



## Sky Sports Cricket and Royal London

### Royal London: The One-Over Challenge

Royal London, the UK's largest mutual life and pensions company, had supported the English cricket team through good and bad for almost 6 years. 2019 was set to be the best year for England who were favourites to win the ICC World Cup on home soil, but as Royal London only has a partnership with the England Cricket, it was set to be shut out of the conversation. Bowling in tandem with Sky Sports, we found a way to position Royal London at the centre of the cricket summer, by offering fans the once-in a lifetime opportunity to bowl against cricket legend Nasser Hussain. The partnership was an all-rounder success, royally smashing the targets for six to achieve significant increase in awareness, 14pp increase in brand talkability and promoting Royal London to 2nd most recalled brand amongst their competitors.

**+20<sub>pp</sub>**

increase in brand awareness  
(from 57% to 77%)

**+16%**

increase in brand talkability  
(from 35% to 51%)

**2<sup>nd</sup>**

most recalled brand amongst comp. set  
(vs 8th outside activity)



#### Challenge

Since 2014, Royal London has made significant investments to support England's cricket team through a heart-breaking exit at the 2015 World Cup to ranking as the world's no.1 team four years later. By 2019, the 6th year of their ECB (England and Wales Cricket Board) partnership, Royal London were recognised by core cricket fans, with prompted brand awareness having grown 21%.

According to Sky's insight, cricket is now the 2nd most live viewed sport (after football) and saw a 21% increase in viewing for 2018 vs 2017\* showing evidence that casual fans were likely to tune into the ICC Cricket World Cup in 2019. Simply put, cricket was about to reach an even broader audience.

Murphy's law that just when all eyes would turn to England's cricket team on home soil, Royal London were set to be shut out the conversation without an official World Cup affiliation. But Spark Foundry weren't going to let a technicality get in their client's way... Determined to keep Royal London in the game and use the opportunity to increase their association with cricket, they briefed Sky Media to leverage the increased attention on the WORLD CUP to drive prompted brand awareness and brand recall against their competitive set.



#### Idea

This was Royal London's chance to engage cricket fans and those harder-to-reach light viewers and casual fans (against Sky's viewer segmentation). But they needed a summer-long conversation to bat beyond the ECB's One-Day International (ODI) and compete with circa 15 big-named official WORLD CUP partners like



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*It was essential for us to stay relevant across the cricket season, especially with the biggest cricket event in the world happening on home soil. Partnering with Sky and creating branded content enabled Royal London to have a presence at key cricketing moments and amplify our partnership with England Cricket. As a result we saw increased affinity with Royal London and improved brand perception amongst cricket fans and Sky viewers.*

*Thea Rogerson, Brand and Sponsorship Manager, Royal London*

Emirates and Coca Cola. So we brought them to the home of cricket... Sky Sports Cricket enabled Royal London to create credible content using Sky's unrivalled talent, BAFTA award-winning production team and market-leading distribution channel, reaching 7million people annually!

Knowing that 40% of light cricket viewers actually “enjoy the build up to a sporting event as much as the event itself”<sup>\*\*\*</sup>, we saw the opportunity to add a layer to the conversation beyond the live matches, building anticipation around the WORLD CUP even if we couldn't integrate into it. Collaboratively we created the “One-Over Challenge”, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for fans to bowl against the former England captain Nasser Hussain at a Royal London ODI. Nasser himself and Sky's Isa Guha hosted the competition challenging fans to submit their best bowling clips via a competition hub to crown a champion for the “One-Over Challenge”.



## Activation

The three-phase media plan hijacked key moments in the cricketing calendar as follows:

**1) Recruit entries:** Knowing 38% of light cricket viewers “enjoy watching sports they participate in”<sup>\*\*\*</sup>, we bowled for impact and awareness, targeting live coverage to drive a large pool of entries. Royal London's ECB partnership gave us access to the Men's International series with Pakistan, where we promoted entries on screens and in match programmes. This was complemented with TV spots across entertainment and sporting shows to broaden reach and engage viewers in phases 2 and 3. Digital takeovers, Social Media banners, SkySports.com editorial support and Sky AdVance were used to optimise the click through rate (CTR).

**2) Intrigue fans:** Once we'd received the entries, our Sky Pundits analysed the clips using touchscreen technology to shortlist a top 5. Knowing light viewers are more likely to consume cricket content via digital & social<sup>\*\*\*</sup>, we used these platforms to engage viewers to discuss the skill and technique of the bowlers. We aligned social/digital takeover posts with key cricketing moments, including the WORLD CUP England squad being released and across Ashes tests. Sky Advance was again used to optimise the view through rate (VTR).

**3) Celebrate the winner:** Winner selected, Royal London gained us access to the ODI Canterbury cricket ground (during England vs Australia Women's test series) to film the “One-Over Challenge”. We used digital and social to celebrate the winner's attempt to bowl out Nasser and saw an unprecedented response to the clip on social - achieving views within the top 2% for all of Sky Sports' social and ranking 6th highest.



## Results

Not only did Royal London stay in the conversation, delivering over 140m impressions (vs 20.5m planned) and a 1035% overdelivery on social, engaging fans till the very end; it also increased talkability, achieved double-digit growth in awareness and overtook six competitors despite the corridor of uncertainty!<sup>\*\*\*\*</sup>

- Brand awareness flew from 57% to 77% (financial services norm = 65%)
- Brand advocacy bounced from 44% to 64% (financial services norm = 43%)
- Brand talkability jumped from 35% to 51% (financial services norm = 39%)
- Royal London became the 2nd most recalled brand amongst the comp. set (vs 8th outside of activity)
- Achieved a 35% higher mark when asked “how close do you feel to Royal London” (5.7 vs 4.2)

\* BARB/Techedge All Inds consolidated, YoY comparison; \*\* Sky Sports Segmentation insight/VESPA panel viewing data;

\*\*\* Sports segmentation insights: c. 4-6% increase on platforms illustrated vs base of circa 30% for heavy cricket viewers;

\*\*\*\* Viewers aware of partnership vs non-viewers - 3rd party, Future Thinking findings