



Charleston Battery

This professional soccer team scores big with the community and fans



Professional soccer team Charleston Battery was founded in 1993 by Tony Bakker, who is also the founder of Blackbaud, a company that provides software and services for nonprofit organizations. In 2000, Bakker built the soccer-specific MUSC Health Stadium, where the team now practices, with private funds. Along with the Richmond Kickers, the Battery is the longest continuously operating soccer team in the U.S.

Exciting Changes Ahead

This year, the team changed ownership. It was purchased by B Sports Entertainment, which installed a new 3,000-square foot video board in the stadium. B Sports also has plans to renovate the stadium's pub, and increase fan experience and engagement within the stadium through use of a mobile app. Sarah Cardamone, Director of Marketing and PR for the Battery, notes that changes related to the pub will be particularly exciting. "Currently, it's only open on game days," she says. "We plan to have someone run it full time, so it can be open every day."

The Battery plays in the United Soccer League, which includes 31 teams and is split between east and west. In addition, says Cardamone, "They recently played a pro team from Scotland as well as the Nigerian Olympic team. The interest in soccer in the U.S. is going through the roof now, and the league is expanding to accommodate that, with more teams joining all the time."

In addition to the professional league, the Battery hosts summer camps for children including three weeks of

half-day camp, three weeks of full-day camp, a weekly Junior Academy program for competitive players, and a weekly Tiny Tots program for children aged three to six. Current and former Battery players are coaches.

The Battery Gives Back

Including the team players, the Battery organization consists of 35 people. Those who aren't on the field still appreciate the opportunity to be part of soccer and work in the professional sports industry.

The Battery gives back to the community in a big way. Each home game features a different nonprofit organization, which is recognized at halftime and allowed to set up a table on the concourse to help attendees learn more about them. In addition, players volunteer at soccer camps and other events for kids.

To keep pace with technology, Charleston Battery gets 1 Gigabit internet service from Home Telecom. Cardamone notes, "Our Gigabit internet continuously powers free Wi-Fi to the entire MUSC Health Stadium. It also provides video service for stadium offices as well as for games, concerts, and our new Films on the Field event."

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— SARAH CARDAMONE, DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND PR, CHARLESTON BATTERY