular sport on the planet – with FIFA estimating upwards of 3.5 billion people it considers fans. It has grown significantly at both the grassroots and elite level over the last three decades in North America and throughout the CONCACAF region.
- Despite this growth, there remains a huge opportunity for the sport to form a deeper relationship across our combined population of 500+ million people in North America, and a billion people across the Americas. There is an equally large opportunity to tackle specific sector challenges for football in areas such as rural communities, the Hispanic populations in the U.S. and Canada, among women and children, and in areas of deprivation.
- FIFA's future vision highlights the importance of the fan experience in order to fulfill its objective of recruiting more than 60% of the world's population to participate in (play, coach, referee, or experience) football by 2026. This is a target that can be achieved more easily with the catalyst of a 2026 FIFA World Cup™ held across a region that shows great expansion potential such as North America.
- The 2026 FIFA World Cup™ is a vehicle through which FIFA and its member associations can influence social and public agendas, drive participation and, ultimately, support FIFA in its FIFA 2.0 goals.

The United Bid has begun to develop a Fan Engagement Blueprint, built on the deepest possible understanding of the football universe and knowledge of what the different drivers are for forming close relationships with the sport. As part of the Blueprint, the United Bid plans to create a long-term fan engagement funnel that increases the number of people interacting with the sport and – for those already connected – strengthen their relationship.

While elements of fan engagement have attracted significant attention of late, the targeting and support of casual fans has always been underserved. The inability to maximize the use and application of data to prioritize individualized fan intelligence and deploy more personalized engagement on an individual fan basis has resulted in too much focus being paid only to the most committed fans. The United Bid is committed to changing this and working with FIFA to develop a forward-looking and innovative fan relationship management system, as sophisticated as the customer-centric engines in retail, and the entertainment and voter engagement systems used in politics.

This approach to fan intelligence allows the United Bid to quantify, on a deep and individualized level, demographics, attitudes, beliefs, and preferences that influence the development of various types of football fans – creating the deepest and most sophisticated knowledge bank of the football community currently in existence.

This insight will also allow the United Bid to offer the right activities, the most effective channels, and the right locations, in a personalized manner, to reach a diverse set of audiences. In doing so, we will achieve a range of objectives in the preparations for, during, and in the years after the Competition – with a particular focus on growing the fan base with people who are not currently connected to football, while engaging existing passionate fans in new ways. The legacy from this work will benefit FIFA and its member associations.

The 2026 FIFA World Cup™ planning phase(s), beginning once the event is awarded, will include efforts to engage communities across the three Host Countries to promote the development of football at both individual and professional levels. Key objectives will be to deploy the power of football to improve the lives of communities and to use the United Bid as a driver to integrate football into academic and other initiatives, to both inspire and empower youth, as well as adults, through the sport.

During the course of the Competition, the United Bid will concentrate on enhancing the live experience for fans, bringing them closer to the sport on match days and connecting them to each other around matches, including creating relationships between fans across Host Cities. And though the greatest fan experience will be, without question, watching games live in the stadium, we will strive to enable fans to feel they are as close to the action as is feasibly possible, wherever they are in the world.

As with all successful mega-sporting events, the United Bid will also plan fan engagement initiatives with a long-lasting legacy, with a positive social impact felt in local communities long after the Final Match. Some of the key legacy initiatives planned by the United Bid include the application of the Fandom Engine and supporting communities, individuals, and on-pitch performance.

CURRENT ENGAGEMENT LEVELS OF FOOTBALL FANS ACROSS THE AMERICAS

Football is the most popular sport on the planet with more than 3.5 billion fans and as many as 1.4 billion participants.

There are few places you can travel in the world without bumping into a young child kicking a ball down the street, alone or with friends, attempting to recreate the performance of their heroes on the pitch – or find a pub or café on a Saturday packed with football fans bonding over their team’s performance, debating players, formations, or tactics. The FIFA World Cup™ final in 2014 brought the world to a halt for two hours as more a billion people from around the world tuned in to watch.

Over the last three decades, a number of factors have helped engagement around football rocket across North America and throughout the CONCACAF region:

- 1.** More than 35 million people play football in Canada, Mexico, and the United States, across all levels, including 30 million in the United States, over four million of whom are registered youth players.
- 2.** When Canada hosted the 2015 FIFA Women’s World Cup™, it broke records for viewership and participation, thanks in particular to interest from female fans throughout the continent. This included a total attendance of 1.35 million and seven matches with over 50,000 spectators.

- 3.** In Mexico, 67% of people are interested in football – well above the global average – and 78% say they would be interested in hosting 2026 FIFA World Cup™ matches in their city.

- 4.** Professional football is the second favorite sport among those aged 12 to 34 in the United States, and the favorite sport among Hispanics – two of the most valuable marketing segments. A 2014 opinion poll showed that 45% of Hispanics in the United States describe themselves as football fans who were likely to watch the FIFA World Cup™.

