

# App Innovation



POINT ALLIANCE

## Assists from Point Alliance and Agility CMS Helped Hockey Canada Score with Real-time Statistics and Live-streaming Video in their Web and App Solutions on Microsoft Azure Cloud to Meet the Massive Traffic Spikes of the 2018 Olympics and Paralympics

*Hockey Canada scores with critical Concussion App plus apps for fans who need instant access to scores, bios, and live feeds at lightspeed with Microsoft Azure Cloud-based innovations geared specifically to Canada's national sport*

Canadian hockey fans watched breathlessly as their Olympic and Paralympic teams made it to the Gold medal rounds in PyeongChang this year. For the parents of one sledge hockey Paralympic team member watching live in South Korea, all the training, planning and travel came down to one last game -- the Canada-US gold medal round on St. Patrick's Day. They held their breath as the game went to overtime.

Back home in Canada, the rest of the family was glued to their screens as they watched the game, scores, and play-by-plays in streaming video on various devices wherever they happened to be. The 2-1 overtime loss was a bitter disappointment but for the 78-year old grandmother of one of the team's youngest players, watching her grandson receive his Silver medal brought hot tears of pride as she remembered the winding road that brought her grandson to this special moment. Although she could not travel to the game, she followed his progress every step of the way, thanks to the robust website and apps built for Hockey Canada by Point Alliance and Agility CMS on Microsoft's Azure cloud platform. It was almost like being there.



