

Sport case study

SailGP drives positive change with world-first Impact League

The Impact League is SailGP's second podium, for the planet. A competition which runs in parallel to the races, tracking the positive actions of SailGP teams in reducing their carbon impact and driving inclusivity. Aiming to redefine performance in sport, the Impact League is brought to life through an interactive digital dashboard which helps fans intuit ways to live more sustainably.

The challenge

SailGP is a thrilling sport, featuring intense, high-speed competition between 10 national teams racing identical F50 catamarans, with events held in iconic coastal cities around the world.

And its format isn't the only innovation SailGP has brought to the sport. The sport is also out to change the world by putting social and environmental impact at the forefront of athletic endeavor. From its second season in 2021, SailGP has operated two podiums and presented two trophies: the first recognizing athletic performance, and the second recognizing commitment to a more sustainable and inclusive future.

SailGP calls its second podium the Impact League, and it embodies a huge ambition: to redefine performance in sport by making sustainability as competitive as the sport itself. SailGP wants fans to be as engaged with the teams' social and environmental credentials as they are with the races, in the belief that the athletes' actions and choices will inspire fans to make similar positive changes in their own lives.



SAILGP™

At a glance

Industry
Sport

Location
United Kingdom

Challenge
Develop an engaging, interactive and data-rich digital fan experience for the SailGP Impact League, to inspire fans to live more sustainably.

Success Highlights

- Significant reduction in time spent submitting, collating and publishing sustainability data.
- Around 15 times increase in unique visitors to the Impact League site.
- 350% increase in interactions with the Impact League dashboard.

Change mindsets with an engaging digital experience

But how to gather and present Impact League data in a way that captures fans' imagination and changes their mindset? SailGP collects a vast amount of data from teams across 10 key criteria—from the use of plastic to team diversity to plant-based diets—and it wanted to present that data in one place which was easy to access and understand, and in a way which both excited and inspired fans.

The results were presented with just one single score for each team displayed on a static leaderboard. Fans couldn't drill down to see what lay behind each score, which made it difficult for them to understand what teams were doing, and how they might modify their own behaviours. Teams couldn't compare their own performance against their rivals to understand the areas they needed to improve. And the data was collected through many spreadsheets—making it a resource intense project for both the competing teams to submit and the Impact League auditor to assess and score.

SailGP wanted the Impact League experience to be much more interactive, engaging and intuitive showcasing a library of data, and it turned to its digital transformation partner, Cognizant, to help bring the Impact League to life.

