

# **Lesson 10.1 – The Spectator (Fan) Experience**



## LESSON 10.1

# The Spectator (Fan) Experience

*It can determine whether the spectator or fan has a positive or negative experience at the game or event*

*Positive or negative associations with the game or event ultimately determine whether the spectator (fan) will become a repeat customer*

## **Spectator (Fan) Experience:**

The spectator or fan experience as it relates to live events refers to the overall impression made on the sports or entertainment consumer

## LESSON 10.1

# The Spectator (Fan) Experience

*How important is the spectator/fan experience?*

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According to sporttechie.com, the Golden State Warriors were more focused on fan experience than dazzling new technologies when designing their new arena (the Golden 1 Center), despite being called the “most technologically advanced and sustainable arena in the world”

Said team President and COO, Rick Welts, “*We’re trying to focus 100 percent on the fan experience where technology enables that, great. The mission is to provide the best fan experience that’s ever been provided before. We want technology to be additive, but it’s not the be-all, end-all by any means.*”

## LESSON 10.1

# The Spectator (Fan) Experience

*When does the spectator or fan experience begin?*

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The fan experience begins the moment when a consumer begins thinking about purchasing a ticket to a game or event while the game or event day experience begins as the consumer travels to and arrives at the event.

*\* If a fan has a difficult time navigating a website trying to purchase tickets to a game or event, the experience has already started on a sour note.*

## LESSON 10.1

# The Spectator (Fan) Experience

*When does the spectator or fan experience begin?*

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A negative experience finding parking, paying for parking or dealing with an unfriendly parking lot attendant can sour the consumer on the entire experience, even before setting foot in the stadium or arena.

High levels of traffic congestion leaving the stadium or arena could negate an otherwise entirely positive experience at the event, impacting whether the consumer would choose to attend again.

LESSON 10.1

# The Spectator (Fan) Experience

*When does the spectator or fan experience begin?*

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## LESSON 10.1

# The Spectator (Fan) Experience

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The Braves also increased the number of stadium entry points to 14 (vs the previous 2), built 360-degree parking around the ballpark, added three pedestrian bridges and more overall parking spaces, a bike valet and new ridesharing pick-up and drop-off locations.



## LESSON 10.1

# The Spectator (Fan) Experience

At an inaugural NASCAR event in Kentucky, traffic began backing up on the only main road into the track nine hours before the start of the race, and by late afternoon there were reportedly backups of as many as 10 miles in either direction. After 100 laps, cars still were exiting the interstate when traffic patterns were reversed. It was estimated that at least 15,000 fans didn't reach the event.





## LESSON 10.1

# The Spectator (Fan) Experience

In an effort to improve the game day experience for fans, the Atlanta Braves bumped back weekday start times to 7:30, dispersed parking options and encouraged more fans to buy tickets and parking in advance

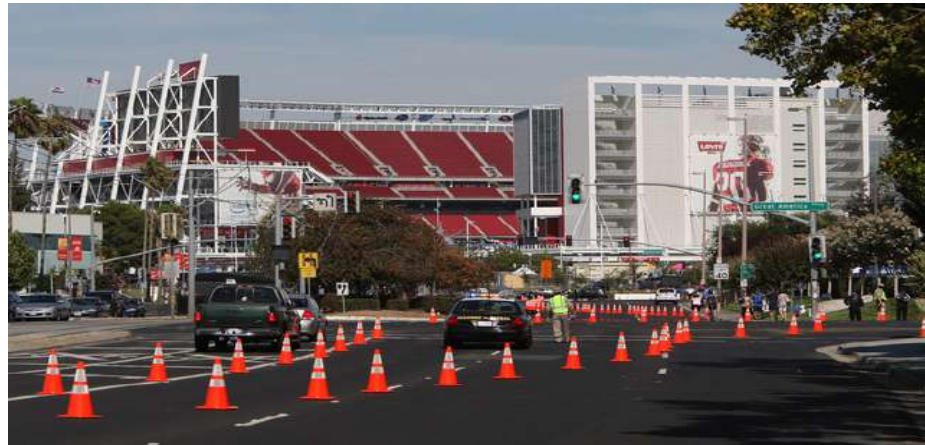
The team also received investments from the city of Atlanta to improve roads, pedestrian bridges and shuttle services



## LESSON 10.1

# The Spectator (Fan) Experience

Prior to the 2015-16 NFL season, the San Francisco 49ers posted a press release describing thirty “upgrades” for the “in-venue experience” that included additional exit lanes from parking lots to improve postgame traffic flow and new parking policies to create easier pregame tailgating.