Attendance(s) at MLS games averaged 22,000 in 2017, putting the league in the top seven globally. It also has the youngest fan-base in professional sports (34.9 years) – versus the NBA (38.5 years) and NHL (42.1 years) – and the youngest TV viewership of all professional American sport.

Even with the positive metrics around football in these territories, there’s still much more work to be done – and consequently an enormous opportunity to grow the sport. Football’s largest event is a vehicle through which the region’s football leaders can capture the attention of younger generations. It can also influence social and public agendas to drive participation to, ultimately, support FIFA in its goal to have more than 60% of the world’s population participate in – or experience – football by 2026.

Compelling Case for Growth

In both Canada and the United States, the percentage of people with no interest in football is still over 40%, and one in two in these two countries have never watched the FIFA World Cup™. This gives enormous potential for growth. Public support for the United Bid is considerable. 77% of those surveyed across its three nations expressed strong support to staging the 2026 FIFA World Cup™.

Interest in Football, Awareness, and Engagement with the FIFA World Cup™

	Total	Canada	Mexico	U.S.
Very/somewhat interested in football	40%	31%	67%	30%
A little interested in football	61%	-	-	-
No interest in football	38%	43%	13%	47%

FIFA World Cup™

Current Interest in the FIFA World Cup™ – Viewership	55%	47%	83%	45%
Current Interest in the FIFA World Cup™ – Avidity	21%	11%	33%	17%
Current Interest in the FIFA World Cup™ – Occasional	34%	36%	50%	28%
Current Interest in the FIFA World Cup™ – Never Watched	43%	50%	15%	53%

Awareness of 2026 FIFA World Cup™

Awareness of 2026 FIFA World Cup™	34%	32%	56%	26%
Not Sure of Awareness of 2026 FIFA World Cup™	12%	-	-	-
Not Aware of 2026 FIFA World Cup™	53%	-	-	-

Interest in Attending and Co-Hosting the FIFA World Cup™

Interest in Attending	Total	Canada	Mexico	U.S.
Interested in attending FIFA World Cup™ matches in city	57%	51%	78%	50%
Unsure in interest in attending FIFA World Cup™ matches in city	4%	-	-	-
Not interested in attending FIFA World Cup™ matches in city	38%	-	-	-

Interest in Co-Hosting

Very supportive of hosting the 2026 FIFA World Cup™	43%	-	-	-
In favour of hosting the 2026 FIFA World Cup™	77%	76%	83%	74%
Uncertain of hosting the 2026 FIFA World Cup™	16%	18%	5%	20%
Strongly opposed to hosting the 2026 FIFA World Cup™	8%	6%	12%	6%

Impact of not building more stadiums

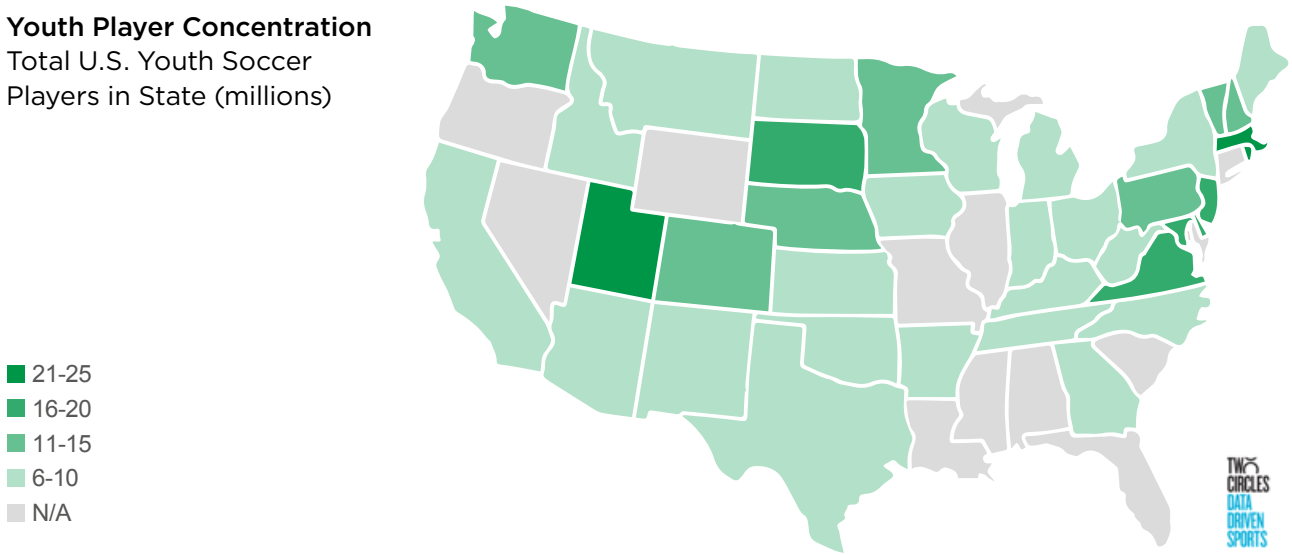
Supportive when knowing no new stadiums	79%	-	84%	-
No more of less supportive when knowing no new stadiums	13%	16%	5%	15%
Less supportive when knowing no new stadiums	8%	-	11%	-

