

# 7 Great Sports Marketing Campaigns

The synergy between digital marketing and sports is undeniable. Done well, sports marketing campaigns have the ability to capture the [hearts and minds](#) of sports fans. Brands that use sponsorships or digital promotions have increased affinity and loyalty with their audiences.

While mobile technologies and social media are [transforming both sports and sports businesses](#). A potent mix. But what are the best examples of digital sports marketing? And what are the lessons we can learn? And why are they some of the most creative marketing campaigns around?

## 1. Red Bull Stratos

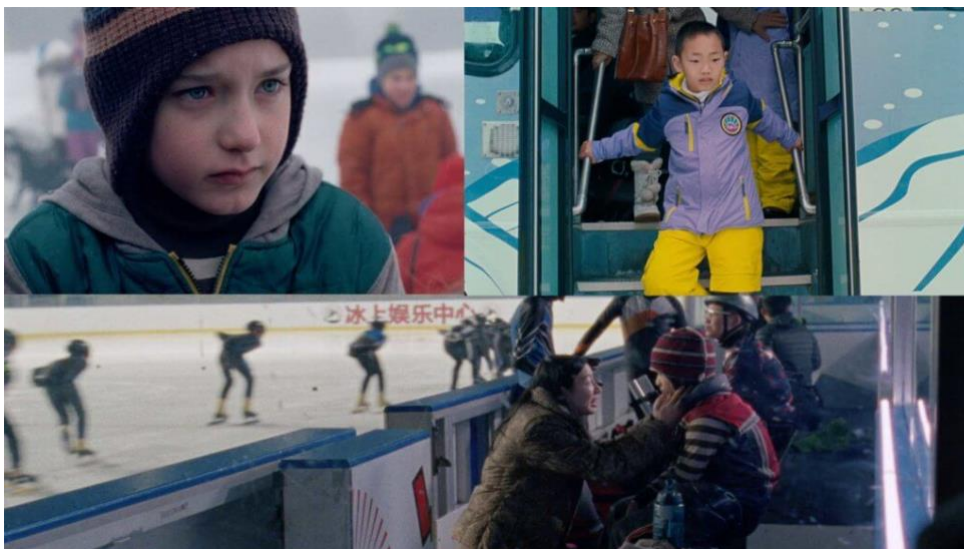
[Remember this](#)? Years in the making, the record breaking “Space Dive” was the most watched [YouTube live stream ever in 2012](#) with 8 million concurrent viewers. Across the world, millions huddled around desks, watched from phones, and sat transfixed in classrooms as Austrian Felix Baumgartner jumped from the edge of space into blue oblivion. And the purpose of this dramatic enterprise? A marketing stunt. An amazing undertaking, yes. A fantastic advertisement for Austrian energy drink brand [Red Bull](#)? Double yes.

What we liked about this particular campaign was its [innovative use of live streaming](#). It paved the way for [further streaming on social media](#) and showed – if done right – it could be another tool in the digital marketers’ arsenal.

It also matched the ethos of Red Bull’s brand. A marketing strategy that uses social media for maximum effect, capturing people with equal parts amazement and awe. Whether through the traditional sponsoring of athletes, extreme stunts, or the full scale ownership of successful sports teams like Red Bull Racing.

The only slight dampener on the Red Bull Stratos success story? The relationship between Skydiver Felix and his employer nosedived after he failed to mention the name of energy drink before he jumped. Ouch.

## 2. Thank You, Mom – Proctor and Gamble



Back for the 2018 Winter Olympics, P&G's "Thank You, Mom" is masterful marketing. It's an awesome example of how a sponsor can craft a link between (let's be honest, some fairly boring) products and the sporting event it backs. Named as one of the top campaigns of the 21<sup>st</sup> century by Advertising Age, it's an emotional masterpiece. And [one in a series](#) of 'mother' themed ads by the consumer goods giant.

At the heart of the campaigns is emotional storytelling. P&G positions its products as the enabler for mothers to support Olympian heroes. The latest campaign for the 2018 Winter Games focuses on "love over bias". According to P&G, the latest campaign "[celebrates mum's role as her child's first and greatest advocate. The one who sees her child's potential regardless of how others see them](#)". Remove the blurb, and it's still an ad campaign selling cleaning household brands, but it's bloody brilliant at what it does.

### 3. Under Armour – Rule Yourself

A brand that has come from nowhere, to a global player, [Under Armour](#) is a sports company with attitude. It was exactly this feeling that it attempted to capture with its gritty Rule Yourself campaign. First launched in the spring of 2016, then pushed again via social media before the 2016 Rio Olympics. The outcome: phenomenal. The Michael Phelps focused ad became the second most shared ad of the 2016 Olympics and the fifth most shared Olympic ad of all time.

