Case study
Podium Analytics - More Sport, Less Injury

Creating a Single Player View to track and manage sporting injuries

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Podium
A N A L Y T I C S

Podium Analytics is a charity working to create a world with more sport and less injury. They commit to a "best-in-class" approach in their pursuit of reducing risk of injuries and helping people recover more quickly and effectively. They have some of the best minds in science, technology and sport both on their team, and at the Podium Institute at the University of Oxford. They are rigorous in their selection of the industry-leading technology they use and are dedicated to ethical and compliant data use.

Challenges and Requirements

Podium Analytics faced two major data challenges in its mission to track players and their injuries across all sports and places of participation:

Creating consistency: The first challenge they faced was ensuring they were working with an accurate and standardised view of each player. For each player, there are multiple organisations across a variety of contexts that need to share their data with Podium. Each has different data standards and levels of rigour in their approach to data quality and Podium needed to join all these data sources together. An additional complicating factor is that people can often use different credentials across different aspects of their lives, so it could not be assumed, for instance, that different names mean different people.

What they needed: Podium needed a reliable method of improving data quality and linking individuals' data from across all organisations to create an accurate Single Player View.

Complex data usage: Podium process and use data in several ways that require different consent levels, based on the lawful bases for processing under GDPR. For instance, they act as data processors for schools and sports clubs, processing injury data on their behalf. But when they anonymise that data to use it in their research, they become the data controllers. Despite the change in roles from data processor to data controller, in both cases, where possible, they can rely on legitimate interest as a lawful basis for processing, which doesn't require explicit consent.

However, when they're recruiting for specific research projects, or when they're contacting people for marketing purposes, they can no longer rely on legitimate interest and instead require explicit consent. This means that for each individual there are multiple layers of consent depending on how their data will be used; and the right one needs to be used every time their data is processed.

What they needed: Podium needed to know with certainty if, how, and when they could use player data without the need for lengthy data analysis every time.

Seizing the Start-Up Opportunity
Setting standards and embedding best practice from day one

"As a startup, there is a fantastic opportunity to build in rigorous **data quality standards and data compliance best practices from day one.** When attempting this with existing data sets, there are unknown levels of duplicates, missing data, and incorrect data; with consent data either absent, out of date, or incompatible for the purposes for which it's being used. **Data atrophies so quickly and if you're not on top of it, problems can snowball. This is why we brought Infoshare in** – to build in the necessary architecture from the beginning. This would help us use and analyse our data with confidence and stop us from hitting data quality and compliance problems down the line."

Damian Smith
Chief Technology Officer, Podium Analytics

"Rather than performing archaeology on the data, trying to understand where it came from, and then make a fact-based assessment on whether we can use the data in a particular context – ConsentMaster from Infoshare automates that entire process. It knits together all those layers of consents and different lawful means of processing so that we know straight away whether we can use that data for a specific purpose. We can make immediate, informed decisions on how to use player data compliantly. This not only gives us the confidence to use the data how we need to; it also demonstrates our commitment to a best-in-class approach to data privacy compliance."

Damian Smith
Chief Technology Officer, Podium Analytics

The solution

Data is used for different purposes across different organisations and so is varied in its accuracy, reliability, and completeness. Podium chose Infoshare's ClearCore to create an evidence-based Single Player View initially for nearly 200,000 players across the UK. This figure is increasing daily as new schools and clubs are recruited and, with their targets to eventually cover all sports, is plotted to be within the millions by September 2024.

They also chose Infoshare's ConsentMaster technology to manage the multi-layered consent information required for every player. It stores the most up-to-date lawful bases for processing, as well as any explicit consent obtained (including when and how people can be contacted). ConsentMaster processes the data daily and newer information supersedes outdated information to ensure Podium are always using the correct lawful basis and remain compliant with GDPR.

"There are some instances where you need human intervention to confirm duplications or matched records. In ClearCore, it's really easy for us to build in our specific exceptions and review criteria; I love how this technology gives us complete control over this process and is always able to meet to our complex requirements."

Damian Smith
Chief Technology Officer, Podium Analytics

Benefits

Ability to spot systemic data issues

ClearCore's data quality reports provide detailed information on the different types of errors and issues occurring in the data. Podium use this information to spot patterns that may indicate systemic data issues. When they can get to the root cause – whether it is poor validation, bugs in the data collection apps, a broken business process or lack of training – identifying the root cause makes it easier to find the right solutions.

Facilitates continuous improvement

As data is processed daily, data quality issues are quickly spotted and fixed as they arise. Data is now continually kept accurate and up to date, which is critical for creating a reliable foundation for research.

The foundation for research

Podium's pivotal goal is to help people play the sports that they love, for as long as they want to. As a data-driven organisation, they know that the key to achieving that is with a strong data foundation.

Better understanding of injuries and trends

If there are duplicate records for people, it is hard to get an accurate view of how prevalent a type of injury is. Equally, if duplicate injuries are reported for a player, they could appear more injured than they are. Being able to remove duplicates means Podium can correctly quantify injury levels and understand injury trends.

Shareable

The Single Player View links all relevant organisations and clubs to a player's account. This gives them, or their parents, the ability, and the choice, to share details of any injuries, hospital visits, and diagnoses, with the organisations where they play sport.

Supports compliance

ClearCore's audit trail provides transparent, detailed information about all changes made to the data, including the players' consent data. Not only can Podium confidently use the data, but they can also prove their compliance with a strong evidence base.

"Data is everything. It is fundamental to absolutely everything we do. If we have poor data, we're going to reach poor conclusions. And for us, that means we're going to reach poor conclusions about children's health and the potential impact on their later life. That's why it has been so important to have Infoshare with us from the beginning. We have the confidence to trust our research conclusions because of the reliable data foundation they have helped us to create."

Damian Smith
Chief Technology Officer, Podium Analytics

"It is brilliant to be working so collaboratively with the Podium team who are using data to deliver positive change at a societal level. The Podium Institute at the University of Oxford are uncovering game-changing insights that will make the world of sport safer and help people play for longer.

"We're always talking about the importance of a strong foundation to get the most out of big data projects, using technology like automation, AI/ML, and Intelligent Insights. It is a privilege to provide this foundation for Podium, with the ambition of becoming the UK's biggest and most sophisticated multisport view of players and their injuries ever created. As a father with kids who play a lot of sport, I'm excited about the impact Podium can have to make their sporting life safer."

Richard Onslow
Director of Business Development & Insight, Infoshare

Transform data into a powerful business asset with Infoshare, the UK data quality and data management specialist. Its ClearCore software cleanses and matches data from multiple sources to create a trusted, accurate, and up-to-date single view of data, including external changes. Organisations benefit from a reliable data foundation to support data compliance, underpin AI/ML and automation initiatives, while enabling better decision-making, improved efficiency, and cost reduction.

Contact or connect with us to find out more, or to see how we could help you

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