High-Potential Growth Segments

Rural Regions: In the United States, football attracts a higher interest in urban areas; for example, New York City over-indexes versus the national population in the proportion of international football fans (50% to 40%), proportion of avid international football fans (17% to 10%), and the proportion of people for whom international football is their favorite sport (10% to 6%).

Know Baseline Engagement/Where do you target?

Youth Player Concentration
Total U.S. Youth Soccer
Players in State (millions)



State	Youth players (m)	State	Youth players (m)
Massachusetts	25	Wisconsin	10
Utah	22	Oklahoma	9
Rhode Island	21	Indiana	9
Virginia	17	Texas	9
New Jersey	17	New York	9
Maryland	16	Michigan	9
South Dakota	16	Kansas	9
Delaware	15	Kentucky	9
Washington	14	Arkansas	8
New Hampshire	14	California	8
Minnesota	14	West Virginia	8
Colorado	14	Maine	8
Pennsylvania	13	Ohio	8
Vermont	12	Georgia	8
Nebraska	12	Idaho	8
Montana	10	Arizona	8
Iowa	10	Tennessee	8
North Dakota	10	North Carolina	7
New Mexico	10		

Source: Breakdown of Players by Youth Soccer State Association, Region and National as of 2013/14 seasonal year. Population based off the 2013 Census.

Women and Girls: In all three Host Countries, there are opportunities to grow the fan base by involving women and girls more fully in the global football community. With the strength of the Canadian women's national team, women and young girls' fandom, as well as grassroots participation rates are growing at a faster rate than men, but represent a relatively small portion of the overall base.

In Mexico, women and girls are dramatically under-represented in the global football community compared to men. And across the United States, football is played by almost as many young women as young men – however engagement levels with women lag overall, with two-thirds of MLS fans estimated to be men and 78% of fans who attend MLS games live, in-stadium are male. In Mexico, there are huge gaps between the levels of participation among men and women, both as participants and fans – the United Bid has made engagement with young girls and women a priority in its hosting vision and strategy for this reason. With FIFA looking to double the number of female players to 60 million globally by 2026, this is a key area of potential growth.

Lower-Income Families: The number of children aged 6 to 12 in the United States who played a team sport at least once a day, from households that earned less than \$25,000 per year, dropped from 46.9% in 2012 to 34.6% in 2016, according to the Aspen Institute. More needs to be done to allow children from lower income families to play the game.

Coaching and Referees: The football federations in Canada, Mexico, and the United States have all invested in efforts to recruit and train more coaches and referees – efforts that will gain additional attention as part of the United Bid. There is also a significantly lower proportion of female football coaches and referees compared to the number of female football players overall. The United Bid hopes to use a platform around the 2026 FIFA World Cup™ to generate awareness around this issue and work to attract coaches and referees that better reflect the demographic mix of the current and future playing pool across the three Host Countries.

The Gaming Era: Video games – and new technologies more generally – are frequently cited as a key cause of increasingly sedentary habits, offering the biggest competition to both recreational and professional sport for an increasingly time-poor population. However, the truth is gaming gives both children and older generations experiences that many sports have struggled to offer: freedom to experiment, competition without exclusion, social connection with friends as co-players, customization and a measure of control over the activity. Integrating learnings from the gaming experience will engage both gamers and non-gamers with the world of football and drive a lifelong relationship with the sport.

The 2026 FIFA World Cup™ presents an important opportunity to bring the global football community fans even closer and an opportunity to establish relationships that will continue to grow over time.

To achieve these goals, we'll apply a long-term, bottom-up fan engagement strategy that is consistent across North America, but also tailored to individual interests through a sophisticated understanding of the different objectives for football, local experiences related to football, and individual opportunities in each country and region.

GROWING A LIFELONG FOOTBALL UNIVERSE

The 2026 FIFA World Cup™ is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to stimulate interest around the world’s most popular sport. The United Bid sees opportunities to work with FIFA to re-imagine the fan experience, with support from technology and an in-depth understanding of different football audiences, and increase the number of people connecting with the sport in various ways. For those already interacting, it will strengthen their relationship, and help to form new bonds and a sense of community through football.

