

Sports Geek Nation AMA with Olivier Spaeth

Olivier Spaeth is the Web and Social Media Manager for FC Grenoble Rugby based in France. Olivier has worked with different media companies and also handled social media for Liverpool a way back. Now with FC Grenoble Rugby, he handles content creation and distribution for their websites and social media channels that amplifies the team's branding and fan engagement.

Connect with Olivier Spaeth on [LinkedIn](#) and Slack [@Olivier Spaeth](#)

Find out more about FC Grenoble Rugby at <http://fcgrugby.com>

Here's the full transcript:

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Q. [Sean Callanan](#): I'll kick things off [@Olivier Spaeth](#) can you please give us some insight into current social media trends you are seeing in France in your role at Grenoble Rugby

A. [Olivier Spaeth](#): Hi Sean, thank you for letting be part of this ama. I think there have been some big improvement in the last 3 or 4 years in the French social media landscape. I think many owners thought that communication and social media were a necessary evil. But, with the big marketing and social media investments made by the Paris Saint-Germain, the other main football clubs invested too and hired community managers, social media managers, video editors, etc. So, the football clubs are now in line with the other European clubs concerning social media.

In rugby, we are way behind. The communication department of a Top 14 club (first tier of French rugby) has usually 2 to 3 persons, to handle media relationships, communication, social media, video production, some marketing, etc. So it is very hard to have a strategy, have the means to apply it and follow it.

Another thing that keeps us behind is that we (French rugby clubs) are very conservative. For example, the coaches don't usually like it when we need some players for a photo shoot or a video shooting.

But I think it will change in the coming months. The attendance are not as good as it used to be.

The rugby clubs need to engage more with their fans. And social media is the best way to do it.

Q. [dgmackay](#): @Olivier Spaeth From what I can see Grenoble have had a bit of a yoyo few years with promotion and relegation. What is the impact of promotion/relegation in French Rugby in terms of financial impact, fan retention, internal resources, and how does it affect the way you approach building a following?

A. Olivier Spaeth: Hi David, indeed we struggle to stay at the top level.

Due to financial issue, the Club was relegated to the 3rd level in 2005, was back at the 2nd level in 2006 until 2012, where it got promoted to the 1st level (Top 14). A new relegation in 2017 and promotion the year after.

In term of finance, we lost about 40% of our revenues. The attendances went from 12500 to 8500. In the back office, we lost some colleagues, but they were not fired, as they wanted to leave anyway. But we had to work with a lower workforce.

It is obviously harder to keep the fans interested and build a following at the second level, as we have less natural visibility, but I think it makes my job even more important. We were able to be closer to our fans, give them more insights: our engagement rates were very good.

And, in rugby, the play-offs are very important. They are a good way to engage with our fans, especially when you get promoted at the end. For example, I was able to curate a lot of videos made by our fans, add ours and publish this video after our promotion game.



The numbers might not be huge for a lot of big franchises and clubs, but it was one of our best video ever.

When we have a bad season, we try to put more focus on the performance of our youth or women teams.

To complete my answer, we are working on different projects to reduce our financial risks: development on non-match day activities like corporate events, creation of a leisure and food park within our new training center, etc.

Q. [joliegee](#): hi @Olivier Spaeth what platform most excites you in 2019?

A. Olivier Spaeth: I don't see any new platform emerging, but Instagram seems to be the most exciting one. The engagement rates are incredible, the demographics on Instagram are very interesting. I cannot do everything I want on it because I have too much things to manage but this is the platform that I want to spend more time on.

Q. [ilvettojr](#): Hi @Olivier Spaeth, I'm taking inspiration from @joliegee's question for this: you said you have a lot to manage, and I TOTALLY understand what you mean. My question is: when you are short on time and resources, how do you choose where to put your effort? Is there anything that has priority over anything else, or is it a decision based on the specific moment?

A. Olivier Spaeth:Hi Marco, we have some priorities: the content that has been sold to a sponsor. For the rest, I have a lot of freedom and I have a test-and-learn strategy. If I try something and I don't get the results I want (audience, engagement, etc.), I can stop it. For example, I had to choose between Instagram Stories and Snapchat, and, the differences were so big, that I stopped Snapchat and put my focus on Instagram Stories.

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Sports Geek Nation has members from (in alphabetical order) Australia, Canada, Denmark, India, Lithuania, New Zealand, Sweden, United Kingdom and United States working in sports such as basketball, football, ice hockey, baseball, AFL, horse racing, golf, rugby league, netball and more.

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