Sports Geek Nation AMA with Andrew Banasik

Andrew Banasik is the Digital Services Manager for Participation at the National Rugby League.

Prior to his current role, Andrew worked with the Country Rugby League coordinating the administration of Senior and Junior Rugby League in Western Region. This eventually led him to joining the National Rugby League as Club and Competition Coordinator for NRL Victoria where he was also a team manager for the Senior Men's Combined Affiliated States Team Representative Team.

Andrew moved on to the sales side of sports after almost two years at the NRL but after a while, he still found himself going back to the league he loved. He is now the manager of the NRL's digital services for broad participation of the community and leads the improvement of digital services for the benefit of leagues, clubs, participants and volunteers. He also oversees the management of participation specific systems and applications as well as the league's other participation digital needs.

Connect with Andrew Banasik on Twitter @andrewbanasik, LinkedIn and Slack @Andrew Banasik

Find out more about National Rugby League at nrl.com

Here's the full transcript:
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Q. seancallanan: One from me @Andrew Banasik as a geek I see people try to solve the grassroots with technology but sometimes it can be forced. What are some tech & non-tech solutions you've seen or implemented that have help you succeed in your participation roles in Rugby League?
A. Andrew Banasik: Hi everyone, Thanks for having me on this week's AMA @seancallanan. Great question!

In terms of the best solutions, I have found those which focus on either participant engagement or administrator/volunteer enablement are the strongest.

A few come to mind:
1. A combined tech/non-tech solution was in my Role at NRL Victoria and we provided each of the clubs which Video Camera and small scaffold. Although quite simple, this

enabled all First Grade Clubs to film each game and we set up basic systems for clubs to pass the content to the League office. From this, from an administration enablement perspective we were able to understand competition standards. In terms of engagement, we now had access to 100s of hours of video content. This was utilised to promote the sport in a non-traditional market and really grow the social channels of the League.

2. We have also recently have utilised personalised video solutions to both engage participants and empower clubs. Last year we rolled out a campaign whereby parents could create their own personalised content for their kids! (Check it out: https://dcms.datacreative.com.au/nrl/juniorhype2019). We have also utilised this for other campaigns also.

3. Data quality in the participation space can always be a challenge. Credit goes to anyone who deals with this data! I have seen a number of systems put in place to manage data to ensure it is clean. A strong by-product of this is the implementation of live (or close to live) reporting solutions which enable administrators to access data which is both accurate and actionable.

Hope that answers the question!

Q. Johannes Wohlert: Hi @Andrew Banasik working for a federation this is super interesting. Who did that video for you? I can see that as a great sponsorship activation too as nearly every sponsor I talk to ask for "digital activation".
A. Andrew Banasik: Hi @Johannes Wohlert We utilised "Visual Domain" for that video. They are a Melbourne based company - really good to deal with.

Q. joliegee: what are the challenges and successes in your participation efforts for the NRL season?
A. Andrew Banasik: Hi @joliegee, thanks for the question! There are a few key challenges we have.
Firstly (as per many other sports), growth in participants and reduction in churn is always a challenge. We have launched a new player development frameworks which is being trialed in key areas at the moment to ensure junior footy that's fun, friendly and free-flowing https://playnrl.com/framework/. This framework brings the challenge of ensure the Digital systems can be altered in a way to accommodate the changes. I am big on ensuring the frameworks/strategies guide the digital systems and not the other way around!

Secondly, in terms of successes, we will continue to build on the NRL MyLeague App/s with a focus on participant engagement and also to provide a strong utility for coaches and administrators https://playnrl.com/myleague/

Q. **liambednarski**: @Andrew Banasik In regards to participation data, what type of live reports have you put in place for grassroots administrators? How do you promote these reports to those administrators to make them aware of the usefulness of those reports?

I can relate to the data quality challenge in sport. How do you go about improving your data stack? What is one current strategy you have in place to improve this?

A. Andrew Banasik: Hi @liambednarski, we provide many reports to our admins which include participation trends, accreditation compliance, forecasting plus whatever the administrators need! The uptake has been impressive thus far. We are very fortunate to have a Digital Services Education Team around the country which assist the administrators on the Digital systems (including reporting). This has assisted with the roll out and utilization of the reports.

Data quality is a difficult task as I am sure you are familiar with also! I think making the administrators aware of the value of the data is key to ensure there is greater ownership on this. I think having the live reports will assist with this also. In addition, compulsory registration and ensuring data captured within the registration process is relevant.

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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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