



Come In Spinner

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Case Study: Betfair Challenge Series

Synergy explains how it pitted Phil Tufnell and Aussie bowler Jason Gillespie against each other in pedalo racing and extreme lawn mowing challenges to capitalise on ashes fever, and bring to life its client Betfair's sponsorship of the England and Wales Cricket Board.

Campaign: Betfair Challenge Series
Client: Betfair
PR Team: Synergy
Timescale: July-August 2009
Budget: £100,000 (including ambassador fees)



Phil Tufnell and Jason Gillespie with John McCririck

Overview

Betfair, the world's biggest betting community, wanted to bring to life its sponsorship of the England and Wales Cricket Board during the summer's biggest sporting event, the Ashes. Betfair wanted to create an innovative and engaging campaign that focussed on its core values of fans betting against each other, and the fun rivalry between England and Australia.

Objectives

- Raise awareness and relevance of Betfair to cricket and sports fans
- Gain engaging coverage in Betfair's target media
- Drive traffic to the FanvFan.com website
- Use PR to drive the acquisition of new customers

Strategy and Plan

The Ashes, England v Australia, is one of the world's oldest sporting rivalries, so the campaign objective was to bring to life the synergies between this rivalry and Betfair's unique fan against fan betting platform. Synergy devised five Betfair Challenges where two 'rivals' would go head-to-head against each other throughout the summer, building a strong connection between the Ashes rivalry and fans betting against each other.

Ashes legends were recruited to take up the challenge - Phil 'the Cat' Tufnell, and Australian fast bowler Jason 'Dizzy' Gillespie.

The Challenges themselves needed to be visual, engaging and, most importantly, funny to cut-through in a cluttered and competitive environment. Held a few days before each Test Match the events included:

- Pedalo Racing in Cardiff Bay
- An extreme Lawn Mower Grand Prix at Lord's
- The Betfair Stakes Horse Race at Warwick Racecourse
- Giant Zorbing in Leeds

The Challenges were filmed and hosted on a dedicated website, www.fanvfan.com as well as YouTube, Metacafe and Daily Motion. On the site punters were engaged by being asked to show their support for either Tuffers or Dizzy ahead of each Challenge, with the more popular getting a head start or time advantage.

The series culminated in a 6-a-side cricket match held before the final Test Match at The Oval. The winner of which would be crowned Betfair Challenge Champion 2009. The loser would have to swallow their pride and parade amongst the opposition fans at The Oval body-painted in the flag of the opposing nation.

National and regional broadcasters, local press and online media were invited to the Challenges alongside sports bloggers. The videos were also made available to national online outlets as a complete ready-to-upload package. Three of the Challenges were supported by England player appearances to increase their profile and keep media interest throughout the summer.

In addition Synergy set up Twitter accounts for both Tuffers and Dizzy (@philtufnell and @Jason_gillespie) so they could Tweet about their experiences as they hurled down hills, zoomed around Lord's and galloped down the finishing straight at Warwick.

Results

Coverage from the Betfair Challenges appeared across national press, TV, radio and regional press.

Features included: *Sky Sports News, ITV Wales, BBC Look North, The Guardian, The Sun, Independent, Mirror, Metro, Nuts Online, Mail Online, The Guardian Online, Western Mail and Yorkshire Post.*

Sky Sports News covered the Betfair launch party, four of the five challenges plus an extended piece on the forfeit with a summary of the whole series. This resulted in just under an hour of Betfair exposure solely on this channel across the campaign.

The cleverly-edited 'Still Got It' video was seeded online and, on YouTube alone, received over 32,000 views and 29 comments.

FanvFan.com received over 45,000 unique visitors before the start of the One Day International Series in August.

Over 7,500 pledges of support for the fanbassadors being registered at FanvFan.com.

Over 15,000 Twitter followers for the fanbassadors.

As a direct result of the campaign over 2,000 new accounts were set up across the various online channels.