A recent IBM survey of U.S. sports fans highlighted the importance of digital experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. IBM and USTA partnered to reimagine the tennis fan experience through innovative Watson technologies, underpinned by IBM's open hybrid cloud that bring the tournament to life via digital platforms.

**Sports Survey + Key Findings**

**Methodology:** IBM conducted a survey on sports and tech, in partnership with Morning Consult. This poll was conducted between July 30–July 31, 2020 among a national sample of 2000 sports fans in the United States. The interviews were conducted online and stratified to ensure a representative sample of US adults. Results from the full survey have a margin of error of plus or minus 2 percentage points.

**The Current Landscape**

*Live sports are a trending topic in media conversation right now, as professional sporting leagues (basketball, hockey, etc.), are all facing new challenges in starting their respective seasons without fans present.*

**Key Takeaways:**
- A plurality say it would be difficult for technology to replicate the live experience of several sports, including football, baseball, soccer, and extreme sports.
  - While 45% miss watching live sports on TV the most, 43% miss being in the atmosphere of stadiums.
  - Nearly half of sports fans (45%) think replicating the live experience of extreme sports would be very or somewhat difficult to do with technology.
- 40% of sports fans think events should only resume under strict circumstances/protocols.
  - A small percentage (17%) of sports fans think all sporting events should be canceled for the time being.
  - One-third of sports fans (34%) say a vaccine will help them feel comfortable attending a live sporting event in-person. The majority of sports fans (52%) emphasized the importance of disinfecting high touch areas, while 46% of respondents say they would want masks to be required for attendees, before returning.

**Digital Content to Stay Connected**

*There is a generational difference regarding where sports fans get news.*

**Key Takeaways:**
- Gen X, Baby Boomers and Millennials all search for sports news at traditional media outlets, whereas Gen Z is more likely to discover sports news on Sports Apps (38%).
- Over half (54%) of sports fans said they usually get their sports news and information from traditional news outlets (broadcast TV, newspapers, etc.)
  - The second destination for fans to consume sports news and information is Facebook (29%) and Sports Apps (27%).
- Nearly half (48%) of sports fans said having an interactive digital experience has become more important to them as a fan since the COVID-19 outbreak.
  - The favorite features on sport apps include highlights (30%), live streaming (30%) and sports news (29%).
  - During the pandemic when live sports were not available, fans were staying connected to sports by re-watching old sports (38%) and exercising (37%), an interesting combination of virtual and physical engagement.

**Digital Experiences and Innovative Solutions**
Sports fans are looking to push for more digitally driven sports content and transformation, given the lack of live and in-person sporting events.

**Key Takeaways:**
- Nearly half (48%) of sports fans think having an interactive digital experience, including streaming, video content, highlights, stats, etc. has become more important since the Coronavirus outbreak.
  - Younger generations, more specifically, have a desire for increased digital experiences: Gen Z (64%) and Millennials (61%)
- One third (33%) of sports fans think in-depth player data would make the viewing experience more compelling.
  - A higher percent of tennis fans (46%) agree that player data increases the experience of live sports.
  - 43% of tennis fans also believe having a probability of outcomes would add to the experience.
- Over two thirds of sports fans think creative camera views to put the fan virtually on the pitch (70%) and live streaming on social media (66%) would be valuable digital enhancements for their engagement with live sports.