



# BEYOND PERFORMANCE

2026

#5

**Your sports business snack.**

In a world where sport evolves faster than the seasons, staying ahead takes more than passion: it takes perspective. This newsletter serves it up: sharp insights, fresh trends, and bold ideas. A smart snack for those shaping tomorrow's sport industry.

MADE BY GPS PERFORMANCE  
ISSUE #5

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Data drives the athlete. Tech reshapes the game. Brands fuel the story. In today's sports world, performance is built as much off the field as on it, where science, innovation, and image collide.



# EVENTS

The **4th Summer Youth Olympic Games** will be held in Dakar, Senegal, from 31 October to 13 November 2026. A historic first, as it marks the first Olympic sporting event ever hosted on the African continent. Designed for athletes aged up to 17, the YOG blend elite competition with educational programming around Olympic values and cultural exchange, and have a strong track record of launching future Olympic champions, including Noah Lyles, Jessica Fox, and Tom Daley. Media accreditation applications are open from 13 April to 12 June 2026 via the official Media Registration Portal, with access available to both rights-holding and non-rights-holding media. The Main Press Centre will be based at the CICAD conference centre in Diamniadio and operational from 27 October to 14 November. Dedicated media hotels are distributed across the Dakar, Diamniadio, and Saly venue clusters, with shuttle transport provided throughout.

The **2026 FIFA World Cup** will run from 11 June to 19 July 2026 across 16 stadiums in Canada, the United States, and Mexico, the first edition to feature 48 qualified nations. The final will be held on 19 July at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey, which opened in 2010 and holds 82,500 spectators. All three host nations qualify automatically: the US and Canada will each appear at their second consecutive World Cup, while Mexico becomes the first country ever to host the tournament three times, having previously done so in 1970 and 1986. The expanded field brings together sides from six confederations, with notable qualifiers including France, Spain, Argentina, Brazil, Morocco, Senegal, Japan, and Australia, alongside first-time or rare participants such as Curaçao and Uzbekistan. For the host nations, ambitions vary. Mexico will look to replicate its quarter-final runs on home soil, while the US aims to go further than its round of 16 exit at Qatar 2022, and Canada hopes to record its first-ever World Cup win after two group-stage exits in 1986 and 2022.

The **2026 European Aquatics Championships** will take place from 31 July to 16 August in Paris and Saint-Denis, nearly a century after

the French capital last hosted the event in 1931. Awarded to Paris in January 2024, the championships are a direct legacy of the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games, with the Olympic Aquatics Centre in Saint-Denis set to host pool swimming, diving, and artistic swimming, while open water and high diving events will take place in the Seine river in central Paris. Five aquatic disciplines will be represented in total, with the event jointly organised by the French Swimming Federation and European Aquatics, backed by a broad coalition of public institutions including the French state, the Île-de-France region, and the City of Paris.

The **2026 European Athletics Championships** will be held in Birmingham from 10 to 16 August, marking the first time the event has come to Great Britain. Alexander Stadium, which sold out during the 2022 Commonwealth Games and serves as the home of UK Athletics, will be the central venue for seven days of competition featuring athletes from over 50 European nations.

The **2026 FIBA Women's Basketball World Cup** will be held in Germany, bringing together 16 national teams in a competition that dates back to its inaugural edition in Chile in 1953, where the United States claimed the first title. The 2022 edition in Sydney set new records for engagement and viewership. Qualification for 2026 ran through a two-stage process: newly introduced pre-qualification tournaments in August 2024 fed into four World Cup Qualification Tournaments in March 2026, with berths also distributed via the 2025 continental championships across Africa, the Americas, Asia, and Europe. Germany qualifies automatically as host, joined by sides including the United States, Australia, France, Spain, Brazil, Japan, Nigeria, and others across all FIBA zones.

The **Route du Rhum, Destination Guadeloupe** sets sail on 1 November, with over 117 solo sailors departing Saint-Malo in Brittany for Pointe-à-Pitre in Guadeloupe, a distance of 3,542 nautical miles across the Atlantic. Created in 1978 by Michel Etevenon, the race has become one of offshore sailing's great

institutions, held every four years and defined by its unique mix of professional skippers and amateur sailors competing across six boat categories, from the giant ULTIM 32/23 maxi-multihulls down to Class40 monohulls and Vintage classes. The current course record stands at 6 days, 19 hours, 47 minutes and 25 seconds, set by Charles Caudrelier when he won the 2022 edition. Past winners and iconic figures include Florence Arthaud, Francis Joyon, Ellen MacArthur, and Franck Cammas, while the race's founding mythology traces back to its dramatic 1978 finish, where Mike Birch beat Michel Malinowski by just 98 seconds.