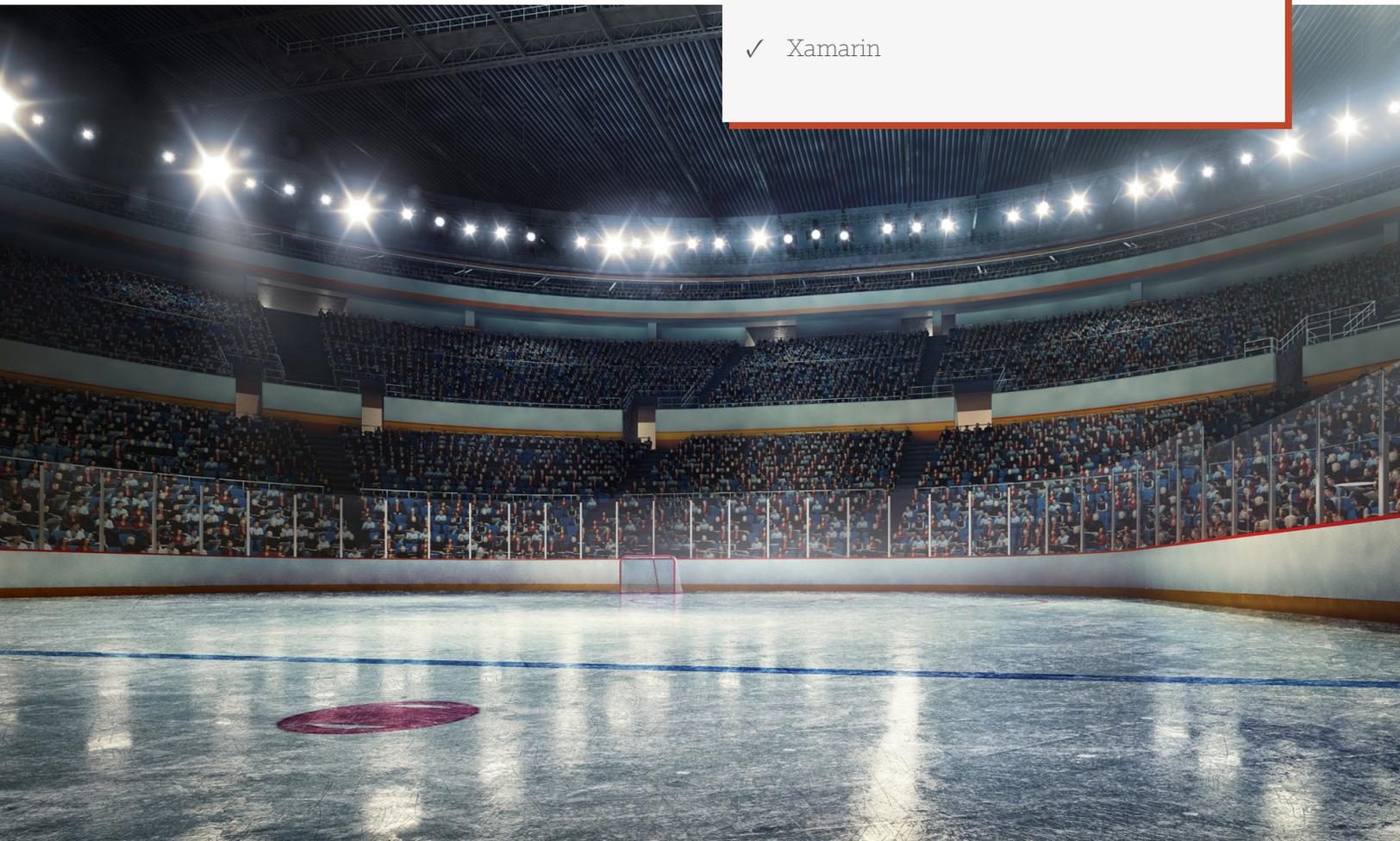
## Road to the Olympics

The road to PyeongChang was long for more than just the athletes and their families. For Hockey Canada, the journey began several years earlier when they realized that their out-dated, proprietary, non-Microsoft, single-vendor website would not be able to handle the high traffic spikes that popular annual events like the World Juniors would soon bring. The old website was supported by basic software, which took several steps to deliver new data and had a limited ability to add functionality. What they needed was a scalable cloud-based solution. Enter Toronto-based Point Alliance and Agility CMS, who partnered to develop an agile CMS solution and mobile apps built on the Azure cloud.

Everything needed to be completely redesigned and upgraded to meet the vast needs of the 2018 Olympics and Paralympics. In today's world, integrations such as live streaming video, play-by-play, real-time in-game and post-game statistics, and mobile app access are mandatory.

### Microsoft Solutions Used:

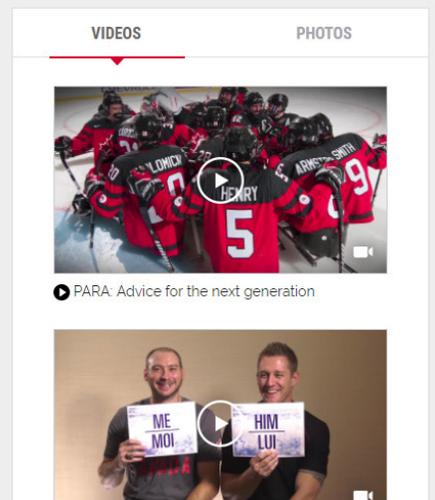
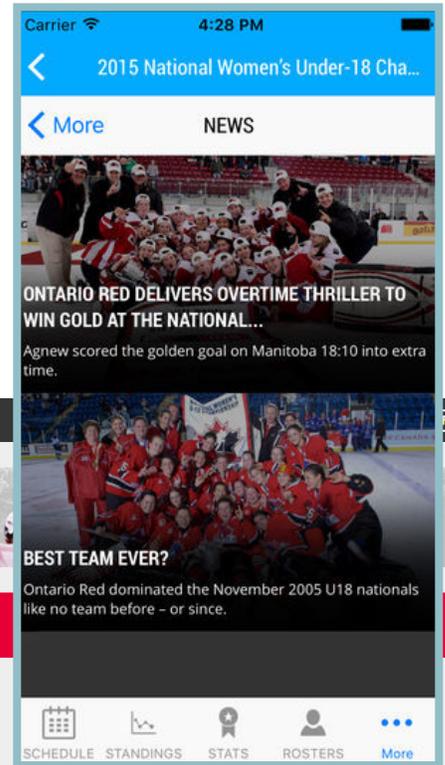
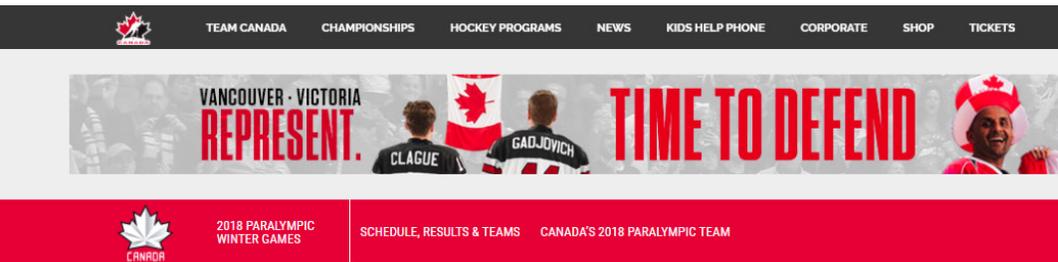
- ✓ MS Azure
- ✓ SQL Azure
- ✓ Visual Studio
- ✓ Xamarin



# Omni-channel solution for Canadian hockey fans

Point Alliance worked with Agility CMS to harness the power of the Azure cloud and develop an omni-channel solution for hockey fans via a responsive website for desktop, tablet, and mobile, along with apps for both iPhones and android phones.