According to AdWeek the ad struck "the right emotional chord with its target audience: millennial men between the ages of 18 and 34". A challenge at the best of times. VP of Marketing and Insight at [Unruly](#), Devra Prywes, noted that the aesthetic of the Under Armour ad worked in its favour. "[With younger viewers, over three-quarters will lose trust in a brand if an ad feels fake. Under Armour's recent campaigns are all consistently authentic](#)". The athlete himself even said that the ad "[showed exactly how I prepare](#)". Prywes also noted that the key emotion associated with the ad was "inspiration". A feeling that evokes a strong reaction in millennial males. Something that no doubt helped it get shared repeatedly.

### 4. Unibet – Value Stats in Sports Marketing Campaigns

In 2019 Unibet took the use of data feeds by the scruff of the neck and totally upgraded its display advertising offering. Out of the sports betting companies on the market, Unibet is well known for supplying insightful information to customers in its sports marketing campaigns, whether that is through its digital video, social channels, or [blog](#).

What it did that was so unique this time around, was that it took its insightful data and combined it with its live dynamic odds within its display advertising and landing pages.

Indeed, for a long time, iGaming brands have used [data feeds and dynamic content](#) to supply live odds or reactive content but what Unibet did with this project was inject value. It created a new dynamic data feed for its display advertising called "Value Stats".

**Bet on Premier League this Summer**

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**Join Now**

18+ only. T&Cs apply. [www.begambleaware.org](http://www.begambleaware.org)

**SHEFFIELD UNITED** vs **LIVERPOOL**

Sheffield United have had the most corners in 5 of their last 6 matches

**MOST CORNERS: SHEFFIELD UNITED** **3/1**

**1. FC UNION BERLIN** vs **EINTRACHT FRANKFURT**

Eintracht Frankfurt have lost 4 of their last 5 away matches

**41/20** **1. FC UNION BERLIN TO WIN**

**1 Join Now**  
Create your free online casino account

**2 Deposit**  
Select your trusted payment method

**3 Play**  
Anytime, anywhere in New Jersey

This new dynamic feature – used across Unibet banners and [landing pages](#) – provides smart insights based on the games highlighted by another data feed in the ad. The value stat data feed is tailored for each market and according to Unibet resulted in increased ad performance. This sports marketing campaign was created and controlled via the Bannerflow [creative management platform \(CMP\)](#) too.

**Bet on tennis with Unibet**

# MONEY BACK AS BONUS UP TO £40 IF YOUR FIRST BET LOSES PLUS £10 CASINO BONUS

**Register Now**

New customers only. 18+. BetGambleAware.org. Min deposit £10. Money back as bonus. Wagering requirements: Sportsbook 3x at min. odds of 1.40 (2/5). Casino 25x. Only one bonus can be used at a time. Sportsbook bonus must be wagered before using the Casino, unless the bonus has been forfeited. Bonus will expire after 7 days of opt-in.

**K. ZAVATSKA** vs **S. CIRSTEA**

K. Zavatska has won 4 of the last 5 matches

**K. ZAVATSKA WINS THE MATCH** **17/5**

**G. MONFILS** vs **A. RAMOS-VIÑOLAS**

G. Monfils has lost a serving game in 2nd set in 4 of the last 5 matches against left handed players

**10/3** **A. RAMOS-VIÑOLAS WINS 4TH GAME IN 2ND SET**

**1 Register Now**  
Join Unibet today - It only takes a minute

**2 Deposit**  
Use one of several secure payment methods

**3 Bet**  
Money back as bonus if your first bet loses.

Indeed, according to Head of Acquisition Optimisation, at Kindred Group (parent company of Unibet), Max Taub: “It’s really important to have this live and reactive data, as it makes a huge impact.” And it’s something many other industries and display advertisers looking to create remarkable campaigns should be doing too!

## 5. Sport England – This Girl Can

First launched in early 2015, Sport England’s [“This Girl Can”](#) campaign was a ground-breaking success. Created specifically to tackle the gender gap in sports participation between males and females in the UK. The campaign sought: [“to tell the real story of women who play sport by using images that are the complete opposite of the idealised and stylised images of women we are now used to seeing”](#). The result was spectacular. According to Sport England’s own figures, This Girl Can directly resulted in [2.8 million women engaging in more active lifestyles](#).