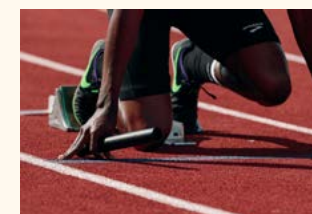
FIFA World Cup



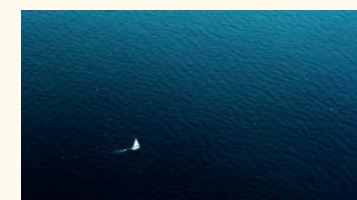
4th Summer Youth Olympic Games



European Aquatics Championships



European Athletics Championships



Route du Rhum



### Global sponsorship packages for FIFA World Cup

FIFA has confirmed all 16 global sponsorship positions for the 2026 World Cup are filled, with the commercial programme already the most successful in the organisation's history. Only two regional Tournament Supporter slots remain, as the tournament's unprecedented scale, 48 teams, 104 matches, and an anticipated global audience of six billion, continues to drive record brand interest.



### BOSS & the Australian Open

The Australian Open has announced global fashion brand BOSS as its Official Lifestyle Outfitter from 2027, in a partnership that will see the brand dress up to 4,000 staff, officials, umpires, and ballkids while extending its presence across retail, hospitality, and fan activations throughout Melbourne Park. United by shared values of ambition and performance, the collaboration positions BOSS at the intersection of sport, lifestyle, and culture on one of tennis's biggest stages.



### NBA & Coca-Cola

The NBA and Coca-Cola have announced a new global marketing partnership, bringing Sprite back as the league's Official Global Soft Drink Partner. The reunion reunites two names with deep roots in basketball culture, Coca-Cola first partnered with the NBA in 1986, and Sprite went on to help shape the sport's connection to music, fashion and self-expression across generations. Under the new deal, Sprite will activate across the NBA's biggest global stages, with Minnesota Timberwolves star Anthony Edwards serving as a key brand ambassador.



# SPONSORING

# COMMUNICATION

## Coca-Cola Anthem for FIFA World Cup 26

Coca-Cola has unveiled its official anthem for the 2026 FIFA World Cup, and it hits like nothing the tournament has seen before. Built around a reimagined version of Van Halen's classic Jump, the track brings together an unlikely but explosive lineup: Colombian reggaeton star J Balvin, soul singer Amber Mark, rock guitarist Steve Vai, and Blink-182 drummer Travis Barker, each adding their own sonic fingerprint to a song that was already built for stadium energy. Rendered in a bold anime visual style, the anthem unfolds like a fever dream of football emotion: the pre-match nerves, the eruption of a goal, the agony of a near-miss, the collective release of a final whistle. The animation pulls fans through the full emotional rollercoaster that only a World Cup can deliver, with Coca-Cola positioned at every beat as the shared companion through it all. It's a deliberate collision of worlds, Latin urban, indie soul, classic rock, punk, mirroring the cultural diversity of a 48-team tournament expected to reach six billion people. The result is less a traditional sponsor anthem and more a genuine piece of content: loud, cinematic, and built to travel.



## FORD | Every Ground Is Our Proving Ground

Ford is marking its return to Formula 1 with Oracle Red Bull Racing with a campaign that goes well beyond a sponsor logo on a car. Timed to F1's arrival on Apple TV, «Every Ground Is Our Proving Ground» uses the platform's sequential ad capabilities to air a micro-docuseries across the race weekend, a progressive narrative, not a traditional commercial break, that draws a direct line between the extremes of F1 engineering and the trucks pulling up to job sites and trailheads across America. No actors, no scripts, just Ford's actual engineers, from F1 powertrain lead Christian Hertrich to the off-road teams currently testing suspension setups in the desert. The underlying message is straightforward: the R&D forged in racing, aerodynamics, suspension, efficiency, feeds directly into vehicles like the F-150 Raptor and Ford's upcoming electric trucks. It is Ford's most pointed tech storytelling in years, and a deliberate reminder that Henry Ford used racing to prove his ideas 125 years ago, and the company is doing exactly the same thing now.