The approach

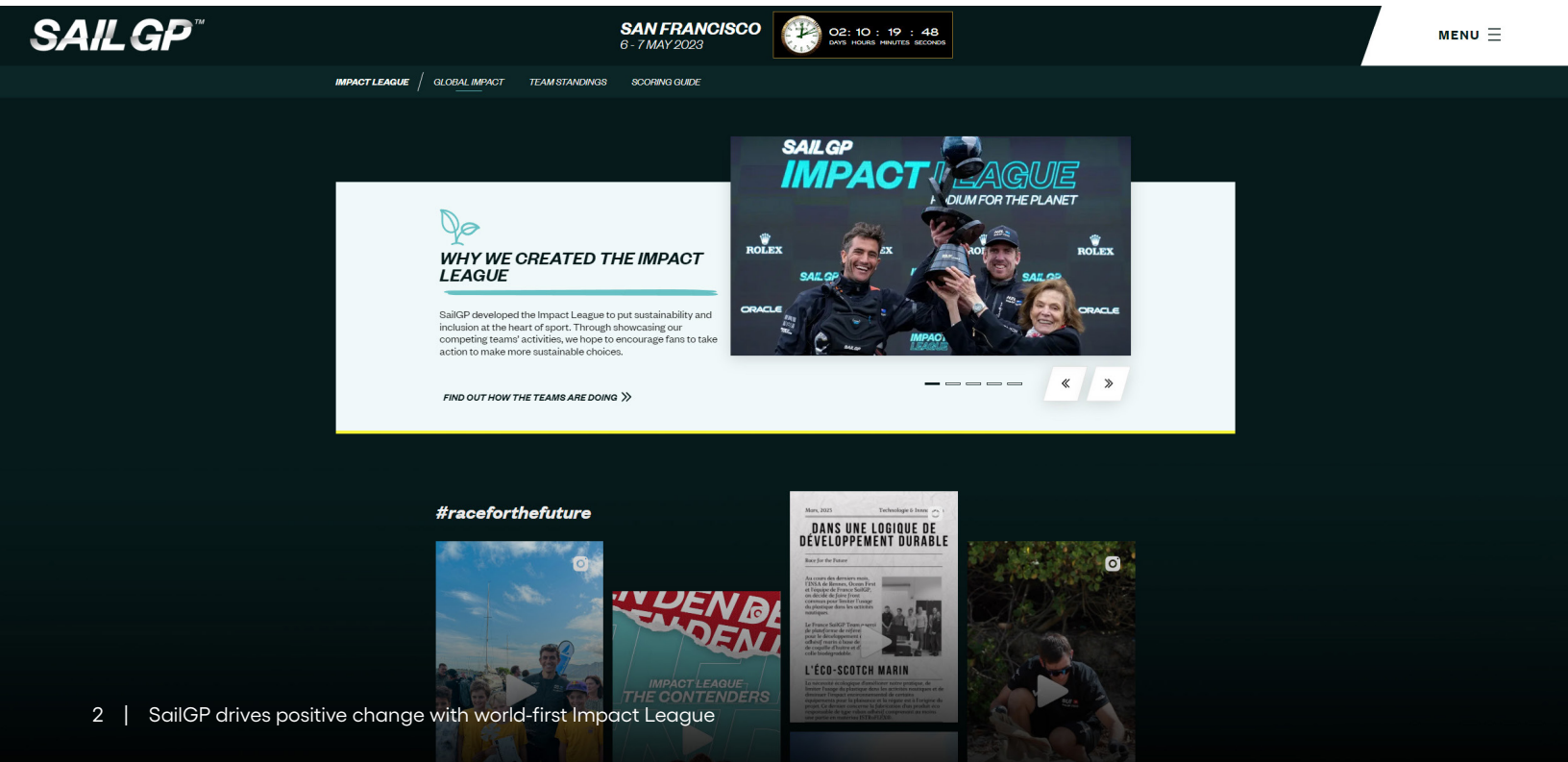
Initial workshops held at the conclusion of Season 3 drew out the breadth of SailGP's vision for the

Impact League, and the areas they wanted our help with.

Cognizant guided SailGP to start small, with a co-created minimum viable product (MVP) that would quickly start delivering results against five key objectives for the Impact League digital experience:

- **Engaging:** The experience should tell a compelling story to fans around the environmental and social sustainability initiatives being implemented by SailGP teams
- **Educational:** It should clearly help fans anticipate what changes will be most impactful and act on them in their own lives to make their own positive contribution to a better future
- **Inspirational:** It should inspire all audiences, including fans, partners, the public and sporting teams, to keep pushing harder to make a positive impact
- **Future-proof:** It should be flexible and scalable, to accommodate future enhancements or additions to Impact League measurement criteria
- **Transferable:** It should be easily adaptable to other sports and organizations who might want to take a similar approach to getting their athletes, fans or employees to make more conscious choices

Finally, both the solution and project delivery should embody sustainability principles, with minimal energy consumption and a demonstrable commitment to diversity, equity and inclusivity.



Twelve weeks to transform the Impact League experience

With just 12 weeks to deliver the solution in time for the start of SailGP Season 4, the team set to work building the interactive solution—focusing on the data foundation, the digital fan experience and project sustainability.