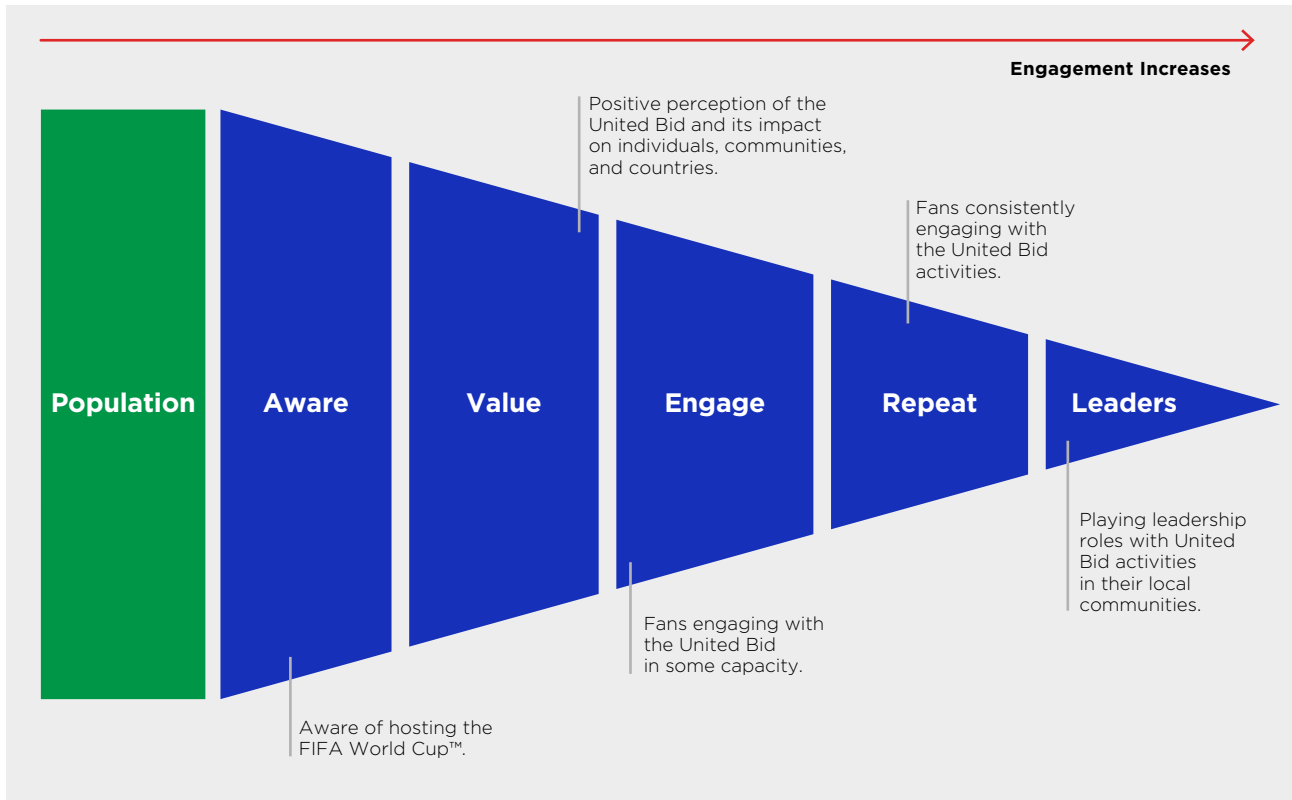
Most of the current engagement strategies in football – and sport more widely – have struggled to catch up to new opportunities available in the digital age. Broadly, these strategies have not been proactive enough, nor do they have a funnel through which a variety of different target audiences can be reached in direct and meaningful ways to drive a stronger relationship both online and offline.

The United Bid wants to be part of the change that is taking place at the intersection of sports and fan data, by exploring the creation of a re-imagined fan engagement “funnel” – consisting of numerous interrelated points of connection and activation, each targeting relevant audiences in personalized ways.

Jessica, a 14 year old teen musician who likes to play an active role in her community of Toronto, Canada. She plays recreational sports but doesn’t engage with soccer.



The United Bid’s fan engagement approach would shape the series of events and initiatives that allow us to grow a lasting engagement with football – in the lead-up to the event and during the Competition – that continues for a lifetime, with a particular focus on the population of the Host Countries. It would also provide the framework to benchmark and continuously measure the success of activities – data that can be used to improve marketing initiatives on a continuous basis.



Understanding the Football Universe

Our fan engagement strategy has a number of objectives, from growing participation in football to heightening interest in elite men’s and women’s football across the Host Nations. Not only will it look to engage a wide universe of diverse ages, nationalities, and gender, it will bring together a diverse number of stakeholders – local and global, public and private, from both within and outside the football community – to achieve a spectrum of ambitious goals.

However, this can only be fully achieved through a deep understanding of the football universe and by knowing the different drivers for fans’ relationship with the sport – something that the sport is currently lacking.