## How ASICS Built a Mental Wellbeing Platform

ASICS has done what few sports brands manage: built a coherent brand platform not through a single landmark campaign, but through consistent accumulation. Starting from one core belief, that movement improves how people feel, the brand has repeatedly found new settings and audiences to prove it, from office workers and teenage girls dropping out of sport, to dogs and the before-and-after aesthetics of fitness culture. Each campaign lands the same idea differently, keeping the platform fresh without losing focus. The result is a body of work that feels both principled and creative, and a masterclass in turning a brand belief into sustained, tangible storytelling.



# RESEARCHES

## Streaming Europe

Streaming Europe offers the first comprehensive, pan-European examination of how global streaming platforms have reshaped the continent's media landscape since Netflix's arrival in 2012, from production and distribution to policy and audience behaviour. One of its standout chapters, The Streamification of Sports Broadcasting, tackles the accelerating migration of live sports rights onto subscription platforms and its consequences for broadcasters, rights holders, and fans across Europe.



## Medical coverage of national teams in snow sports: Preparation, specific risks and organization of care

This article examines the complexities of providing medical coverage for national teams in snow sports, from pre-event preparation to on-site care in demanding and constantly changing environments. It highlights the adaptability, communication, and cross-disciplinary collaboration required of team physicians operating in one of sport's highest-risk contexts.



## Open innovation ecosystems: a scoping review and conceptual model for sport management

This paper presents the first comprehensive review bridging Open Innovation Ecosystem theory with sport management, synthesising 41 peer-reviewed articles to map how collaborative innovation networks are structured and governed. It proposes a two-phase conceptual model that sport organisations can apply to drive innovation across fan engagement, athletic performance, and event management.



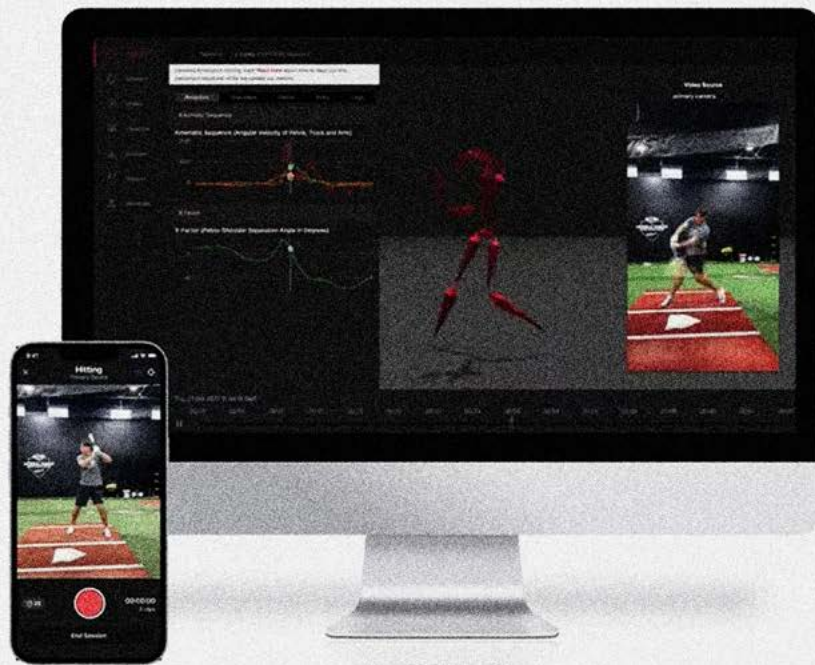
## The role of high-performance sport environments in mental health: an international society of sport psychology consensus statement

This consensus statement from the Third ISSP Think Tank on Mental Health shifts the focus of athlete mental health research from the individual to the environment, examining how sport teams, organisations, and systems either support or undermine the wellbeing of athletes, coaches, and staff. It offers concrete recommendations for sport organisations, practitioners, and researchers to build healthier high-performance environments across both social and physical dimensions.



# TECH

## UPLIFT



Uplift Labs has democratised elite biomechanical analysis by turning a smartphone into a 3D motion-capture system, delivering the precision of a \$50,000 lab setup at 90% lower cost. Its AI-powered platform now serves nearly 20,000 athletes across 65-plus professional teams and more than 50 youth sports organisations, with an AI Coach that translates complex movement data into actionable guidance for coaches, trainers, and physical therapists.

## IBM

IBM has launched the IBM Sports Tech Startup Challenge, a global programme designed to identify and accelerate AI-driven startups with the potential to reshape the sports industry. Running across a series of showcase events at Web Summit Vancouver, Rio, and Lisbon, as well as major tech weeks in New York and San Francisco, the initiative culminates in an invite-only pitch competition at Web Summit Lisbon in November, where the winning startup may be eligible for a proof-of-concept partnership with IBM valued at up to \$100,000. The programme draws on IBM's three decades of sports technology partnerships, spanning Wimbledon, the Masters, the US Open, and Scuderia Ferrari HP, and sits against a backdrop of a global sports economy projected to grow from \$2.3 trillion today to \$8.8 trillion by 2050.