## LESSON 10.1

# The Spectator (Fan) Experience

According to a 2010 survey published in the Sports Business Journal (conducted by Turnkey Sports), the top three biggest fan complaints about parking at sporting events included:

- 1) Time required to exit after the event (50%)
- 2) Cost (31%)
- 3) Lack of available parking near the stadium/venue (9%)

## LESSON 10.1

# The Spectator (Fan) Experience

Prior to the opening of their new stadium in Santa Clara, the San Francisco 49ers posted a press release describing thirty “upgrades” for the “in-venue experience” that included additional exit lanes from parking lots to improve postgame traffic flow and new parking policies to create easier pregame tailgating.



## LESSON 10.1

# The Spectator (Fan) Experience

In 2017, the Miami Dolphins partnered with Uber to help ease game day congestion by offering fans a dedicated drop off and pick up spot in the team's parking lot, a private tailgate section (complete with game day supplies), and the ability to book a ride from the team's app.



# UBER

## LESSON 10.1

# The Spectator (Fan) Experience

*How do organizations manage, control and enhance the fan experience?*

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- Technology
- Proactively controlling environment
- Game operations

## LESSON 10.1

# Managing the Fan Experience

## *Technology*

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To combat unruly fans, the many teams and organizations offer “text” lines in which fans could report obnoxious behavior by sending a text message to team security and disruptive fans could then be subject to ejection.



## LESSON 10.1

# Managing the Fan Experience

## *Technology*

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At the average NFL game, about 3 people are arrested and 25 more are ejected.

Every NFL team offers some form of a text or cell phone hotline to report disruptive fan behavior.





## LESSON 10.1

# Managing the Fan Experience

## *Technology*

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At Auburn University, fans can use their cell phone or PDA to send a text message with the word AUBURN, a description of their problem and their location to 78247, and the text appears on a screen in a laptop in the press box. From there, officials can respond and use security cameras to zoom in on the section in question.



## LESSON 10.1

# Managing the Fan Experience

## *Technology*

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When Las Vegas Motor Speedway did research on the fan experience, parking came back as an area that needed improvement. As a result, LVMS worked with a technology company to create a “fan guide” app that takes consumers into the track and to their seats through information delivered to a smartphone.



## LESSON 10.1

# Managing the Fan Experience

## *Technology*

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At a speedway as large as Las Vegas, which seats 140,000 fans, parking in the wrong lot or entering through the wrong gate can lead to long delays entering the stadium and finding seats so the app helps prevent confusion by providing the easiest route to a parking space and to the fan's seat.



## LESSON 10.1

# Managing the Fan Experience *Technology*

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When it opened its doors to a brand new football stadium, Baylor University introduced an In-Game App, making it the first college athletics application to provide instant replays from multiple views to fans, right at their seats, at McLane Stadium.



## LESSON 10.1

# Managing the Fan Experience

## *Technology*

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Stadium amenities are designed to improve the overall spectator/fan experience.