Sports reach people through social networks and resonate as part of social identities that emerge through affiliations with teams and stars, giving them a sense of belonging and community. These sporting networks can promote and strengthen connections among their members and provide entry points for tapping into group identity. People often think and behave differently when they are physically part of a group or reminded of their membership in a group; when people make decisions or process information as part of a group, goals that promote outcomes that are good for the collective, rather than the individual, are activated.

So the United 2026 plan is to advance this knowledge and determine new ways to leverage these connections among existing passionate fans.

The Center for Research on Environmental Decisions at Columbia University in collaboration with the National Science Foundation have explained how we can motivate and empower societies to adopt needed changes, for instance by:

- connecting critical world challenges to issues that matter to the audience
- aligning messages with audiences' worldview; social values can shape engagement
- showing audiences how to be part of the solution (based on their values/priorities)
- talking about local solutions when addressing global issues such as climate change
- tapping into social identities and affiliations to bolster engagement
- harnessing the power of groups
- making something concrete through experience

The United Bid has started addressing these opportunities through football, through discussions with world behavioral expert Dr. Elke Weber, and we hope to further expand this work in order to guide and empower fans to better support global issues.

Human relationships are complex. No extensive research has been done to date to fully understand how people's relationships form, and change over time and circumstance, with teams, leagues, professional athletes, and similar. The scholarship that does exist is focused on the most committed of fans – the die-hards – leaving the vast majority of casual fans not well understood. The United Bid, if successful, would create a new knowledge base for football fan behavior to fill this void, leading to opportunities for FIFA and the member associations, partners, and other stakeholders to reach and connect with far larger segments of the population in innovative ways.

The fan engagement process would begin by improving the current levels of understanding around engagement levels and target segments. By building and then continually developing a picture of the demographics, attitudes, and behaviors of those who do and don't engage with football and the FIFA World Cup™, we can create data-driven fan segments (with accompanying personas) to target in fan engagement campaigns.

To build this picture, we have already begun a study of the relationships between the game of football, the levels of fan support, and how to influence behavior. The United Bid, with help from Casual Fans – a fan intelligence startup – has modeled the individual components of fandom for the American population. The data will be able to form the basis for both commercial and academic research, and the United Bid hopes to ultimately connect behavioral scientists to social impact and support a series of experiments (such as using the Candidate Host Cities as a laboratory).

The Fandom Engine

The primary objective – and huge opportunity – to engage and inspire a generation through the 2026 FIFA World Cup™ can best be achieved through a sophisticated and innovative fan engagement system that facilitates and tracks personalized fan communications to audiences, both within and outside the Host Countries.

As part of the United Bid's Fandom Engine, we would create a forward-looking and innovative fan relationship management system as sophisticated as not only the best fan engagement systems in sport, but also the systems found in advanced customer-centric industries such as retail and entertainment, or politics.

Its principle purpose is one of knowledge: quantifying, on a deep and individualized level, the football fan demographics, attitudes, beliefs, and preferences that influence the development of various types of football fans. This would create the deepest and most sophisticated knowledge bank of the football community currently in existence, leveraging artificial intelligence and other new technologies available in the future.

The insights drawn from the Fandom Engine would then allow us to offer the right activities, on the most effective channels, and targeting the right locations. In turn, this would cultivate and increase engagement with the sport across amateur and professional levels, strengthening also grassroots efforts. Hosting the 2026 FIFA World Cup™ would allow the United Bid to fulfill its promises both in the preparations for, during, and the years after the tournament.

The Fandom Engine concept is centered on an original, proprietary data warehouse, built by the leading practitioners in sports fan insight and data-driven sports marketing. The approach draws on multidisciplinary expertise and pulls in a comprehensive range of fan engagement data points – generated by both the United Bid and associated partners in a process compliant with all relevant data protection laws – to create a single-fan-view that will serve to guide all fan engagement initiatives. An initial data set has already been developed by Casual Fans – a fan intelligence startup – and utilized by the United Bid in the development of our hosting strategy and initial plans. The concepts that would power the engine are being explored across a variety of different initiatives and partners as well.

In practical terms, there are as many uses of this intelligence, and the engine that supports it, as there are individual fans (existing or prospective).

- Imagine giving recreational Canadian football players weekly, personalized analyses around their performances and participation. Players can see where they rank and associated partners can then offer attractive benefits to those with increasing individual participation levels and those driving increasing engagement within communities, whether as a coach, official, or team organizer.
- Imagine being able to let the mother of two young Mexican football fanatics know, through her most used media channel, that her kids' favorite player will be visiting a nearby town to host a community event. At this event, the kids are able to engage with a variety of activities. Based on data collected at the event around their preferences, they would be able to receive tailored content on their mobile phones following the event, along with videos of their time at the event.
- Imagine delivering a curriculum around football via academic institutions to people all over North America, with key Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) subjects being taught through the language of football. Through the Fandom Engine, individuals would be able to advance their thinking through a structured, enjoyable series of lessons, with the Fandom Engine connecting people at similar levels in different areas of North America to make learning a collaborative process that drives new friendships through football.

