

Business Impact of Sporting Blue Rewards Program

Sporting Kansas City's **Sporting Blue Rewards** loyalty program (launched ahead of the 2023 season) rewards fans for engagement across ticket use, in-app content, purchases, and more ¹. Fans earn points/badges via the SKC mobile app for actions like scanning tickets at the stadium, shopping in Sporting KC retail, or interacting with club media ¹. These can be redeemed in prize draws for rewards including match tickets, premium upgrades, signed jerseys, and even Sporting Pay credit ¹. Season Ticket Members receive extra challenges (e.g. a "Twelfth Man" program) unlocking exclusive events (pre-match celebrations, player meetups) and entries into draws for high-value prizes (road trips with the team, free 2024 season tickets) ². Sporting Blue Rewards is integrated into SKC's app (along with the digital wallet and ticketing) ³, and complements other fan-engagement platforms (e.g. the club's Socios.com fan-token partnership ⁴). Below we analyze its impact on key business areas.

Business Area	Program Elements & Impact Metrics
Ticket Sales	<i>Rewards-driven renewal:</i> The Twelfth Man challenge (free tickets, road trips) directly incentivizes Season Ticket renewals ² . <i>Revenue lift:</i> Personalized loyalty programs can raise overall revenues by ~5-15% ⁵ . <i>CLV boost:</i> Research shows a 5% increase in retention yields >25% profit growth ⁶ . <i>Loyal fans also spend more over time (up to 85% of growth comes from loyal customer base ⁷).</i>
Merchandise Revenue	<i>Exclusive merch rewards:</i> Fans can win/autograph gear and custom jerseys ¹ , tapping their desire for unique items. STMs get 15% off SportingStyle apparel ⁸ . <i>Sales increase:</i> Targeted promotions often boost merch sales ~30% ⁹ (even 40% via app-based campaigns ¹⁰). <i>Engagement:</i> Exclusive or limited-edition offers can raise fan engagement by ~25% ¹¹ .
Concessions	<i>Discounts & mobile pay:</i> STMs automatically receive 15% off concessions in the app ¹² . The Sporting Pay mobile wallet streamlines in-stadium purchases. <i>Spending lift:</i> Lowering concession prices or friction has driven ~+16% fan spend in case studies ¹³ . Loyalty-based offers (e.g. redeemable vouchers, timely coupons) should similarly raise per-capita spend.
Digital Engagement	<i>App integration:</i> The SKC app unifies ticketing, rewards and content ³ . Fans earn points by watching video, listening to broadcasts or reading newsletters ¹⁴ . <i>Fan tokens & polls:</i> Socios integration adds prediction games and polls for rewards ¹⁵ . <i>Impact:</i> Engaged platforms have driven ~+40% merchandise sales ¹⁰ , and Oracle finds personalization can grow revenues 5-15% ⁵ .

Business Area	Program Elements & Impact Metrics
Fan Retention/ Acquisition	<i>Loyalty as revenue driver:</i> Industry surveys show ~75% of clubs cite fan loyalty as their #1 growth driver ¹⁶ . Blue Rewards deepens loyalty by rewarding many fan activities (not just spending). <i>Broadening fanbase:</i> By valuing non-ticket actions, SKC taps casual and remote fans (a growing industry focus ¹⁷). Loyal fans advocate for the club and generate most lifetime value ⁷ .
Sponsorship Value	<i>Sponsor activations:</i> Challenges and prizes can be co-branded (e.g. Capitol Federal prizes) to give sponsors visibility. <i>Targeted marketing:</i> Collected data (fan preferences, quiz responses) allows sponsors to target audiences (as seen in NASCAR Fan Rewards surveys ¹⁸). <i>Measured ROI:</i> Loyalty-driven promotions have lifted sponsor impressions ~25% ¹⁹ , enhancing sponsor ROI.
In-Stadium Spending	<i>Integrated offers:</i> Blue Rewards enables gamified in-venue promotions (e.g. scanning tickets for badges or unlocking concession offers). <i>Revenue gain:</i> Personalized fan experiences can boost in-stadium sales by 5–15% ⁵ . Improving core fan experience (e.g. through loyalty perks or lower prices) can lift total spend—one case showed a 16% spend increase when concessions were made more fan-friendly ¹³ .