## Applications of food science innovations in sports nutrition

This article maps the shift in sports nutrition from traditional supplementation toward precision, molecularly-guided interventions. It covers how technologies such as microencapsulation and nanotechnology improve the delivery and bioavailability of active ingredients, how metabolomics is unlocking the molecular pathways behind fatigue and recovery, and how AI and multi-omics data are pointing toward a future of fully personalised nutrition strategies built for individual athletes and specific sport demands.

# NEWS FROM GPS

## A Season of Medals, Milestones and Resilience

This winter delivered some of the most memorable moments in recent Swiss and European alpine skiing, headlined by **Loïc Meillard**'s historic triple medal haul at the Milan-Cortina Olympic Games, culminating in Olympic gold in slalom on February 16, the first for a Swiss skier in the discipline since 1948. Alongside him, **Alexis Monney** confirmed his status among the world's best speed skiers with two podiums and six top-5 finishes, while **Sue Piller** announced herself on the World Cup stage in remarkable fashion, finishing 27th in the world in giant slalom in her very first full season, with two Europa Cup victories and an Olympic debut to boot.

**Luca Aerni** delivered one of the season's most emotional storylines, returning to the World Cup podium in giant slalom after eight years with a stunning second place at Val d'Isère, sandwiched between Meillard and Odermatt in a historic Swiss sweep. **Elena Curtoni** wrote her own chapter on March 8 with a Super-G victory at Val di Fassa, her first win since 2022, on the day that meant the most, after one of the hardest comebacks of her career. **Mélanie Meillard** navigated a demanding winter with character, saving her finest performance for the Olympic slalom in Cortina where she finished 7th on the sport's biggest stage. And at 35, **Mattia Casse** remains a fixture in the world's top speed skiing results, posting six top-10 finishes across descent and Super-G with the reliability that defines a great career.

Not every season is measured in podiums. **Amélie Klopfenstein** continued her patient return from serious injury, building race volume and consistency across three circuits. **Giorgia Collomb**, at just 19, accumulated 15 World Cup starts and nine top-10 finishes in the Continental Cup, choosing to end her season early to prepare the next one, a decision that speaks to her maturity. **Filippo Della Vite** had a difficult winter on results, but one full of lessons that will feed into what comes next. And **Marta Bassino**, injured at the season opener in Sölden, turned her winter into a recovery and rebuild, physically and mentally, ready to return stronger.

This season also marks the end of an era. **Marc Rochat** has announced his retirement from competition, closing a career defined by resilience, positivity, and an unwavering commitment to the sport he loved. A career built not just on results, but on the attitude he brought to every start gate.

Taken together, it is a group that spans every stage of an athletic career, from teenagers finding their footing to champions rewriting history, and now, to a champion taking his well-earned bow. That breadth is precisely what makes this team worth following.



# GPS PERFORMANCE

## Crafting Collaborations That Shape the Sports Industry

Founded in Lausanne at the heart of the global sports ecosystem, GPS Performance is a strategic agency dedicated to advancing elite sports. With over 25 years of experience, we support athletes, brands, federations, and events—helping them thrive in an increasingly competitive and dynamic environment.

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## Empowering Athletes

We help world-class athletes build sustainable careers. From commercial optimization to personal branding, contract management, legal guidance, and communication strategy, GPS Performance provides tailored support so athletes can focus fully on their sport.

## Amplifying Brands

We enable brands to maximize their impact through sport. Our services include sponsorship strategy, athlete and event partnerships, activation planning, and performance measurement—ensuring that every collaboration delivers both visibility and value.

## Elevating Events

GPS Performance brings expert support to sporting events: from sponsor acquisition and hospitality concepts to global promotion and operational management. We create high-impact experiences that resonate with audiences and partners alike.

## Driving Federation Growth

We help federations and sports institutions professionalize and expand their activities—through strategic consulting, sponsorship development, and enhanced management practices.

# DISCLAIMER

This document is intended for a selected audience within GPS Performance's professional network: partners, sponsors, athletes, and trusted contacts. It is the result of GPS Performance's independent research and ongoing industry monitoring. The insights and perspectives shared herein do not aim to cover all developments in the sports industry and are provided for informational purposes only. They do not constitute professional, legal, or commercial advice.

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