

## CASE STUDY — ING NEW YORK CITY MARATHON 2006 — 1

### ING New York City Marathon 2006 – NBC Sports

When NBC Sports and MediaZone officially partnered in September 2006, it was with the express vision of creating new, immersive, interactive experiences for sports fans online and on-air. The ING New York City Marathon on November 5, 2006 presented the ideal opportunity to make this vision a reality for the first time.

One of the unique aspects of the annual marathon, which has over 37,000 entrants, is the number of amateurs who never have the opportunity to have friends and family follow their progress throughout the race – until now. At the other end of the coverage spectrum, the 2006 race saw the added celebrity appeal of seven-time Tour de France winner Lance Armstrong running for the first time.

The online interactive video offering that MediaZone, NBC Sports and official marathon organizers RoadRunners ultimately created for this year's marathon provided fans with the most complete coverage ever offered from top to bottom, including an exclusive LanceCam and customized Runner Tracker feature.

#### Over 26 Miles Through the Biggest City in America



Over 2.5 million spectators lined the course in New York to witness the 2006 ING New York City Marathon, which is undoubtedly the highest profile event of its kind in the world. The 2006 event saw last year's champion and current marathon world record holder Paul Tergat compete to defend his title; however, it was Brazilian Marilson Gomes dos Santos who won the 2006 ING New York City Marathon in dramatic fashion.

Along with the excitement of these elite runners who were covered by the primary World Feed which is produced for traditional broadcast, online viewers were also able to follow Lance Armstrong, who competed in his first ING New York City Marathon and finished in less than 3 hours, with the exclusive LanceCam which followed him throughout his run.

In addition, online viewers were able to follow the entire race with three additional stationary cameras positioned at half-marathon distance, the 30k mark, and the finish line. These views continued well after the elite runners finished, capturing the majority of the 37,000 participants until roughly six hours after the event began, and provided the video component of the ground-breaking Runner Tracker feature.

#### Fast Facts:

- Over 210,000 unique visitors
- 40% watched broadcast feed
- 30% watched LanceCam
- 30% watched 3 stationary cameras

#### Combining Transponder Technology with Video Feeds to Track Runners Visually

One of the most appealing aspects of the ING New York City Marathon is the sheer number of runners, many of whom are amateurs and don't enjoy much visibility. By combining the multiple cameras stationed along the course with data provided by RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) technology for the first time ever, MediaZone and NBC Sports were able to create a unique Runner Tracker based on the bib numbers of all 37,000 entrants.



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To use this Runner Tracker custom feature, online viewers entered up to five bib numbers to receive notifications when those runners could be expected to pass each of the three stationary cameras so they could easily follow their favorites visually!

Although there were some glitches with this cutting-edge functionality due to a problem with the data feed during the first portion of the race, most viewers were still able to access the feature during the live race. Even better, an On Demand version of the Runner Tracker was available which allows viewers to look up the time runners passed each of the three camera points on the course and watch those runners in the downloaded or streamed footage!

### RFID Tracking — How it Works

RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) chips attached to the runner's shoe sends a unique signal to a special mat laid across the course which identifies each runner by time and score.

As media innovators, MediaZone and NBC Sports pushed the envelope to provide a state-of-the-art online broadcast experience of the 2006 ING New York City Marathon, and set a new bar for interactive sports television online.



### MediaZone and NBC Sports: In It For The Long Haul

Although the ING New York City Marathon was the first major event launched as part of NBC Sports and MediaZone's official partnership, the two media companies have worked very closely on a handful of other previous events, including Wimbledon LIVE in Summer 2006. Together they offered the most comprehensive coverage of the Grand Slam tennis championship ever available in North America with both on-air and online video coverage of over 300 matches live and On Demand.