

AUTOMOTIVE

Lexus leans into humor in football-themed film

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Lexus's new safety features are shared in a football-themed video. Image credit: Lexus

By SARAH RAMIREZ

Toyota Corp.'s Lexus is touting its crossover SUV and updated safety features in a tongue-in-cheek video as audiences turn their attention to the upcoming Super Bowl.

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In a departure from its campaigns emphasizing craftsmanship, Lexus is sharing a humorous look at a mock safety system inspired by its UX sport utility vehicle. By finding inspiration from a hot topic among sports fans, the campaign can engage with a mass audience.

"The timing with the first-ever Lexus UX launch was serendipitous with the NFL playoff season, and we wanted to take advantage of it," said Mariko Kusumoto, senior manager of advertising at **Lexus**, Plano, TX. "Our goal was to entertain football fans during the most exciting time of the season while showcasing the class-leading standard safety system of the all new UX."

Quarterback safety

Retired quarterback Matt Leinart stars in the new film directed by comedy duo Nick and Charles.

Described as a "national treasure" despite a short-lived professional career, Mr. Leinart appears enthusiastic about helping Lexus develop what it calls its Quarterback Safety System+ (QBSS+).

Former quarterback Matt Leinart appears in a new Lexus campaign

The short film mimics many campaigns from automakers, with an engineer explaining the creation of a groundbreaking safety system.

However, this faux system is meant to protect "the nation's greatest resource," football quarterbacks. This is an amusing take on a new "roughing the passer" rule in the National Football League, which is meant to protect quarterbacks from injury but drew widespread criticism for being applied too generously.

Some of the QBSS+ features include "blind side monitor" to let quarterbacks know the optimal time to avoid a tackle, which Mr. Leinart demonstrates by falling into the fetal position.

Recent efforts

This campaign from Lexus focuses on its new vehicle while also spotlighting its safety features.

The UX so named as a combination of urban and crossover originated as a concept car for Lexus several years ago. City drivers have been at the forefront of the model's design since the beginning.

A recent UX campaign from Lexus encourages urban drivers to push boundaries ([see story](#)).

Parent company Toyota Corporation is looking to make driving safer by allowing its vehicles to communicate with other cars and infrastructure.

From 2021, Toyota and Lexus will begin equipping models in the United States with Dedicated Short-Range Communications (DRSC) technology, which can help prevent collisions and give drivers a heads up about upcoming road conditions. Toyota sees DRSC as a means of advancing both connected and autonomous driving, two areas seeing significant focus among automakers ([see story](#)).

"The first-ever Lexus UX compact crossover, which launched earlier this month, has a class-leading standard safety system," Ms. Kusumoto said. "From new low-light pedestrian detection and daytime bicyclist detection technology to built-in cameras to help provide road sign information, the UX's suite of standard active safety equipment is one of the most comprehensive safety systems ever offered in a Lexus."

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