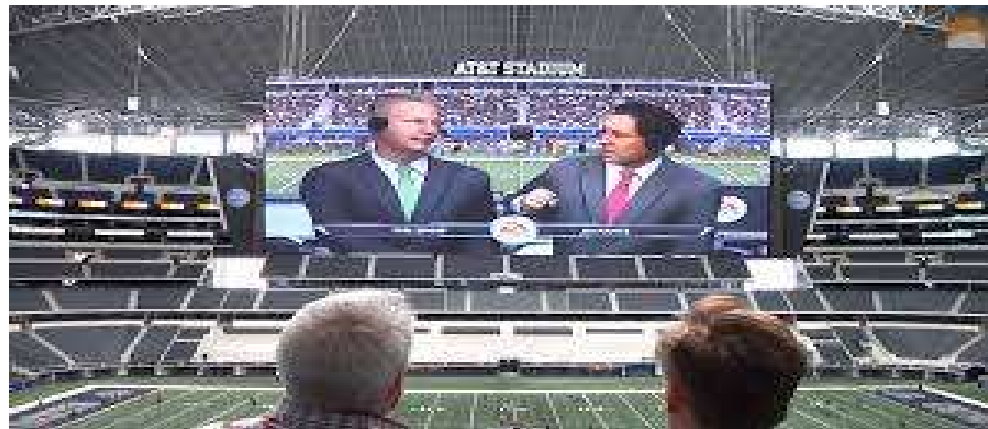
Many sports teams have installed High-Definition jumbo screens at stadiums for the best possible viewing of replays and to allow fans in the upper level seating areas to get closer to the action.

## LESSON 10.1

# Managing the Fan Experience

## *Technology*

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AT&T stadium, which plays host to the NFL's Dallas Cowboys and an array of other events, boasts one of the most impressive jumbotrons in the world. The two sideline displays measure 160 feet wide and 72 feet tall, measuring from one 20-yard to the other 20-yard line.

## LESSON 10.1

# Managing the Fan Experience *Technology*

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Venue upgrades and new construction often focus on viewing angles and improving sightlines to insure fans can see the action no matter where they are sitting or standing



## LESSON 10.1

# Managing the Fan Experience

## *Technology*

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In 2017, TPC Sawgrass (a PGA Tour golf course in Florida) underwent a 6-month \$50 million renovation with the a goal of improving the fan experience – enhancements included:

- A shaded bleacher area with sight lines to multiple holes
- Food and dining areas that feature local cuisine
- An improved grand entrance-way, highlighting the grandiose main clubhouse
- New mounding around a number of holes giving fans an elevated and less obstructed view of the action



## LESSON 10.1

# Managing the Fan Experience

## *Technology*

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Mobile devices are not allowed at the PGA's U.S. Open, but fans onsite can still utilize social media through onsite CourseLink kiosks that enable visitors to use Twitter, take photos and share personalized messages through Facebook and Foursquare.



## LESSON 10.1

# Managing the Fan Experience

## *Technology*



American Express introduced an innovative feature at a PGA Tour event with a program dubbed the “Course Curator,” which enables Amex cardholders to customize their experience at the golf tournament by guiding them through the course and helping them to find their favorite golfers. “This has the potential to really change the golf-day experience for fans,” said Barry Hyde, the USGA’s chief marketing officer in an interview with the Sports Business Journal.