The Engine will be able to make every fan journey personalized, leveraging demographic and psychographic information, attitudinal, and behavioral data to deliver specific, multi-channel messaging.

The Engine would also be able to measure engagement effectively, in particular across North America, from initial interaction with the game and subsequent activities, to inform, in real-time, how and where strategies can be optimized, allowing the team to identify areas where demand is high and provision of additional activities would be best received.

POSSIBLE FAN ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES

During the initial operational phase the 2026 FIFA World Cup™ United Bid would concentrate on engaging communities across the Host Countries to promote the development of football at both individual and professional levels.

Engagement initiatives could be split into the following areas:

1. Social Impact:

Inviting key audiences to support the United Bid as a vehicle to drive social causes, using the power of football to improve the lives of communities and tackle some of the biggest issues facing society.

Possible initiatives:

United Innovation Social Impact Challenge:

Under the leadership of a global technology expert, students from across the three nations would be connected with the technology industry to create initiatives that promote societal good. The winners would be celebrated and the United Bid would be leaving an executional blueprint for future FIFA World Cups™ that can be applied across national borders.

Sport and Behavior Council: Forming an integrated network of researchers, NGOs, and other organizations that drive social impact goals and behavioral change, we will create a group that develops research and guidance, and connects social impact challenges to issues that matter to the audience. This will showcase how fans can further support societal causes. It will also act as a high-level political influencer for promoting football's role in driving positive change. An example could be how individuals can engage in activities to be more environmentally responsible.

Community Project Giving: Most major sports leagues and governing bodies, including FIFA, have partnerships with charitable foundations; their own initiatives to drive action on societal issues. The United Bid's Community Project Giving will give the North American football

community the power to determine where support should go, helping existing community football projects to further spread football's message of good.

2. Education:

Physical sport is a key element of school life across the world, but seldom does sport play a role in the classroom. By using the United Bid as a driver to integrate football into the learning sphere, younger generations will be inspired and engaged through the sport.

Possible initiatives:

Education Institution Partnerships: By linking with museums, libraries, science, technology, educational, and academic institutions, the United Bid will create a curriculum around football to show how the game continues to connect and inspire the world, and create research and new understanding to drive improvements in the sport and how it is consumed.

Language-Based Learning: The United Bid would form partnerships with international cultural institutions, so that youngsters from North America can participate in exchange programs – using sports events and experiences as the central hook – to harness the global power of football. This will expose young people to different football cultures.

3. Global Engagement:

The FIFA World Cup™ is football's biggest international sporting event. It will focus the eyes of the world on North America and the CONCACAF region long before the 2026 tournament takes place. The 2026 FIFA World Cup™, therefore, is a potential vehicle to bring together North America with football fans from across the world.

Possible initiatives:

Bringing the World Closer: There is a shared passion for the FIFA World Cup™ and the game in all corners of the globe. The United Bid has integrated plans for a number of activities into our hosting vision and strategy designed to

capitalize on this to strengthen and bridge relationships between North America and the rest of the world. For instance, a Sister City Campaign will connect football fans in Candidate Host Cities with communities across the world and encourage both parties to get behind their second team, making the FIFA World Cup™ a celebration of global solidarity and driving new interest in teams and players from other sides of the planet.

FIFA Destination: World football's governing body is in a constant cycle of staging global tournaments at different levels of the game – from age-category competitions to the FIFA Beach Football World Cup™ and the FIFA Futsal World Cup™. The North American region will help FIFA promote events of every shape and size in the four years leading in to the 2026 showpiece, supporting the growth of every version of the game and placing North America at the heart of the sport during that period.

Knowledge Transfer: The United Bid will proactively share the knowledge accumulated from its preparations for the 2026 FIFA World Cup™, including joint partnerships with education institutions, to ensure future initiatives not only benefit the Host Countries but also FIFA and the entire global football community.

Social – Football – Media: to further connect the football community worldwide and provide avenues for the Fandom Engine to leverage bid data analysis and insights.

4. Membership: Digitally-focused membership schemes will build a direct relationship between the United Bid and the football community.

Possible initiatives:

Smarter Data: This will capture data of highly engaged football fans and provide a platform to deliver regular content and communications from host venues, event ambassadors, engagement programs, and sponsors.

Being able to track, through the Fandom Engine, numerous types of behavior and identify the user behind them, means we would be able to reward engagement. As with all the best membership schemes, both in sport and beyond, it will be constantly tested, analyzed, and modified to maximize benefits for the fans.