Lightweight and adaptable data foundation

SailGP collects many data points from each participating team, requiring an effective method of data collection, organization and storage. Cognizant engineered a lightweight, efficient and flexible data foundation for the solution, including:

- **Data schema:** A flexible data schema, based on the 10 Impact League criteria, that can easily be updated as the Impact League evolves and can also be readily adopted by other organizations
- **Relational database:** A scalable, energy-efficient, cloud-hosted Oracle database that allows data to be easily interrogated and compared across teams and seasons
- **Data collection:** A sophisticated input mechanism to ensure easier and more consistent data collection, with plans to automate as much data collection as possible in the future
- **Lightweight application programming interface (API):** A single API to the web front-end, with caching to minimize the number of API calls from the Impact League website, helping to keep energy consumption to a minimum

Interactive and engaging digital fan experience

The design and functionality of the Impact League site's user interface is critical to fan engagement. Cognizant employed sustainable design principles and interactive storytelling techniques to develop an overhauled fan experience, including:

- **Interactive dashboard:** Fans can now interact with a dynamic dashboard that updates throughout the season. For the first time, fans

and teams can drill into the data to compare team performance across all 10 Impact League criteria; look at trends over time; and understand what actions teams have taken to achieve their scores

- **Data storytelling:** SailGP fans and representatives from other sports can immediately grasp the power and potential of the Impact League through the story told by the data as teams move up or down the leaderboard based on their dynamically updating impact scores
- **Actionable insight:** With access to detailed information about the initiatives teams are taking, fans and businesses can sense which changes will make the most impact in their own lives, and act with confidence
- **Sustainable design:** Cognizant sustainability experts ensured an ultra-low carbon footprint for the new Impact League digital fan experience, using low-emission colors where possible and avoiding data-intensive video and images in favor of lightweight graphics and Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) styles. Local caching of Impact League data also cuts down on energy-hungry API calls

Reduced carbon in delivery

From the start and throughout, Cognizant sought to deliver the project as sustainably as possible. Our proprietary carbon calculation tool was used to assess the overall carbon footprint of the project, establishing a total for emissions generated and allowing the team to identify opportunities to reduce it. This included minimizing travel and printouts, using sustainable design and engineering principles and leveraging existing resources and assets.

Once all possible means of minimizing carbon impact had been adopted, any remaining emissions were offset through the purchase of credible carbon offsets via Gold Standard, a program designed to combat the adverse effects of climate change on the world's most vulnerable regions.

Business outcomes

In just 12 weeks, the Impact League digital experience was transformed from a single, text-heavy web page with a static leaderboard into a data-rich, interactive digital storytelling experience that allows fans to track the purpose-driven achievements of their favorite SailGP teams, anticipate the positive differences they can make in the world and start to take action themselves.

Faster processes and more engaged fans

The project has delivered major improvements in efficiency for Impact League teams and operations:

- Significant reduction in time spent submitting, collating and publishing sustainability data

SailGP fans are much more engaged, too, with the new digital experience delivering:

1. Around 15 times increase in unique visitors to the Impact League site
2. More than 16 times increase in Impact League page views
3. 350% increase in interactions with the Impact League dashboard

Redefining performance across sports

Cognizant's delivery of SailGP's new, data-driven digital fan experience is just the start. The Impact League continues to evolve, with SailGP exploring new ways to challenge teams to achieve more. In Season 4 it introduced four new focus projects to evolve the Impact League further, and its Purpose team aspire to see the two podiums merged into one, where speed, athleticism and driving positive impact count equally towards winning.

Another goal is to see the Impact League model adopted across more sports and organizations, helping to make them more sustainable and inspire new generations to embrace and champion positive change. The flexibility, scalability and adaptability of the new data foundation and digital experience will be able to support other sporting leagues who want to make a positive difference to the future of the planet.

About SailGP

Featuring intense races, iconic global venues, elite teams and athletes and record-breaking speeds, SailGP is the most exciting racing on water. The Impact League is a world-first initiative that sees SailGP teams compete for a second Championship, tracking the actions teams make to reduce their overall carbon footprint and help accelerate inclusivity in sailing. For more information visit www.SailGP.com.



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