What made the campaign a particular success was its ability to capture minds across channels. Plus, its creation of an online community of individuals who would normally be ignored. The stats speak for themselves: [600,000 women and girls joined the This Girl Can social media community](#). Plus, the campaign is still mentioned regularly on social media since its launch. Search via the hashtag



#thisgirlcan on twitter and see for yourself. It was of no surprise that Sport England choose to [return to the campaign](#) again and again, with a new version for 2020.

## 6. Seattle Seahawks and Starbucks

Local company helps local sports team. It's a classic scenario. However, what happens when the company is Seattle based [Starbucks](#) and the team is the [Seahawks](#) of the NFL? Some pretty cool marketing that's for sure. The two Washington State giants teamed up to produce co-branded cup sleeves that not only looked like Seahawks jerseys but featured a Snapcode too. This allowed Seahawks fans to access exclusive content on Snapchat.



[The campaign worked](#) not just because of the Seattle connection but because of how it used lifestyle and everyday technology. A coffee in one hand and a smartphone in the other – hopefully with Snapchat installed. This smart social campaign was produced in honour of the [Seahawks reaching the playoffs](#), and was a great way of incorporating a sponsor.

## 7. Paddy Power and Social Media Sports Marketing Campaigns

[Paddy Power](#)'s use of social media is well documented. With millions of followers, it's a staple of many people's feeds and unique in terms of sports marketing campaigns. It produces, seemingly round-the-clock, Facebook, Twitter, and Snapchat posts. When it comes to creating content the betting company thinks like a publisher. And like a publisher its success comes from the tone of voice, and attitude, which runs throughout its advertising and social engagement. Whether print, online display, or video you recognise a Paddy Power ad.

On its social effort, Paddy Powers head of engagement Paul Mallon has commented: "[I can't think of many brands who produce the standard of in-house social and editorial content that we do](#)". And he's right.

Without focusing too hard on one particular campaign, Paddy Power's ads and posts all have the same traits: [mischief; disruption; and controversy](#). Whether trending when [pretending to chop down the Amazon rainforest](#) in support of England in the 2014 World Cup. Or [tweeting](#) on the delightful haircuts of footballers Aguero and Falcao. Paddy Power wants to engage with its punters in real-time. It's a cost effective way to [build brand awareness, increase affinity with the brand, and differentiate themselves from competition](#). And that's why we salute Paddy Power's use of social media.

## Some Not-So-Great Sports Digital Marketing Campaigns:

Somewhere, someone at [20th Century Fox](#) thought that linking up with [Manchester United](#) for cross promotion purposes was a good idea. How better to sell films than to parachute Wayne Rooney into trailers? The result is predictably horrific. Let me explain, Wayne Rooney is a footballer and not an actor (and he's terrible). Respected Guardian film critic Peter Bradshaw when analysing a Deadpool tie-in commented: "[It is genuinely difficult to tell if this intentionally seeks to align the pansexuality of Deadpool with what some have seen as the homoerotic quality of footballers' goal celebrations](#)". Indeed.

Ham-fisted in the extreme, placing Manchester United stars into [trailers](#) for [blockbusters](#) isn't proving a massive success. Take [this attempt](#), a mash-up of Rooney and the (surprisingly good) Wolverine film [Logan](#); replies to the video on [social media](#) include "delete" and "why?". Result! With over 72 million Facebook followers, and another 10.2 million on Twitter, it's understandable why 20th Century Fox wanted to join forces with Man United. It's just a pity the results are utterly awful.

(Thankfully, for movie lovers everywhere, Wayne Rooney has since moved to Derby County, and Man United and 20th Century Fox have ceased their bizarre sports marketing campaign).

## Sports Marketing Campaigns: The Takeaways

**One more thing!** If you get the chance, check out how Italian football team Roma is combining it's awesome signing videos with [adverts for missing children](#). Launched in 2019, it has been such a success that it has not just resulted in kids being found but it is now being exported to other clubs to be part of their social campaigns too. We will definitely be focusing on this in another article as it such an awesome idea.

So there you have it, a selection of exceptional (and one not so great) digital sports marketing campaigns. Each campaign notably different, yet they all have one thing in common: unique engagement with a target audience.

The honest truth is we love remarkable sports advertising here at [Bannerflow](#), especially those that involve online display. Here's the three lessons that we think marketers should take from these campaigns:

- Innovate in the [application of technology](#)
- Get social; engage with viewers across channels
- Be dynamic and reactive with your display advertising
- Be real; audiences want something that is authentic
- (Don't insert Wayne Rooney into films)

**One more thing:** Stay on your toes. If you're following a social strategy for a major sporting event, there's the problem of [hashtag hijacking](#). And with issues of [brand safety](#) ever more important, it pays to keep a watchful eye over your social feeds during major sports marketing campaigns.

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