Adult Membership benefits would include preferential ticketing access, discounts for merchandise, the chance to be a mascot during official events, a digital magazine, and offers and competitions from FIFA partners.

A dedicated **Junior Membership**, meanwhile, would provide benefits including games, competitions, personalized gifts, fan photos, news, and videos.

5. Other Possible Initiatives

FIFA World Cup™ Fan Panel: The creation of a panel of fans from across the three Host Countries to act as influencers, innovators, and early adopters, the FIFA World Cup™ Fan Panel's primary use would be in research and information-gathering. It would facilitate the sharing of ideas and opinions from fans directly with the Bid, enabling fans to start an initiative that we can gather insights around – and feedback – quickly and cost-effectively. The best ideas would be progressed and fan involvement placed “front and center” during launch and execution.

eSports: The EA Sports videogame series “FIFA” has helped drive the popularity of professional football across the world and in North America in particular 50% of U.S. FIFA players are more interested in professional football after playing the game. The 2026 FIFA World Cup™ would give the United Bid the opportunity to host nationwide – and cross-region – FIFA tournaments to engage with a young audience, with engagement split online and in-person (the latter by hosting live finals at iconic sports venues).

Football Skills: Local contests where individual participants from different gender and age groups complete a series of timed drills testing including passing, dribbling, and shooting. Winners of the Football Skills events would advance to regional and then national finals. All information, details, and leaderboards for Football Skills will be hosted on a dedicated digital app and web portal.

Commercial Partnerships: By working closely with FIFA Partners – many of whom are already data-rich and have been engaging with the global football fan base for a significant period of time – the United Bid can create joint activation projects that offer valuable content, rewards, and experiences to key target audiences.

2026 FIFA WORLD CUP™

By hosting the 2026 FIFA World Cup™, North America and the CONCACAF region would be the focus of the world's attention for the eight years while planning, and especially during the summer of 2026 – the destination of a long-anticipated sporting climax filled with media attention and global fan engagement initiatives.

During the course of the Competition, the United Bid would concentrate on executing against several identified initiatives that are part of the overall vision and hosting strategy, including:

60 Minutes From Football: As part of the “Minutes From Football” initiative, the United Bid would develop a blueprint for delivering extended, localized FIFA Fan Fest™ experiences in these communities beyond the Host Cities. These events would be scaled in size based on where they are and the size of the captive audience within the wider region. In addition, they would also serve as a huge “data capture” exercise to continue to build the size and detail in the United Fandom Engine.

The United Bid is committed to organizing the 2026 FIFA World Cup™ in a way so that no fan will have to travel far from their community to connect with the sport and the global football community. The goal is to bring football to fans, to embed playing and enjoying the world's game into the fabric of people's lives and communities. Fans who don't have a ticket can get as close to the action as possible before, during, and after games as part of FIFA Fan Fest™ events in Host Cities. Across Canada, Mexico, and the United States there are over 500 urban areas with a population of over 100,000, over 80 areas with over 500,000 residents, and thousands of other small communities, urban and rural, that could be connected and engaged.

Our aim would be to enable fans – whether one mile or 10,000 miles from the match – to feel that they are as close to the action as is feasibly possible.

Enhancing Game Day and Other Experiences:

By 2026, new technologies and ubiquitous connectivity will allow North America to provide autonomous transit, high-speed internet, embedded sensors, and ride-sharing services that will enable fans to consume the sport and connect with each other in new and powerful ways.

Indeed, by 2026, the Host Cities and stadiums that are part of the United Bid will almost certainly be part of Smart Cities, able to offer people more personalized experiences, driven by sophisticated tools and data that learn about individuals and their behaviors, what they like, as well as better real-time monitoring of media consumption and greater adaptability to cater for individual requirements. With sustainability as embedded in our vision and strategy, the United Bid will focus on harnessing existing technologies – rather than in investing in new technologies – and analyze a wide spectrum of data to improve the fan experience.

Navigation App: The United Bid, working in sync with FIFA, will explore ways to deploy physical digital kiosks throughout host cities, enabling a two-way interaction between Host Cities and fans through the delivery of key information. The kiosks could provide translation, way-finding support, and otherwise contribute to a smooth match day experience in a variety of ways. For instance, notifying fans when they are in close vicinity of a FIFA Fan Fest™ or alerting them on best travel options.

Artificial Intelligence: AI-driven bots that push customized information to visiting fans will be programmed to answer any event-related question – from game statistics to transport information – in an on-demand and personalized manner based on a fan’s location and other preferences. Cognitive computing will also provide many other services and opportunities.

Intelligent Media: Individual preferences and demographics drive personalized media – the delivery of dynamic messaging, offers, and custom creative to fans around and inside the stadium. For example, when a fan looks at a billboard on a stadium concourse, they would receive a targeted advert, in addition to wayfinding information specific to them and their needs, such as an offer on their favorite drink or a video of their favorite player.

