



D.C. United Engages with Fans by Streaming Exclusive Shows via Facebook Live

Using Wirecast from Telestream, the D.C. United Digital Media Department engages with fans by streaming exclusive pre- and post-game shows via Facebook Live.

Washington, D.C.

As the most decorated club in modern U.S. soccer history, the D.C. United has won the MLS Cup four times, including 1996, 1997, 1999 and 2004. To keep their fans excited and engaged, the club's in-house digital media department has set a goal to connect regularly with their fans through digital and social media outreach.

To accomplish this, the digital media department produces interesting, broadcast-quality live streams that entertain and support the fans that attend the games, which are currently played at the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium. They especially want to connect with the club's growing fan base including:

- Devoted fans in the District of Columbia (D.C.)
- Fans tailgating in the parking lot before the games
- Fans that reside outside of the Washington D.C. market
- Fans that follow the team on Facebook



A live post-game interview

The Initiative

Recognizing the significant marketing opportunity that Facebook Live poses, the digital media department set out to find interesting, engaging ways to produce content exclusively for Facebook that would take the D.C. United fan experience to a higher level.

On a weekly basis, the department now delivers fresh Facebook Live programming, including weekly pre-game and post-game shows featuring:

- Game highlights
- Interviews with players and coaches
- Post-game analysis of key plays and strategy
- Pre-produced video packages about the team

Committed to producing digital media programs comparable in quality to the club's televised games, the digital media department searched for the ideal content creation platform.

They chose Wirecast 7—live production and streaming software from Telestream—for its comprehensive feature set and professional quality, as well as its ability to stream content directly via the Facebook Live platform.

“The digital media department is a small crew tasked with doing a lot of different things, such as social media, video and PR on behalf of the D.C. United,” says Samantha Perrie, video producer with the digital media department. “Usability was something we looked for in a new app. After a thorough search, we found Wirecast, took it for a test drive, and knew it was what we were looking for.”

The digital media department also uses Wirecast to stream exclusive Facebook Live video events, such as a 20th anniversary re-broadcast of the D.C. United's 1996 MLS Cup championship game. Since that game was over two hours long, the digital media team used Wirecast to create a playlist of smaller segments, including first half, second half, half time and overtime, for easier streaming. The video was also interspersed with “Back in the Day” breaks that showcased the original commercials that ran during the original broadcast.

Perrie explains, “It was an exciting time back then, an amazing game, played in the rain, and visually awesome. I broke it up into video clips using the layer feature in Wirecast, and worked things back and forth between the layers to stream the whole thing. It was hugely successful as our fans got to relive their glory days. We were delighted by how many people it reached, and we plan to do similar broadcasts again in the future.”

The Challenge

The biggest challenge facing the club's lean digital media department was to produce live social media streams that mirror the quality of their televised game matches. To meet this high production standard, the live production and streaming solution would need to be able to:

- Perform live video switching between multiple video cameras
- Layer video elements
- Add live graphics treatments
- Intersperse full-screen displays, such as *Coming Up Next* and *Season Ticket* information
- Mix audio
- Use sophisticated 3D titling capabilities to display player and game stats
- Stream via Facebook Live

“There really wasn't any learning curve for me having been in the video industry for years. I could just hop right on, create different layers for graphics, and turn them on and off. It's so easy.”

Samantha Perrie, video producer with the digital media department serving D.C. United

Wirecast handles all of these online production tasks in a streamlined workflow that video novices find intuitive and user-friendly. And for those with a video editing or production background, the Wirecast environment offers a familiar paradigm that lets them get up-to-speed quickly.

The Solution

Wirecast solves the digital media team's production challenges by sharing the same live camera feeds and graphics treatments as the televised match. Wirecast also makes all of the production tools needed to produce the live-streamed shows easily accessible from a single user interface.

The pre-game show, which typically runs about 22 minutes, is comprised of five segment blocks, each of which is roughly three minutes long. Since the pre-game show airs while the team is doing warm-ups, each live segment incorporates 30 seconds of pre-recorded material, such as player interviews.

While the digital media team wants their Facebook audience to grow, they particularly want to use the platform to recognize and interact with those ardent fans that support the D.C. United by coming to the games, and to help build excitement while they wait for the game to start.

Wirecast also provides features that support the entire process of live streaming directly to the Facebook Live platform. For example, the D.C. United digital media department occasionally encounters Internet connectivity issues when streaming media from their historic home stadium. To ensure a solid connection, Wirecast allows them to test the stream before the show goes live on Facebook for better quality control.

"I test the stream output before every show," mentions Perrie. "Being able to set up a stream really fast, and test it in a way that only I can see it, gives me confidence and peace of mind that everything is working."

The Results

"We feel that the more informed our fans are, the more loyal they are likely to be. Making it easy to watch interviews with players and coaches about what they think the match-up will be like, with analysis afterwards, all makes for a more engaged fan base, which is our ultimate goal," says Perrie.

"After playing around [with Wirecast] for 10 minutes, I had the basics of it, but at the same time, there's plenty of potential to do more and raise the bar for next season."

Samantha Perrie, video producer with the digital media department serving D.C. United

The initiative has proven successful, with a growing audience, including tailgaters who watch the live streams on their mobile phones or tablets in the parking lot prior to the game, and followers who actively post comments about the live streams on the club's Facebook page.

In terms of viewer analytics, the Insights tool in Facebook Live allows the team to get a good overview of their performance metrics for the year. The weekly shows have a Facebook reach of over 50,000. And for its special, commemorative re-broadcast of the D.C. United's 1996 MLS Cup match, the Facebook streams garnered:

- A reach of 763,775 Facebook viewers
- 110,552 video views
- 24,716 Facebook comments, reactions and shares

As more D.C. United fans learn about the club's live Facebook streams, the digital media department expects engagement to grow significantly throughout the 2017 season, and beyond.

For more information, please visit:

The D.C. United soccer club website:

<https://www.dcupied.com/>

Telestream Wirecast:

<https://www.telestream.net/wirecast>