Ticket Sales

- **Renewals & Upsells:** By offering high-value rewards for continued attendance, Sporting Blue Rewards can directly improve season-ticket retention. For example, the “Twelfth Man” challenge gives STMs access to exclusive events and draws with prizes like free 2024 season tickets ². This kind of incentive motivates renewals and referrals. Industry data suggest such loyalty initiatives pay off: programs with personalized engagement can boost overall revenue by ~5–15% ⁵. Moreover, small retention gains pay big dividends – according to Bain, a 5% lift in customer retention can yield over 25% higher profit ⁶. Loyal season-ticket holders also spend more on average, so improving their lifetime value (through perks and rewards) is an important growth lever.
- **New Fan Acquisition:** Sporting Blue Rewards also engages casual fans beyond current STHs. By rewarding actions like viewing club videos or listening to match broadcasts ¹⁴, SKC taps fans who may never attend regularly – a key opportunity noted in the industry ¹⁷. Broadening the loyalty program in this way can convert casual observers into engaged supporters, further expanding the ticket base over time.

Merchandise Revenue

- **Exclusive Prizes & Discounts:** The program offers signed and customized merchandise as rewards ¹, stoking fan interest in SKC gear. Season Ticket Members already receive 15% off apparel at SportingStyle ⁸, an integrated benefit that encourages more purchases. These offers make buying team merchandise more attractive.
- **Sales Lift:** Promotions tied to loyalty can significantly boost merch revenue. **Industry analyses report that limited-edition or exclusive merchandise pushes have driven ~30% jumps in sales ⁹**. Similarly, integrating promotions into digital channels (like the team’s app) has been shown to lift merchandise

sales by ~40% ¹⁰ . By channeling Blue Rewards through the club store (physical and online) and highlighting member discounts, SKC can capture these gains.

Concessions

- **Member Discounts & Convenience:** Sporting KC's system gives STMs 15% off all food and beverage purchases ¹² . Because the app's Sporting Pay wallet handles transactions, fans can pay quickly and even apply discounts automatically. This lowers friction for in-stadium spending.
- **Increased Spending:** Such incentives should raise per-fan concession spend. For example, Deloitte notes that drastic cuts in concession pricing (a type of loyalty benefit) led one NFL team to a 16% increase in total stadium spending ¹³ . **In our case, loyalty-driven discounts (15% off) and app offers can similarly stimulate additional sales. In practice, we'd expect Blue Rewards to shift some budget toward concession/retail and increase overall in-park revenue per attendee.**

Digital Engagement

- **App Integration & Content Challenges:** Sporting Blue Rewards is built into the SKC mobile app ³ ²⁰ , enhancing digital interaction. Fans earn points for consuming club content (videos, podcasts, newsletters) even outside the stadium ¹⁴ . Additionally, the Socios.com partnership brings in blockchain fan tokens, polls and prediction games for extra rewards ⁴ . Together, these features draw fans into SKC's digital ecosystem on game days and beyond.
- **Engagement Metrics:** Heightened digital engagement typically translates to higher revenue. Oracle research shows that personalization at scale (as in loyalty apps) can increase revenue 5–15% ⁵ . Moreover, one case study found integrating promotions on digital platforms drove a 40% surge in related sales ¹⁰ . We would expect Blue Rewards to similarly boost metrics like app active users, session length, and click-throughs to the club shop or ticket offers. These interactions also produce valuable data (e.g. content preferences) that SKC can use for targeted marketing.

Fan Retention & Acquisition

- **Building Loyalty:** A fundamental benefit of Sporting Blue Rewards is strengthening the fan-club relationship. Industry surveys indicate ~75% of sports teams view fan loyalty as their primary revenue driver ¹⁶ . Engaging fans year-round with challenges and rewards ensures that even occasional supporters stay connected. Loyal fans tend to buy more tickets, merch, and sponsorship-related products, and they advocate for the team (Bain notes that ~85% of growth often comes from repeat customers ⁷).
- **Broadening the Fanbase:** By rewarding non-attendance behaviors, the program extends SKC's reach to new fans. This is crucial as sports organizations shift focus to "every day, global" engagement ¹⁷ . For example, rewarding remote participation helps attract younger or distant fans. As STL Cloud or other tools segment loyalty members, SKC can target promotions to lapsed or casual fans for re-engagement, improving customer lifetime value (CLV) through expanded acquisition and retention.