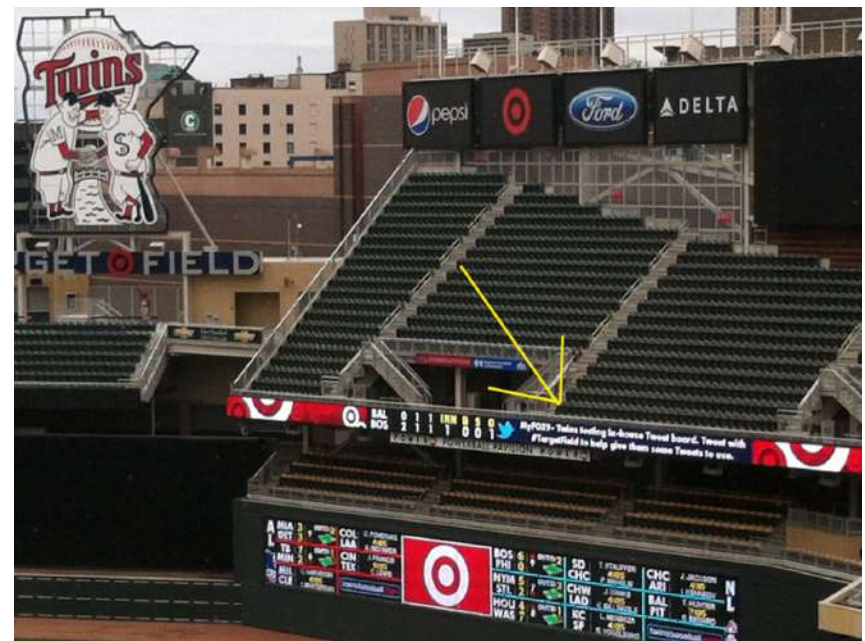
## LESSON 10.1

# Managing the Fan Experience

## *Technology*

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The Minnesota Twins feature a "[Tweet Board](#)" at Target Field, which shares tweets from Twins games via a video board with the crowd during games.



## LESSON 10.1

# Managing the Fan Experience

## *Technology*

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The San Francisco Giants opened a sports “social media” café (called the “[@Cafe](#)”) inside AT&T Park behind the centerfield wall where fans can view their own social media content from Twitter and Instagram on six, 55-inch screens, all while enjoying some coffee, recharging a smartphone and following “worldwide social media chatter about the team, players and all things Giants and Major League Baseball”



## LESSON 10.1

# Managing the Fan Experience

## *In-seat Technology*

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Minor league baseball's Round Rock Express offers a service that allows fans to order and pay for food and drinks from their smartphones. When the order is ready, a text message is sent back to the fan. Then, they pick it up at one of four stations at the stadium and skip waiting in line.



## LESSON 10.1

# Managing the Fan Experience

## *In-seat Technology*

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Taking it one step further, fans attending New York Yankees and Dallas Cowboys games can now order food and drinks in their seats from a mobile app and have it delivered.



## LESSON 10.1

# Managing the Fan Experience

## *In-seat Technology*

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The San Francisco 49ers launched an app to be used at Levi's Stadium that can steer fans to the bathrooms and concessions with the shortest lines and the fastest routes out of parking lots.



## LESSON 10.1

# Managing the Fan Experience

## *Ticketing Technology*

The Golden State Warriors now give fans the ability to upgrade their seats *during* the game using mobile devices, helping them to improve customer service and generating additional revenue while helping to move unsold ticket inventory.





## LESSON 10.1

# Managing the Fan Experience

## *Technology*

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Popular “beacon” technology is being used by a number of sports and entertainment venues to enhance the overall experience for fans attending events. Beacons are essentially a bluetooth wireless technology that provides location-based information and/or services to mobile devices (the most popular interface right now is Apple’s iBeacon technology).



## LESSON 10.1

# Managing the Fan Experience *Technology*

The 2015 PGA Championship at Whistling Straits in Wisconsin launched a “[Binoculars](#)” feature to help fans see which players were around them and to navigate the course faster.



## LESSON 10.1

# Managing the Fan Experience

## *Technology*

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Sporting Park (home to Major League Soccer's Sporting Kansas City franchise) boasts one of the most technologically advanced stadiums in all of sports (click [here](#) to see a graphic featuring some of the highlights).



## LESSON 10.1

# Managing the Fan Experience

## *Technology*

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T-Mobile Arena made its debut in 2016 in Las Vegas – the \$375 million flashy sports and entertainment venue has five floors of entertainment space, a three-story high-def scoreboard, six premium lounges and of course, T-Mobile charging stations for everyone.



## LESSON 10.1

# Managing the Fan Experience

*Proactively controlling environment*

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Less than 40 of the roughly 120 largest NCAA Division 1 schools allow the sale of alcohol inside their stadiums and many limit sales to luxury suites, lounges or club-seating areas.



## LESSON 10.1

# Managing the Fan Experience

## *Proactively controlling environment*

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Many teams staff members in place dedicated to monitoring tweets and gauging fan behavior on game days to help prevent issues from arising.

Because of the increase in complaints about intoxicated patrons disrupting fellow fans' viewing of the game, the Los Angeles Dodgers took the drastic step of placing a ban on tailgating prior to all home games.



