

# Washington Nationals Nats Plus Loyalty Program: Business Impact Analysis

The **Nats Plus** program is the Nationals’ premium season-ticket membership, offering Full- and Half-Season plan holders exclusive benefits (discounts, priority access, eCASH back on concessions, special events, etc.) and participation in the club’s broader rewards platform (formerly the “Red Carpet Rewards” program). As team marketing materials describe, Nats Plus members receive special perks (exclusive gifts, access lines, collectibles like a custom bobblehead, etc.) and the franchise regularly touts them as its “most valued fans” <sup>1</sup>. Points-based rewards (via the MLB Ballpark app) and digital tools like **eCASH** are woven into the program: members use a mobile e-wallet for concessions (with short “eCASH-only” lines) and earn cash-back on spending <sup>2</sup>. Broadly, the program’s goals are to drive incremental revenue (ticket and F&B sales) and deepen fan loyalty by tying engagement to tangible rewards.

## Ticket Sales & Season Ticket Retention

By bundling benefits and exclusive access into Nats Plus, Washington aims to boost ticket plan sales and retention. In practice, targeted digital campaigns linked to the program have delivered measurable gains. For example, a recent fan-outreach campaign (using the team’s FIS engagement platform) reached ~20,000 potential customers and generated about **\$60,000** in new season-plan revenue <sup>3</sup>. Another campaign targeted ~2,000 at-risk season-ticket holders, automating outreach for renewals and yielding “**several hundred**” additional plan renewals <sup>4</sup>. Nationals executives credit these data-driven efforts: John Choi (VP of Business Strategy & Analytics) noted that a unified fan CRM gives a “360-degree view” of the customer, enabling marketing that “engage[s] with fans in the moments that matter most” <sup>5</sup>. In short, personalized loyalty marketing around Nats Plus helps convert leads into new sales and shore up renewals.

At a strategic level, industry observers note that loyalty programs are now viewed partly as new revenue streams. As the MLB’s Mets’ technology VP Oscar Fernandez observed, teams may see loyalty initiatives as a revenue driver, but “this is a foundation to learn more about our fans” <sup>6</sup>. In Washington’s case, the ease of auto-renew (“Nat for Life”) and the promise of future perks (e.g. postseason ticket priority) are intended to reduce churn. While precise renewal rates aren’t public, the team’s emphasis on continuous perks (gifts, access, etc.) is designed to reward repeat support and discourage defections.

## Fan Engagement & In-Stadium Spending

Nats Plus and the related Red Carpet Rewards program also boost **fan engagement** by rewarding desired behaviors. Fans earn points by attending games, interacting with broadcasts or team social media, and completing app-based challenges <sup>7</sup>. These points are redeemable for **member-only experiences** – from merchandise and tickets to VIP moments like visiting the broadcast booth or even “holding the finish line for the Presidents Race” <sup>7</sup>. Such exclusive experiences strengthen emotional attachment and encourage continued attendance. The program opened to *all* fans (in 2019) but remains integral to season-ticket membership, reinforcing why many season-plan holders identify as “Nats Plus” members.

Digital engagement via the Ballpark app drives revenue and enjoyment. For example, the team’s eCASH system (tied to Nats Plus) lets members pay for food and merchandise on a mobile wallet: this unlocks faster “eCASH-only” concession lines and immediate cash-back on purchases <sup>2</sup>. By making in-stadium purchases simpler and rewarding, eCASH likely lifts F&B and retail spend per fan (the app also powers QR-code food ordering). Likewise, targeted email campaigns tied to the loyalty database have proven more effective: one Nationals FIS case study found that personalized emails produced **33% higher open rates** and a **157% increase in click-throughs** versus generic blasts <sup>8</sup>. In practice, Washington’s “Value Days” promotions (discounted tickets/concessions) marketed to 19,000 budget-conscious fans through the loyalty platform generated about **\$12,000** in additional revenue <sup>9</sup>.

**Table 1: Nats Plus / Loyalty Features and Business Outcomes**

Program Feature	Business Impact	Evidence / Source
<b>Season-plan benefits &amp; perks</b> (discounts, priority upgrades, gifts)	<b>Increases plan sales and renewals</b>	Targeted campaigns added <b>~\$60K new season-plan sales</b> and “hundreds” of renewals <sup>10</sup> . Loyalty seen as a new revenue stream <sup>6</sup> .
<b>App-based points &amp; experiences</b> (Red Carpet Rewards)	Drives game attendance & fan engagement	Fans earn points for attending/engaging, redeemed for swag, tickets, or VIP experiences <sup>7</sup> ; personalized offers drive much higher engagement (e.g. 157% higher click rate on targeted offers <sup>11</sup> ).
<b>eCASH mobile payments</b>	Boosts concession & merchandise spending	<b>Members get cashback on F&amp;B/merch, use short app-only lines <sup>2</sup>; convenience and rewards encourage higher per-fan spend.</b>
<b>Data-driven marketing (CRM)</b>	Improves conversions & upsell	<b>Unified fan data yields better targeting: e.g. renewal campaigns reached 2,000 at-risk holders and recovered “several hundred” renewals <sup>4</sup>.</b>
<b>Experiential perks (exclusive events)</b>	Enhances loyalty & word-of-mouth	Exclusive events (e.g. private meet-and-greets, behind-scenes tours) make members feel valued and can encourage referrals (per team messaging <sup>1</sup> ).

