

Sports Geek Nation AMA with Edward Ernst

Edward Ernst is the Manager for Corporate Partnerships-Sales at the Breeders' Cup.

Edward spent most of his career in the market intelligence arena working with B2B and B2C executives to define strategies for future growth. He has worked on the business development side for Hanover Research, HelloSponsor, Emerging Strategy and JJA Search.

In 2018, Edward joined Breeder's Cup where he works on developing new sponsors and establishing corporate partnerships.

Connect with Edward Ernst on Twitter [@theernstadage](#), [LinkedIn](#) and Slack [@Edward Ernst](#)

Find out more about Breeder's Cup at breederscup.com

Here's the full transcript:

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Q. [seancallanan](#): I'll kick things off how do horse racing corporate partnership different to team or individual sports partnerships? What if any some of the unique parts that you offer from Breeder's Cup?

A. [Edward Ernst](#): Hey @seancallanan – thanks for inviting me to do this. While I can't speak for the entire horse racing corporate sponsorship world, for Breeders' Cup the biggest differences are inherent to our structure. Whereas most professional teams have stadiums, the Breeders' Cup World Championships are held at a different race track every year and our "qualifiers" – the Challenge Series – are run at tracks across the globe. This makes us more similar to the Olympics than to the NFL or NBA.

From a sponsorship standpoint, (since we don't have a stadium to name) our biggest deals include entitlement of a Championship race and its associated division in the Challenge Series. As part of these larger deals (and even some not quite so big), we focus on the on-track experience. Horse racing is unique in that, on a given 6-hour day at the races, there might be ~10 races run, each taking less than 2 minutes – this results in a fair amount of time between the action for fans to do things not directly tied to our sport. For example, interacting with our sponsors' onsite activations.

Q. [jase](#): What digital tools do you give your fans to let them know what's going on at the track?

A. [Edward Ernst](#): @jase Our digital presence is something we've made significant investments in over the past couple years. Originally launched in 2012, our app is the main

information hub for fans/attendees. It underwent a major update in 2018 as part of our continued effort to modernize the horse racing experience

<http://www.breederscup.com/article/breeders-cup-releases-updated-mobile-app-ahead-2018-breeders-cup-world-championships>



We also deploy an extensive email campaign in the lead up to each World Championship – offering fans previews of what types of activations/events they can expect once they get on track.

That being said, one of our strongest assets for educating fans about what's going on at the host site is our physical program. For most fans of horse racing, the daily program (that provides information about the runners in each race) serves as a daily bible – you're unlikely to see a race fan not holding one at any point during the day.

Making sure that our printed materials and our digital presence are aligned is key for us. It's not so much about the medium we're using to inform our audience, it's making sure that that information is readily available no matter how they want to consume it.

Q. [joliegee](#): how do you prepare for the World Championships?

A. Edward Ernst: The amount of preparation that goes into the World Championships is (as you might imagine) extensive. In my role in Sponsorship, I can't speak in detail about the full extent of what our preparations look like – for example, we have an entire team dedicated to managing the logistics of 150+ Thoroughbreds being shipped to the host track (including handling quarantine for a number of international competitors).

However, my responsibilities are incredibly varied. About 1-2 weeks before the World Championships begin, I'll relocate to the host city. During this lead in period, I could be working on anything from helping one of our partners activate in the stable area at the track (one of our partners hands out branded buckets to all our Trainers), serving as a representative while one of our jockeys does a signing event to promote the World Championships locally, to making a run to the local grocery store to procure 300 travel-sized bottles of mouthwash to include in our "survival bags" for our partners' event staff.

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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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