CUSTOMER CASE STUDY

Helping Vancouver Whitecaps FC focus on fans, not security noise

Vancouver Whitecaps FC reduced security complexity and improved visibility across its environment, helping the IT team focus less on operational noise and more on delivering exceptional fan experiences.

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Vancouver Whitecaps FC

Industry

Professional Sports & Entertainment

Sophos solutions

- Sophos Managed Detection and Response (MDR)
- Sophos Endpoint
- Sophos Email
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- Sophos Managed Risk
- Sophos Device Encryption

All Sophos solutions are part of Sophos Fusion, the industry's most complete cyber defense system. Powered by agentic AI with human judgment, it sees everything, connects everything, and enables an organization's defenses to respond as one.

Overview

- Canadian professional soccer club
- Large-scale match-day operations with ticketing, mobile apps, Wi-Fi, and broadcast infrastructure
- Responsible for protecting fan, staff, and business data

Challenges

- Managing growing cybersecurity complexity with limited internal resources.
- Protecting fan data and maintaining trust across every digital interaction.
- Operating with fragmented visibility across security tools and data sources.
- Reducing operational noise and prioritizing the threats that matter most.
- Shifting from reactive security management to a more strategic cybersecurity approach.

Outcomes

- Improved visibility and context across the security environment.
- Faster prioritization and response to security events.
- Continuous monitoring and 24/7 access to cybersecurity expertise.
- Freed IT resources to focus on infrastructure, innovation, and fan experiences.
- Transitioned from firefighting security issues to strategic planning.
- Greater confidence in supporting match-day operations, business objectives, and fan trust.

Vancouver Whitecaps FC operates in an environment where technology is as critical to the fan experience as what happens on the pitch. Match days rely on ticketing systems, mobile applications, stadium connectivity, digital transactions, and operational technology all working together without disruption. At the same time, every interaction creates data that must be protected.

> "Protecting fans' data isn't a back-end function. It's part of the match-day experience. Just like what happens on the pitch."

Tomiwa Omoniyi,
Head of IT at Vancouver Whitecaps FC

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For Tomiwa Omoniyi, Head of IT at Vancouver Whitecaps FC, cybersecurity is fundamentally tied to fan trust.

As the club's technology footprint expanded, the IT team needed a more effective way to manage cybersecurity across the environment. Existing tools provided some protection, but visibility was limited and security operations were becoming increasingly difficult to manage efficiently.

The challenge extended beyond technology. The internal team was spending valuable time managing disparate tools and responding to operational issues instead of focusing on long-term initiatives that could improve the club's infrastructure and digital experiences.

To modernize its cybersecurity operations, Vancouver Whitecaps FC worked with Sophos and Sophos Partner, Netcetera, to build a more proactive security strategy powered by Sophos Fusion. For Omoniyi, the decision was based on finding a strong security partner that could provide both strong security capabilities and support for the club's unique operational environment.

"Choosing to partner with Sophos and [Netcetera] came down to alignment and capabilities. Sophos brought a mature, managed security approach with strong endpoint protection and real-time threat intelligence."

The partnership was equally as important as the system behind it.

"We weren't just looking for vendors. We needed partners who understood the scale of live environments and the importance of uptime," he said.

Today, Sophos MDR provides the continuous monitoring and security expertise needed to support Whitecaps' operations. With improved visibility and a more coordinated approach to incident response, the IT team is able to spend less time sorting through noise and more time focused on business priorities.

"Working with Sophos day to day is very streamlined," Omoniyi said. "Alerts are prioritized and triaged quickly and there is shared visibility across the board."

The operational impact has extended well beyond cybersecurity. By reducing the burden associated with monitoring and responding to threats, the team has been able to redirect attention toward higher-value initiatives.

"That shift allows us to move up the value chain, focusing on infrastructure improvement, long-term planning, and enhancing the overall digital experience for fans and staff," Omoniyi said. "It is a transition from firefighting to forward planning."

For organizations managing modern digital environments, Omoniyi believes cybersecurity can no longer be handled by a single individual or isolated team.

"Security can't be a one-person or even a one-team job anymore. It's too complex and too fast moving," he said. "Having Sophos in the mix means we get in-depth expertise and 24/7 coverage."

> "Before partnering with Sophos, the environment was more reactive than proactive. The main challenge was fragmentation. Alerts were coming in from multiple directions without a centralized intelligence layer. That creates noise, slows response time, and immediately increases risk."
>
> **Tomiwa Omoniyi,**
> Head of IT at Vancouver Whitecaps FC

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That confidence allows the Whitecaps to focus on what matters most: supporting the business, enabling match-day operations, and delivering experiences that strengthen fan engagement.

“Instead of constantly worrying about what might go wrong, we can focus on enabling the business, supporting match-day operations, improving fan engagement and aligning IT with the club’s broader goals,” Omoniyi said.

For Vancouver Whitecaps FC, cybersecurity is not a standalone IT function. It is part of how the club delivers a trusted fan experience. With a more connected approach to cyber defense, the club can focus on delivering exceptional fan experiences while maintaining confidence that the people, systems, and data behind them are protected. As part of Sophos Fusion, the industry’s most complete cyber defense system, Whitecaps benefits from a unified approach that helps reduce complexity, accelerate response, improve resilience, and maximize the value of its security investments. Powered by agentic AI with human judgment, Sophos Fusion sees everything, connects everything, and enables defenses to respond as one.

As Omoniyi puts it: “At the end of the day, it lets us do what we are supposed to do: support the team, support the fans and make sure everything off the pitch runs as clean as what happens on it.”

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