VR and AR will be utilized to give fans at home or at community events the feeling of being in the stadium and watching games live.

Augmented and Virtual Reality: By 2026, Augmented and Virtual Reality technology – and its mainstream consumption – will have undergone significant developments. It will be able to bring the passion of a live football event to every fan, wherever they are in the world. VR and AR will be utilized to give fans who are at home or at community events the feeling of being in the stadium and watching games live, creating the biggest viewing crowds ever for FIFA World Cup™ games.

Connecting Fans

Football provides the connection point for the world’s largest and most passionate collective audience. A 2026 FIFA World Cup™ in North America will allow FIFA and the members associations to encourage and enable stronger relationships between individuals at and around matches, using football to bring together fans of different nationalities and teams worldwide.

Supporting delivery of all the principles above is the continuing analysis of Big Data, which will also provide real-time measurements to help us all make smart decisions on which media we should use to deliver which marketing and communication messages.

The simple availability of information is not enough, even when presented to thousands of people in a stadium and millions outside. Societies must be motivated and empowered to adopt changes (Deci 2000). Therefore, as explained above, football provides significant opportunities to deliver critical messages to massive audiences. We will analyze the key entry points to tap into fan identity and have the most effective impact on guiding the football community behavior towards individual and collective wellbeing.

LEGACY

All major sporting events should leave a long-lasting legacy. The United Bid believes a new and enhanced fan engagement should be part of the lasting legacy around the 2026 FIFA World Cup™ in North America and provides support to FIFA in its efforts to develop and promote the game, as outlined in “FIFA 2.0: The Vision for the Future.”

Some of the key legacy initiatives are outlined below. They include the application of the Fandom Engine in addition to supporting communities, individuals, and on-pitch performance.

Fandom Engine: At the heart of our legacy would be the continuation and extension of the Fandom Engine. This is the cornerstone of the United Bid’s engagement through to 2026 but also, following the Competition, it should continue to work in real-time to inform strategies across amateur, professional, and grassroots levels of the game.

The Fandom Engine would have three main responsibilities in establishing the legacy of the tournament within North America:

- Determining investment decisions in continuing to cultivate and increase engagement through analysis of the effect of specific engagement activities during the lead up to 2026 FIFA World Cup™ across different geographies, demographics, and levels of engagement;
- Personalizing each individual’s journey, leveraging demographic, attitudinal, and behavioral data; and
- Measuring engagement levels with the game and related activities.

The United Bid is also committed to extending the Fandom Engine as an innovative way of increasing and enhancing engagement beyond North America – throughout the CONCACAF region and ultimately all around the world.

We would propose to create a working group early, during the planning phases for the 2026 FIFA World Cup™ to directly involve member associations, throughout the CONCACAF region and beyond, in these discussions.

Moreover, the United Bid is committed to sharing all the learning and best practices with FIFA and the member associations. We would work with FIFA to understand existing and planned infrastructure (people, process, and systems) and coordinate on efforts to identify and execute the right level of implementation of the Fandom Engine as part of our planning efforts. Our approach is designed to create a new model for fan engagement that will benefit future organizers, so that fan engagement is not specifically tied to any single event or period of time but is driven by the opportunity to form and expand opportunities over time.

Key learnings will also be integrated into FIFA’s proposed Fan Interaction Management (FIM) system to assist the sport’s governing body with their ongoing fan engagement.

Research and Development: As part of a series of activities in the lead-up to the 2026 FIFA World Cup™, the United Bid plans to develop partnerships with several institutions, including museums, libraries, and other science and technology-related groups to pioneer research pertaining to both the development of the game of football (on and off the pitch) and social and community upward movement.

Sustainable Development

The Fandom Engine will also contribute to the sustainable development legacy required by FIFA. The United Bid recognizes the unique position of football as a driver of global change. Thus, through a deliberate and methodical strategy on fan engagement, we trust that this initiative can be an effective driver for the football community to significantly contribute to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

CONCLUSION

The 2026 FIFA World Cup™ in North America will open the door to a world of opportunity, with lessons learned, and best practices created for sharing with the entire global football community. That is true for every aspect of our hosting strategy and vision, and is integrated into our thinking about fan engagement.

It would also offer tremendous new assets to FIFA's commercial affiliates and member associations.

Hosting the 2026 FIFA World Cup™ across Canada, Mexico, and the United States would give FIFA and its member associations, and the entire global football community, an opportunity to reimagine and elevate the approach to fan engagement with an eye toward the next century.

The United Bid is putting fans, and fan engagement, at the heart of our hosting vision and strategy. We would work with FIFA to use the 2026 FIFA World Cup™ as a vehicle to harness the power of football in ways that have never been done before, to introduce and spread the benefits of the game to current and future fans, through the most sophisticated fan engagement strategy ever witnessed.