## LESSON 10.1

# Managing the Fan Experience

## *Proactively controlling environment*

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Organizations can gain a better understanding of fan behavior prior to an event taking place and make adjustments to staffing accordingly. For example, statistically Boston Bruins fans consume 30 percent more alcohol at the Boston Garden than Celtics fans do. As a result, management at the arena may choose to measures to proactively manage a potentially rowdier crowd.

## LESSON 10.1

# Managing the Fan Experience

## *Proactively controlling environment*

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Much to the disappointment of fans who enjoyed a slightly different atmosphere at a PGA sanctioned golf event, the Tour imposed a ban at the Waste Management Phoenix Open on players throwing things to fans (previously a tournament tradition) as a means for improving both player and fan safety at the event.





## LESSON 10.1

# Managing the Fan Experience

## *Proactively controlling environment*

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In an attempt to prevent fan violence during the Euro 2016 soccer tournament, host country France banned alcohol sales in and around host stadiums

The ban prohibited local restaurants, bars and shops from selling alcohol as well



## LESSON 10.1

# Managing the Fan Experience

*Proactively controlling environment*

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Understanding the intense rivalry between fans of the Portland Timbers and Seattle Sounders, management for both respective MLS clubs limited the number of tickets available for sale to the opposing team at its home games (seating all opposing fans in a section inaccessible to home fans) in an effort to curtail any potential confrontations during the game.



## LESSON 10.1

# Managing the Fan Experience

## *Proactively controlling environment*

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For example, Arrowhead Stadium (home to the NFL's Kansas City Chiefs) recently renovated the stadium to expand the concourse to reduce congestion, increase the number of concession stands (and diversify the food offerings), and add more bathrooms, all with the intent of improving the overall fan experience.



## LESSON 10.1

# Managing the Fan Experience

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In 2014, despite incredibly high demand for tickets as American Pharoah chased horse racing's coveted "Triple Crown", management at Belmont Park actually reduced the number of seats available for the Belmont Stakes in an effort to create a more positive fan experience (in 2015, many attendees complained of long lines, an inadequate supply of food and drinks, and transportation issues).

## LESSON 10.1

# Managing the Fan Experience

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Mercedes-Benz Stadium, home to the NFL Atlanta Falcons, is slated to open in 2017 and will have 670 different concessions locations, which is 65% more than what the team currently has in the Georgia Dome, to help provide easier access for hungry fans.



## LESSON 10.1

# Managing the Fan Experience

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Concessions will cost an exact dollar amount so fans won't have to deal with coins and soda refill stations will be self serve and separate from ordering lines. Falcons owner Arthur Blank said the aim was to produce a "unique fan experience" that would allow game attendees to focus on the game and not become frustrated with concession inconveniences.



## LESSON 10.1

Failure to proactively control the environment and manage the experience can result in a shift in consumer perceptions. After a parking lot shooting following a San Francisco 49ers and Oakland Raiders pre-season game in 2011, USA Today conducted a poll online, asking fans whether stadium violence would impact their decision to attend a game.

### Will recent violence keep you from attending a sporting event?

No. Don't even give it a thought



No. But I wouldn't bring children



Yes. Watch game and be safe at home



Yes. Live events no longer family fun



**TOTAL VOTES: 2689**

**Latest results**

## LESSON 10.1

# Managing the Fan Experience

After several deaths in recent years as a result of fans falling over railings at games, Major League Baseball is under scrutiny for their stadium safety regulations

Fans are calling for teams to install higher railings and netting on their upper decks to help prevent future accidents





## LESSON 10.1

# Managing the Fan Experience

*Proactively controlling environment*

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NFL commissioner Roger Goodell issued of a “Code of Fan Conduct” policy which prohibits, among other things, “unruly, disruptive, or illegal” behavior; “drunkenness” resulting in “irresponsible” behavior; and “foul or abusive language or obscene gestures.” The code also proscribes “verbal or physical” harassment of opposing teams' fans.



