Commanders and Sport Analytics

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Brief History

The Football Team In Washington

- The Washington Commanders were founded in 1932 as the "Boston Braves." Five years later, the team moved to Washington D.C. and has remained there since.
- In 1933, the team's name was changed to the "Redskins" which remained the team name until 2020.
- Pro Football Hall of Fame head coach Joe Gibbs was part of the franchise's most successful period when he coached the team to three Super Bowl victories in 1982, 1987, and 1991.

# Commanders and Sports Technologies

STATSports

- The Commanders use the SonraWatch by STATSports to track players data.
- This data is then used by coaches to determine a players health and risk of injury.
- It is fit to each player specifically given that there are a wide range of body sizes on the team.

Impact of STATSports

- The SonraWatch creates a PDF report live from each workout session or game.
- As mentioned before this data can be used to measure a player's performance and areas they may need improvement in.
- For instance, if a player in a specific skill group isn't meeting the standards of everyone else, this device can quickly and accurately track this information.
- This technology can be one of the main reasons why the Commanders had such a great season.
- They went 12-5 coming second in the NFC East and made it all the way to the NFC Championship.
- The live, direct, and quick data that the SonraWatch provides seems to help the Commanders win.

MATCHDAY-2 Drill Comparison		START 15:31:40	END 16:49:41	DURATION 01:27:58	BIP 73%	PLAYERS 15	

DRILLS	DRILL INTENSITY (DIST PER MIN)	NO OF PLAYERS	DURATION	TOTAL DISTANCE	DISTANCE PER MIN	MAX SPEED	HIGH SPEED RUNNING	HIGH SPEED RUNNING PER MIN
Entire Session	↑	17	93	10364	10364	10.8	1042	11.29
Technical/Tactical - Conditioning - Pass & Mo...	↗	17	26	1035	1035	10.8	1042	11.29
0-15	→	17	15	1035	1035	10.8	1042	11.29
15-30	↘	17	5	1035	1035	10.8	1042	11.29
30-45	↓	17	15	1035	1035	10.8	1042	11.29
45-60	↑	17	15	1035	1035	10.8	1042	11.29
60-75	→	17	15	1035	1035	10.8	1042	11.29
75-90	↓	17	15	1035	1035	10.8	1042	11.29

Impact of Sports Analytics on Gameplay and Fan Experience

Game Evolution:

- Analytics have reshaped the way football is played by prioritizing efficiency and accountability.
- Teams now emphasize situational performance metrics to optimize strategies during games.

Example: A team may use a play that statistically works best on 3rd and 5 with 2 minutes left in the half rather than a play that is typically ran.

Coaching Strategy:

- Coaches use advanced metrics from analytics to streamline game preparation, tailoring strategies based on data-driven insights.

Fan Engagement:

- Fans gain a deeper understanding of the game through detailed statistics like Next Gen Stats, enhancing the viewing experience.
- Bettors and bookmakers benefit from advanced analytics, creating new markets and deeper engagement with the sport.

Recruitment and Drafting:

- Analytics influence NFL draft decisions, focusing more on game-specific skills (closing speed, reaction time) than traditional Combine metrics.

Career Pathways:

- The rise of analytics has created career opportunities for data scientists, with many being hired by NFL teams or analytics companies

Key Innovations in NFL Sports Analytics

Line-to-Gain Optical Tracking:

- The NFL has introduced optical tracking technology for accurate line-to-gain measurements, tested during the 2023 season.
- This innovation emphasizes precision, and speed to ensure seamless integration across the league enhancing officiating decisions and gameplay flow.
- Comparison: Tennis and cricket already use optical tracking for line calls and decision-making. However, the NFL's adaptation for line-to-gain focuses on dynamic, real-time gameplay scenarios, unlike the more static rulings in tennis or cricket.

Focus on Player Health and Safety:

- Innovations targeting player health and safety are prioritized in the NFL, using data analytics and emerging tech to assess and mitigate risks.
- Comparison: Rugby and hockey also employ injury analytics, but the NFL's scale and integration with its broader technological ecosystem set it apart.

Leveraging Partnerships: How Collaborations Drive Data-Driven Decision-Making

Integration of Technology in Operations:

- Verizon's Game-Day Operations Support: Reliable communication tools directly influence coaching and player strategies, ensuring decisions are informed by live game scenarios.
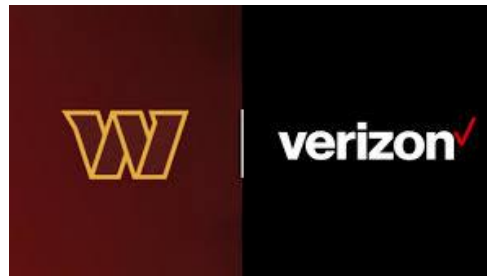
Scenario: During a critical 4th-down play, the offensive coordinator communicates a play to the head coach in real time using Verizon's private, secure wireless communication system. This ensures that decisions are made quickly without interference or delays, adapting to the defense's lineup.

- Fan Experience Innovations: Upgraded connectivity helps fans navigate concessions and view on-field action, providing insights into crowd movement and preferences that could be used for operational improvements.

Collaboration with Code and Theory:

- Data-Driven Branding: The rebranding journey utilized over 40,000 fan submissions, focus groups, and community input to inform decisions about the team's name, logo, and identity.
- Inclusivity-Focused Approach: The process emphasized diverse perspectives—players, fans, Indigenous leaders, and activists—ensuring decisions resonated broadly and authentically.

These partnerships and the resulting data-driven strategies demonstrate how the Washington Commanders are leveraging external expertise to improve performance, engagement, and brand identity.

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