

CASE STUDY

# AFC Ann Arbor Perfects Its Pitch With TrueView In-Stream Ads

AFC Ann Arbor, known as the Mighty Oak, plays minor-league soccer almost literally in the shadow of the University of Michigan's gigantic football stadium. For its inaugural season in 2015, the club needed a savvy marketing campaign to spread the word in its football-crazed hometown. The club quickly exceeded its goal through YouTube and TrueView in-stream ads.

## Reaching young families with YouTube advertising

Digital advertisers run [TrueView in-stream ads](#) on YouTube videos or on Google Display Network (GDN) videos, games, and apps. You can create in-stream ads through AdWords. Viewers always have the option of [skipping an ad after five seconds](#). "You have five seconds for making an impression," Bilal says. "Viewers might skip the first few times, but that fourth or fifth time we can definitely capture them. That five-second model is genius." AFC Ann Arbor originally expected its in-stream campaign to comprise about 25 percent of its marketing efforts. "By the time we were done, it was 60 to 75 percent of our total."

"We had unbelievable success in year one. The crux of it all really was our TrueView in-stream campaign on YouTube."

—Bilal Saeed, co-owner, AFC Ann Arbor

## Measuring and optimizing throughout the campaign

AFC Ann Arbor also relied heavily on the metrics available through TrueView in-stream ads. "We wanted to roll things out, see what happened, and adjust immediately," Bilal says. "Making early adjustments resulted in significant revenue differentiation over waiting until the end of the season to analyze data and then adjust."

As a result, the club created many more videos than it had originally planned, concentrating on the content fans needed and wanted, such as



### About AFC Ann Arbor

- Founded in 2014, AFC Ann Arbor has nine local owners and strong ties to the community. The club competed in the inaugural season of the Great Lakes Premier League as a founding club. It then joined the National Premier Soccer League to compete in the Midwest region.
- Ann Arbor, Michigan
- [www.afcannarbor.com](http://www.afcannarbor.com)

### About Pakmode

- Based in Ann Arbor, Michigan, Pakmode is a sports and entertainment marketing firm. Working mainly through digital platforms, new media, and partnerships, it helps teams, colleges, and artists gain revenue and exposure.
- Ann Arbor, Michigan
- [www.pakmode.com](http://www.pakmode.com)

### Goals

- Generate interest in soccer in a football-oriented community

### Approach

- Create captivating promotional material
- Run TrueView in-stream ads on YouTube and the Google Display Network
- Use metrics to optimize content and media mix

### Results

- Attendance averaged 1,200 fans per match
- Team landed multiple sponsorships

game recaps and feature profiles. “And mobile has become the biggest part of our strategy,” Bilal adds. “Once we were able to get some better content, our mobile success just skyrocketed.”

The ability to capture valuable viewer data was “just huge,” Bilal says. By identifying its current audience, AFC Ann Arbor could find similar audiences. It assembled a remarketing list of over 100,000 relevant YouTube viewers and identified 80,000 similar viewers.

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—Bilal Saeed, co-owner, AFC Ann Arbor

### TrueView in-stream ads fill the stadium

AFC Ann Arbor’s inaugural season was an immense success. Thanks in large part to its in-stream ad metrics, the club landed a jersey sponsorship before playing its first match. An area car dealer then signed up for a presenting sponsorship after just a few weeks. Online, the club’s YouTube videos drew 175,000 views. As for the sport itself, AFC home attendance averaged 1,200 fans per match, many more than anticipated. “We had unbelievable success in year one,” Bilal says. “The crux of it all really was our TrueView in-stream campaign on YouTube.”

The club believes that results from the 2015 season have prepared it for greater success in a bigger league with a longer season. YouTube and TrueView in-stream ads have helped it not only to build a strong fan base but also attract quality collegiate and amateur players who want to play for AFC Ann Arbor. In-stream ads definitely will continue as a key piece of AFC’s marketing efforts.

“Every time we run a campaign now, we just get better at it,” Bilal says. “For any sports organization, I can honestly say that TrueView in-stream ads are 100-percent going to work. That is just amazing.”