## LESSON 10.1

# Managing the Fan Experience

*Proactively controlling environment*

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The NFL extended the policy even further, requiring any fan who gets kicked out of an NFL stadium for unruly behavior to take a \$75 four-hour online class and pass a [code-of-conduct test](#) before being allowed to attend another NFL game.

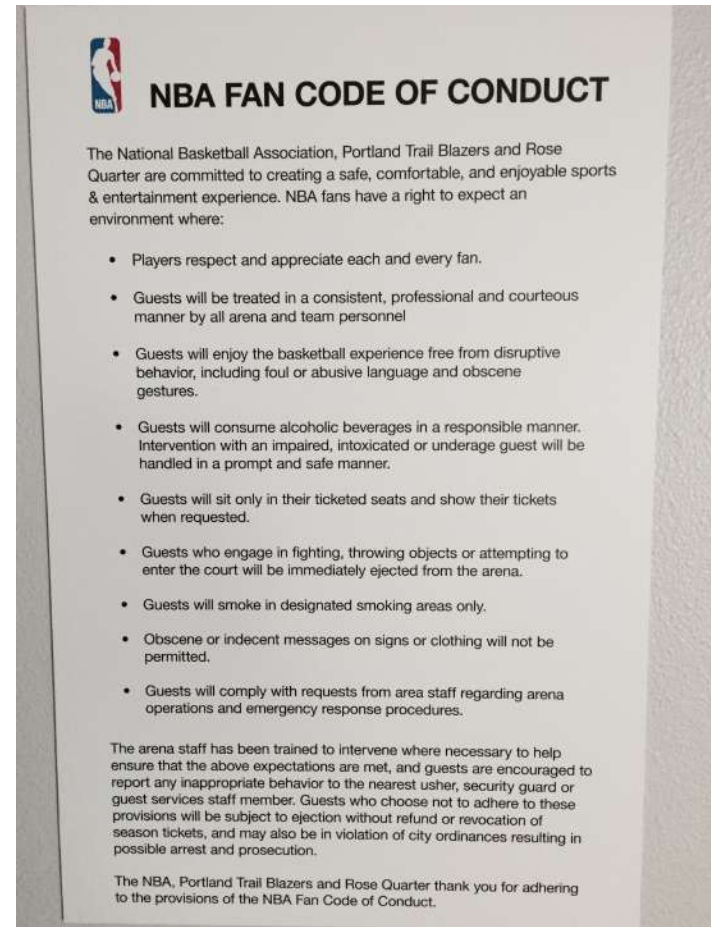


## LESSON 10.1

# Managing the Fan Experience



NBA arenas, like the Moda Center in Portland, Oregon, have the league's "Fan Code of Conduct" posted in many locations around the building.



## LESSON 10.1

# Managing the Fan Experience

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Most organizations will also post expectations of fan conduct on their websites

Click [here](#) to see Major League Soccer's fan code of conduct policy

Click [here](#) to see the Denver Bronco's RESPECT: Fan Code of Conduct



## LESSON 10.1

# Managing the Fan Experience

## *Game Operations*

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Game operations provide an effective vehicle for an organization to manage, control and enhance the fan experience.



## LESSON 10.1

# Managing the Fan Experience

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The Green Bay Packers game-day staff is heralded for creating one of the best atmospheres in all of sports, and their strategic game day plan is detailed down to every minute of the game

Click [here](#) to see more about how the Packers plan for game days from the *Green Bay Press-Gazette*



**LESSON 10.1**

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# LESSON 10.1 REVIEW (ANSWERS)

1) Describe the concept of the fan/spectator experience

The spectator or fan experience as it relates to live events refers to the overall impression made on the sports or entertainment consumer. It can determine whether the spectator or fan has a positive or negative experience at the game or event. The fan experience begins as the sports or entertainment consumer arrives at the event.



# LESSON 10.1 REVIEW (ANSWERS)

2) Define the term game operations

Refers to the planning, organization and execution of game production, presentation, entertainment and promotion