

# Online Sports and Apps

## Spotlight

Do you want to make a career out of your love for sports? Training to become a sports app developer requires a lot of training in programming, but the ability to create new fan experiences is also evolving with the latest technology and software.

## Personal Connection

A sports app developer creates solutions for anything from coaching to tournament management to fantasy leagues to fan entertainment to purchasing tickets. Becoming a sports app developer is all about creating an online experience for sports fans or teams using the latest technology and tools:

- Do you love sports?
- Are you interested in learning to code?
- Do you care about creating a great user experience?
- Are you interested in how the latest technology can improve sports apps?

## Other Connections

Even if you don't end up becoming a sports app developer, there are many different career paths that can leverage your love of sports to create an experience for sports fans, including:

- Working as a sports broadcaster
- Writing sports articles as a sports writer
- Providing team updates on social media as a sports social media coordinator
- Using data to find the next best athlete as a team scout
- Working as an analyst or content creator for eSports
- Developing new eSports apps or technology
- Developing new technology to improve fan experience at a stadium

## Fun Facts/ "Did you know?..."

Some fun trivia about sports apps and technology:

According to a report by Google, the average age of sports app users is 36 and users spend an average of 50 minutes every day on sports apps. [Read more here.](#)

Technology is replacing hot dogs in sports stadiums: The Sacramento Kings have the most technologically advanced arena, Golden 1 Center. They are using technology in every way imaginable to improve the guest experience. "If a kid drops a hot dog, for example, in most instances the kid is upset, the parents are upset because they have to go stand in line and buy another hot dog, and there's a hot dog on the floor -- but here, whether we're catching it on social media or through one of our guest services or a camera or a robot, we are then able to deliver that hot dog within moments."

[Read more here.](#)

Augmented reality turns fans pro: Major sports leagues are using augmented reality technology so that fans can enhance their experience at games and also have the professional sporting environment at home. The MLB Ballparks app, for example, shows detailed information about each player so that even fans in nose-bleed seats can point their phones at the field and get player sporting statistics. [Read more here.](#)

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## STEM Connection

Here are just a few ways that new and emerging technologies are transforming the development of sports apps:

- 5G unlocks new possibilities for sports fans in the stadium: With lower latency and higher speeds, 5G opens up the possibilities for sports fans at an event to benefit from a wealth of real-time information, including instant replays on their phone, upgrading tickets, paying for parking, getting to their allocated seats, ordering food and drink, buying merchandise, and even adjusting the under seat heating, all from a dedicated app. 5G can also support Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR), so fans can use an app to have their “picture” taken with their favorite player or see holograms of players over the field through their phone. [Read more.](#)
- Artificial Intelligence is changing livestreams: Artificial Intelligence (AI) is learning sports and can now be used to automate live-streaming and predictive analytics. It can even pull the highlights from the game automatically into a mobile app for fans to re-live the best moments of the game or for athletes to learn from their mistakes. AI trains on thousands of hours of video recordings to learn the “most efficient ways to track the action.” [Read more.](#)
- Blockchain is improving the offerings to sports fans: Sports are turning to blockchain to improve ticketing, merchandising, and fan interaction. Blockchain-powered mobile apps are “providing a contemporary ticketing solution for fans,” which eases distribution and rules out the possibility of ticket replication. Blockchain-powered fan engagement platforms have also been developed. “Users can participate in votes for club decisions as well as use tokens to access content and memorabilia.” Another platform offers “blockchain-based player trading cards” that are used to play fantasy football. [Read more.](#)
- Apps bring world-class training home: Mobile apps that use artificial intelligence and machine learning are able to unlock the potential in every player, amateurs and professionals alike. The NBA, with AI company HomeCourt, launched a mobile app for players of every skill level that provides real-time analytics on things like speed, vertical jump, release time, and ball handling. HomeCourt then creates tailored training programs and offers players an opportunity to participate in NBA-themed challenges like shooting contests and training drills. Read more about the app that brings the NBA experience home [here.](#)

## Articles, Videos, Podcasts of Interest

[Watch this TED talk](#) by an NFL player about how augmented reality will change sports.

[Read this article](#) about an app development curriculum that Apple launched for high school students.

[Check out this video](#) to learn more about what it is like to be a mobile app developer at a start-up.

[Learn more](#) about the most important trends for mobile apps, from integrating wearable technology to machine learning.

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## Journeys to Becoming a Sports App Developer

You may not realize it now, but the knowledge and skills you are building through your love of sports in high school could lead you on a path to working in online sports and apps in the future.

Read about how one person's love for fantasy leagues led to his own sports app startup:

Sanzar Adnan Alam grew up in a business family and always aspired to do something of his own. He completed a Bachelor's in Computer Science and a Master's in Cyber Security and worked as a mobile app developer up until he decided to focus on a sports app startup.

Sanzar had developed a sports app that had failed in the past, but that didn't stop him. He believed that was all due to having the wrong timing. Sanzar had played in fantasy sports leagues since high school and he was "hooked from day one." So, he wanted to develop a fantasy sports app, but he had to find the perfect timing. "Waiting for the perfect time to launch, I started planning and developing a local fantasy sports platform... but decided against it and rather just publish an android predictive quiz app focusing on soccer World Cup... to test the market. We did no marketing and had around a thousand users. We took it as a small win." From there, he built a development team, and they launched a free fantasy sports app. "With the user feedback and experience gained," they then launched Team Plan, a fantasy sports platform with paid contests.

Sanzar attributes the growth of their app to being a sports fan himself. "Being a sports fanatic and avid fantasy sports player myself helped me a lot to understand the needs of our current users along with ways to attract them into our platform." Sanzar's advice to those who want to follow in his footsteps is to "take the plunge and persist. Anything is possible if you persevere!"

Read more about Sanzar's story [here](#).

Read about a sports fan who wanted to be able to see all the relevant information about his team in one place, and it led to his own software development company for sports apps:

Mark Allan was a Manchester United fan, but he failed to find an app that "brought [the team information] all together and made me feel properly in touch with my own club." So, he decided to "learn the development ropes" by building an app for himself. Friends started asking him for it, so he put it in the Windows Phone Store and "it snowballed from there." It quickly scaled up from a handful of users to 200,000 hits an hour. He now has a software development company that is "well on its way to developing a Windows Phone app for nearly every single professional club in Britain."

Mark's app is differentiated because it's built by a fan for the fans. "The point is that they're built from a fans' point of view and provide something of value even when clubs have an official app of their own... I'm sure you could develop a sports app without being a fan, but I'm not sure it would be a good idea. For example, I could write apps for American football teams, but since I don't follow the sport I wouldn't have a proper feel for what the fans were after and probably wouldn't have the dedication needed to curate and maintain the data. It would end up as just another cookie-cutter data feed app."

Read more about Mark's story [here](#).