## Sponsorship Appeal & Data Value

A modern loyalty program can also **benefit sponsors and partners**, making Nats Plus more attractive to corporate supporters. Industry analysts observe that linking sponsor offers to loyalty rewards is a new frontier: for example, card-linked loyalty platforms allow a sponsor’s transactions to automatically earn club rewards, creating “a more integrated form of sponsorship” <sup>12</sup>. In this model, if a Nats Plus member buys a partner’s product, they might earn Nationals points or eCASH – and the sponsor gains direct credit with the fan. Importantly, the fan data collected through the program (purchase history, preferences, engagement patterns) is itself valuable to sponsors. As SBJ notes, teams report that the “better data” from loyalty programs is “of more direct value to current or potential corporate partners” <sup>12</sup>. In other words, Nats Plus not only drives fan spend on Nationals-branded goods but can tie into partner marketing, giving sponsors access to loyal fan demographics.

Overall, the Nationals’ loyalty initiative creates diverse revenue streams – ticketing, concessions, merchandise, and even partner promotions – that extend beyond box office sales. As one MLB

technology executive put it, the program is “a revenue stream” *and* a fan-education engine <sup>6</sup>. By deepening engagement and gathering rich customer data, Nats Plus helps the franchise maximize lifetime value of fans and craft more compelling sponsorship packages.

## Key Program Elements Driving Impact

The following are some of the most successful components of Nats Plus and related loyalty efforts, each contributing to the business goals above:

- **Member-Exclusive Benefits:** Beyond standard seat rights, Nats Plus offers perks like merchandise discounts (20% off at team stores for full-plan members), priority season tickets (postseason seat guarantees), and expedited services (dedicated customer reps). These tangible savings and conveniences motivate upgrades from partial plans and solidify renewals.
- **Experiential Rewards:** Access to unique experiences (e.g. **broadcast booth tours**, on-field batting practice passes, player meet-and-greets) is a hallmark of the program. These moments-of-a-lifetime rewards are highly prized by fans and create loyalty. For example, the **Red Carpet Rewards** catalog has long included such one-off events <sup>7</sup>. Programs that grant fans a sense of belonging and exclusivity tend to yield higher retention.
- **Digital Engagement & Personalization:** The Nationals have invested in a unified digital ecosystem (mobile apps, CRM) to engage Nats Plus members year-round. Features like the MLB Ballpark app (with push notifications, mobile ticketing and ordering) and an in-house analytics platform allow highly personalized marketing. Data-driven targeting has clearly paid off: Washington’s campaigns saw substantially higher engagement rates than untargeted messaging <sup>8</sup>. Integrations such as the voice-activated bobblehead (fun novelty) and seamless concession payments (face recognition entries, eCASH) also modernize the fan experience <sup>13</sup><sup>2</sup>.
- **Loyalty Currency (Points & eCASH):** Nats Plus members earn points for attending games and spending, which can be redeemed flexibly. eCASH (a digital refund on purchases) acts like an instant rebate, encouraging members to spend more at the park <sup>2</sup>. Having a clear “loyalty currency” keeps fans returning to rack up rewards.

**In summary**, while exact financials are proprietary, available data and industry commentary make it clear that the Nationals’ loyalty program has had positive business effects. Season-ticket renewals and new plan sales have been bolstered by exclusive perks and targeted outreach <sup>10</sup>. Fan engagement metrics (attendance, app activity, social interaction) are augmented by the program’s rewards schema <sup>7</sup> <sup>8</sup>. And the rich fan data collected creates value for both the team and its corporate partners <sup>12</sup>. As MLB teams increasingly view loyalty programs as key revenue and marketing platforms, the Nationals’ Nats Plus initiative exemplifies a modern approach that leverages **member benefits, experiential marketing, and digital personalization** to drive ticketing, spending, and overall fan loyalty.

**Sources:** Team and media reports on Nats Plus/Red Carpet Rewards <sup>7</sup> <sup>2</sup>; a Washington Nationals case study (FIS) with campaign results and executive quotes <sup>10</sup> <sup>5</sup>; SportsBusiness Journal analysis of sports loyalty programs (with MLB industry perspective) <sup>6</sup> <sup>12</sup>; Nationals’ own fan communications <sup>1</sup>. All figures and quotes are from these sources.

1 NATS PLUS Members Appreciation | Washington Nationals

<https://www.mlb.com/nationals/tickets/season-tickets/nats-plus-gift>

2 Season Plan Holders eCash | Tickets | Washington Nationals

<https://www.mlb.com/nationals/tickets/season-tickets/ecash>

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6 12 What's the state of loyalty programs in the sports industry in 2025?

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7 Nats open loyalty program to all fans and expand ticketing options in 2019 - The Washington Post

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/2019/03/22/nats-open-loyalty-program-all-fans-expand-ticketing-options/>

13 Revolutionizing Fan Loyalty in Major League Baseball - Concentrix

<https://www.concentrix.com/insights/blog/revolutionizing-fan-loyalty-in-major-league-baseball/>