Sponsorship Value

- **Sponsor Activations:** Loyalty programs offer new ways for sponsors to connect with fans. For instance, challenges or prize drawings (e.g. “Win exclusive gear from Capitol Federal!”) can feature sponsor branding. This direct fan engagement often increases sponsor exposure. In one analysis, clubs saw a ~25% rise in sponsor impressions when sponsors were embedded in merchandise promotions ¹⁹ .
- **Data-Driven Marketing:** Blue Rewards also generates fan data that sponsors value. As seen in NASCAR’s Fan Rewards, loyalty platforms can survey fans about their favorite brands or products ¹⁸ , enabling targeted promotions (e.g. offering a vodka brand’s prize only to drinkers). SKC can similarly use loyalty behavior (which games attended, what content viewed, which rewards redeemed) to help partners tailor offers. This makes sponsorship spend more efficient and measurable.



Figure: Aerial view of Children's Mercy Park, home of Sporting Kansas City. The stadium is equipped for digital fan experiences (e.g. Sporting Pay mobile ordering) and hosts loyalty-driven activities (scanning tickets, app promotions) that drive in-stadium spending.

In-Stadium Spending

Blue Rewards is designed to increase spending across all stadium channels. By gamifying the live experience (e.g. scanning ticket barcodes for badges or unlocking concession coupons), the program encourages fans to spend more time and money inside the venue. For example, automating offers (15% discounts, bundled deals) in the app can upsell fans to premium food or merchandise. Overall, personalized fan experiences have been shown to boost in-venue revenue 5-15% ⁵ . Moreover, addressing core fan needs at the stadium pays off: when one team cut concession prices in half, total stadium spending rose ~16% ¹³ . By combining loyalty perks with improvements to the stadium experience, SKC can expect higher per-capita revenue (from tickets, parking, F&B, retail, etc.) and better fan satisfaction, reinforcing the cycle of engagement and spend.

Sources: We draw on Sporting KC’s official program details ^{1 2 12 8}, industry analyses and case studies ^{6 5 16 9 19 13 14}, and broader loyalty marketing research to frame these insights.

^{1 2 20} Sporting KC launches Sporting Blue Rewards as new loyalty program in redesigned club app | Sporting Kansas City

<https://www.sportingkc.com/news/sporting-kc-launches-sporting-blue-rewards-as-new-loyalty-program-in-redesigned->

^{3 14 18} Facilities: New NASCAR fan loyalty program moves away from solely rewarding spending, becomes more democratic

<https://www.sportsbusinessjournal.com/Journal/Issues/2023/03/06/Insiders/facilities/>

^{4 15} Socios.com becomes official fan loyalty partner of Sporting KC | Sporting Kansas City

<https://www.sportingkc.com/news/socios-com-becomes-official-fan-loyalty-partner-of-sporting-kc>

^{5 17} What’s the state of loyalty programs in the sports industry in 2025?

<https://www.sportsbusinessjournal.com/Articles/2025/03/03/a-rewarding-experience/>

⁶ Prescription for Cutting Costs

https://media.bain.com/Images/BB_Prescription_cutting_costs.pdf

⁷ The Future of Fan Engagement

<https://www.51insights.xyz/p/the-future-of-fan-engagement>

⁸ Sporting Kansas City Season Tickets | Sporting Blue for Life

<https://sportingblueforlife.com/>

^{9 10 11 16 19} The Power of Merchandise Promotions: How Sports Clubs Boost Fan Loyalty and Revenue - CX360

<https://cx360.nextbee.com/the-power-of-merchandise-promotions-how-sports-clubs-boost-fan-loyalty-and-revenue/>

¹² Sporting Pay | Sporting Kansas City

<https://www.sportingkc.com/sporting-pay/>

¹³ The stadium experience: Keeping sports fans engaged—and loyal

<https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/us/Documents/technology-media-telecommunications/us-tmt-stadium-experience-keeping-sports-fans-engaged-loyal.pdf>