

we write about the things we build and the things we consume

 written by Chris Jackson on 3 June 2016 in Atlas, sports

there's more to live sports than football

TV and live events go well together. Since most of the big live events on this planet are sport, it's not surprising that sport is a big priority here at MetaBroadcast.

For years people have been talking about making live sport on TV more interactive. Some attempts **have succeeded**, whilst others have added relatively little to the overall experience. Many holders of football and motorsport rights now offer interactive features such as stats, replays, and even multi-camera options. These features are popular with some viewers, though most are happy to consume normal linear TV coverage, as provided on a main screen.

where interactivity makes a difference

It's clear the bigger opportunity for interactivity is in less popular sports.

I enjoy watching cycling and tennis, sports with a medium sized following, concentrated in a small number of countries. Each sport has significant opportunity for growth. Some consider these sports are less popular because their formats are not TV friendly. By comparison, football and motorsports are almost designed for a mainstream TV audience, with events mostly taking place in short bursts of 1.5-2 hours, once or twice a week, in evenings or weekends.

Meanwhile, cycling and tennis events can take 5 hours, and the big moments happen every day across 2-3 weeks of a major competition, and mostly during the working day. That's great for retirees, a growth market, but not so good for those of us who have to work for a living.

Eurosport hold most of the cycling and tennis rights in Europe. Recently I've been impressed with new features of their app. Take a look at the screenshots below.

As well as the usual stats and news, the app has a couple of excellent features for those of us who still have to work. If you know exactly what you want to watch, you can pick from many additional live streams, like extra matches or different angles.

Best of all, there's a timeline of highlights missed so far. This means you can tune in near the end of an event, quickly catch up, then watch the best bits live. You can even rewind and watch as-live from the highlights to the end of the event.

some requests

As you can probably tell, I've become a power user of these features. So now I have a few requests, both for Eurosport, and for other makers of sport apps.

First, it would be great if the app worked in the background, and also when the

device is locked. I'd like to keep listening or streaming video to a TV, while doing other things on the device, or even walking about.

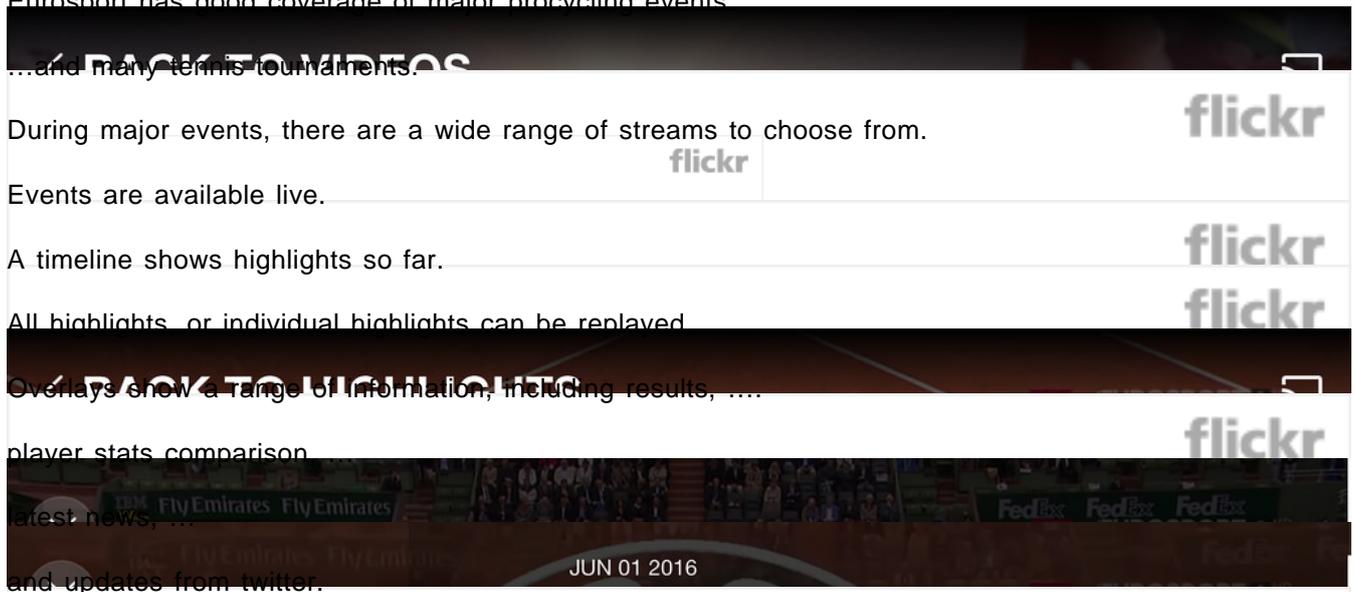
Second, everything needs to update faster. Catchup would be better if it were available within an hour of an event finishing. Ideally it would be available instantly, just like on a DVR, as a continuation of the rewind feature. Schedules need to stay updated, too. As soon as a channel decided to stay with the tennis an extra 30 mins, it would be great if the schedule reflected that. Maybe even alerts for those who are waiting for the next event, updating on start times, and then when there's a highlight?

this matters because...

Lots of people would like to stop their day and watch something truly exceptional unfolding before them, but few have time to watch for hours, just in case an extraordinary moment happens. Technology offers a real opportunity, especially in less popular sports, to reach more people more often, and to bring the exciting moments of many more sports to a much bigger audience.

We would love to hear about your experiences as a user. And equally, if you're working on a project in this area. If you need access to near-realtime broadcast data, MetaBroadcast can help.

Eurosport has good coverage of major pro cycling events



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