

SPORTS

Breeders' Cup digital pivot hints at luxury opportunities for fan engagement

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The Breeders' Cup will take place Nov. 6 and 7. Image credit: Breeders' Cup

By NORA HOWE

International horse racing event the Breeders' Cup has unveiled a multi-faceted digital program, demonstrating how luxury brands may continue to virtually engage consumers as sporting events take place without live spectators.

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The #MyBreedersCup program allows fans new opportunities to interact with the event remotely, as the event goes on without fans amid the COVID-19 pandemic. It includes innovative viewing experiences, virtual fashion contests and even event cocktail recipes.

"Building out the Breeders' Cup's digital offerings has been a priority for the past several years," said Justin McDonald, senior vice president of marketing of the [Breeders' Cup](#).

"Whether fans want to keep track of their favorite horses throughout the day with the all-new Contender Cam, snap and share a themed photo with friends applying our interactive AR photo filters, or watch the races from the perspective of a Championship jockey through the Jockey Cam, #MyBreedersCup facilitates all those moments and more, providing an incredibly robust and immersive look into the world of elite thoroughbred racing," he said.

#MyBreedersCup

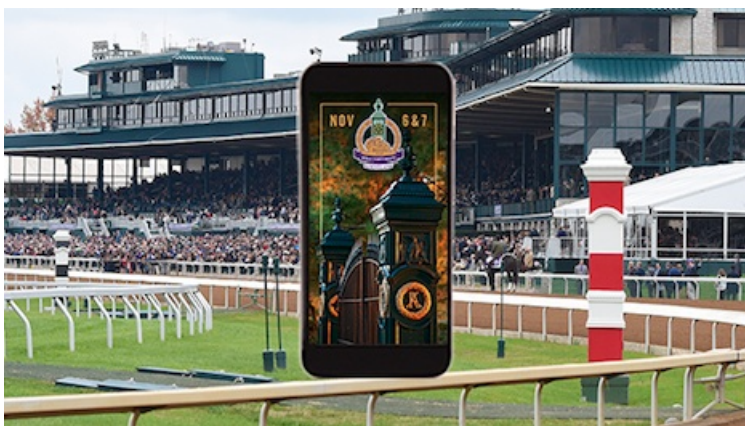
Breeders' Cup has been working with media company NBC Sports to implement production elements that would allow viewers of the live broadcast to watch the races such as the high-power camera dubbed the "BatCam," which will provide dynamic views of the races.

This year's Breeders' Cup will have a robust on-site production with NBC having access to 80 cameras for their coverage.

Another new feature is the Lexus "Jockey Cam," a helmet-mounted camera that will provide a live, first-person perspective for up to two jockeys per race. Fans can watch through the Breeders' Cup's official website, but NBC Sports will also integrate video content from the "Jockey Cams" into their Breeders' Cup race-day coverage.

The new "Contender Cam" will allow fans to watch their favorite horse through a dedicated live stream on [BreedersCup.com](#) from the time they enter the paddock to when they enter the gate. There will be up to 14 live

streams to choose from each race, allowing owners, fans and bettors to keep a close eye on all horses as they warm up.



#MyBreedersCup allows audiences around the world to engage remotely with the event. Image credit: Breeders' Cup

Additional features of the program include a live virtual reality and 360 stream from the walking ring and Winner's Circle and a virtual edition of the "Longines Prize for Elegance" fashion contest, awarding classic Longines timepieces to two stylish fans.

The Swiss watchmaker is a longtime sponsor of the Breeders' Cup, serving as the event's official timekeeper since 2014 ([see story](#)).

#MyBreedersCup photo filters featuring special frames, background and virtual elements will provide fans the ideal race-day mementos and boost social media engagement.

Fans will also be able to recreate the Breeders' Cup experience in their own homes with Breeders' Cup Party Kits and signature cocktail recipes.



The history of the Breeders' Cup trophy dates back to the late 1580s. Image credit: Breeders' Cup

The 37th running of the Breeders' Cup World Championships is scheduled to take place on Nov. 6 and Nov. 7, 2020 at Keeneland in Lexington, KY. The event will be broadcast live on NBC, NBCSN, NBCSports.com and the NBC Sports app, as well as on BreedersCup.com and the Official Breeders' Cup app.

Year of virtual sports

Sporting events have been severely hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, which directly affected how luxury brands would pursue event sponsorships.

Traditionally, many luxury brands have celebrated events with affluent fanbases, including horse races and tennis tournaments, with sponsorships and special experiences for attendees.

In June, Wimbledon cancelled its iconic tennis tournament due to coronavirus restrictions. In response, Wimbledon organizer All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club launched a social media campaign calling on consumers to share their favorite memories of the event to keep it alive virtually with the hashtag #WimbledonRecreated ([see story](#)).

Luxury brands have an opportunity to reach consumers in new and innovative ways as audiences become more reliant on digital for content and connections. One of the biggest losses for sporting events and brands is in

hospitality assets, therefore brands should consider how they will build a more intimate connection within the context of sponsorships ([see story](#)), such as Lexus sponsoring the Jockey Cam in this year's Breeders' Cup

"This year it was more important than ever to identify and develop an even greater number of new experiences that allow our fans to fully interact with every element of the event, since they cannot do so in person," Mr. McDonald said.

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