Point Alliance worked closely with Hockey Canada to understand exactly what they needed: speed, reliability, scalability and agility. The Hockey Canada website provides easy access to Team Canada and Junior Hockey events, data, photos, broadcast-quality live streaming video, real-time statistics and scores, plus hockey news, schedules, bios, rosters, standings, and integrations to the Kids Help line, social media, and ecommerce for merchandise and event tickets. Mobile apps include Live Ice, Rule Book, Hockey Canada Network, and Concussion Awareness.



## Customer experience improvements revealed in stats

Providing an amazing user experience using multiple device platforms, seamless across devices, was of paramount importance for Hockey Canada, whose target audience includes fans, players, coaches, parents and alumni. The customer experience improved dramatically, with faster results, a better visitor experience, more page views and reduced bounce rate.

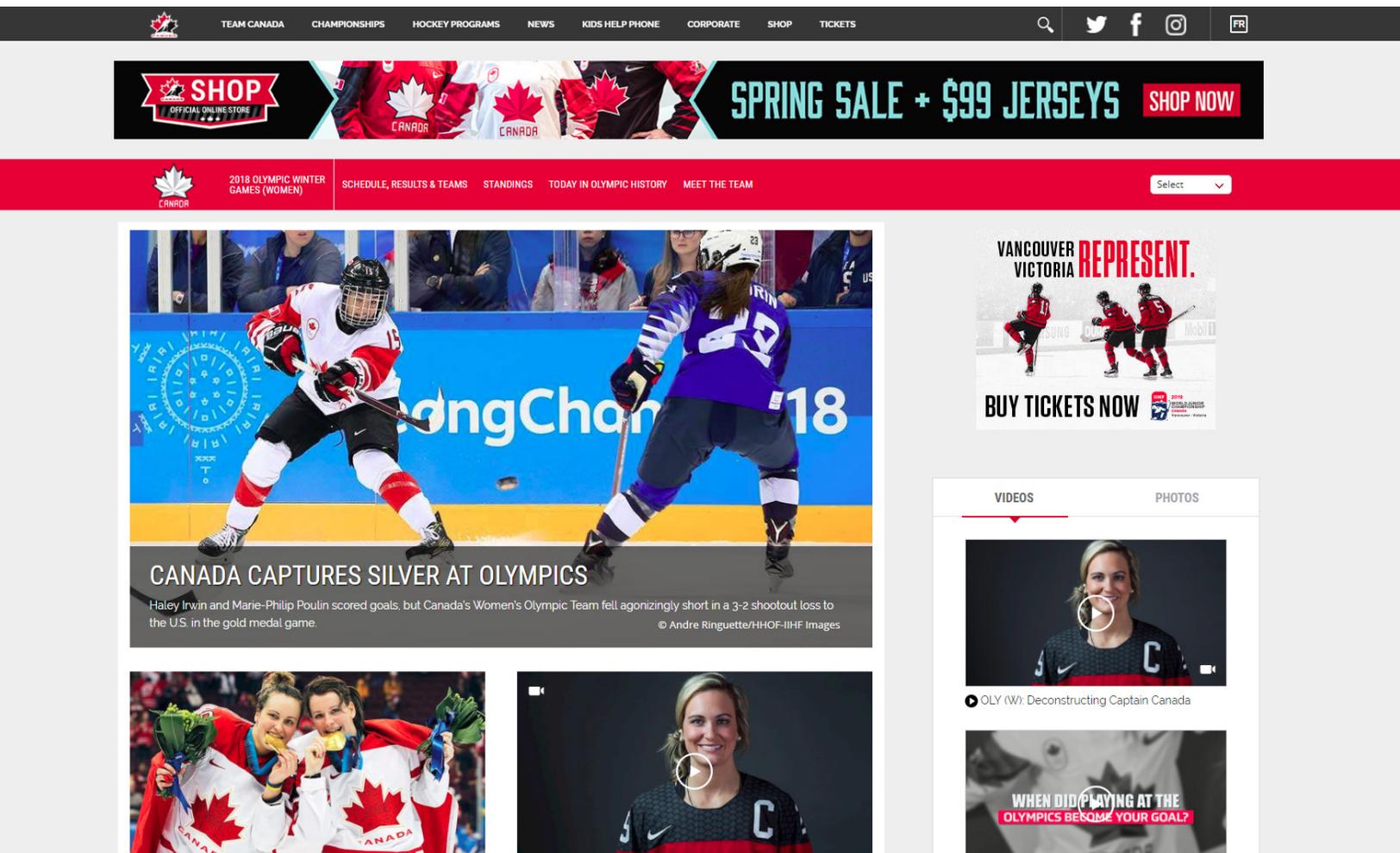
Traffic levels exploded. From Dec 1/17 to Mar 31/18, the Hockey Canada website attracted an unprecedented 3,893,616 users, of which 3,848,229 were new users to the site, resulting in 6,960,840 sessions and 15,358,735 page views. World Juniors traffic this year nearly matched the Olympic and Paralympic spikes.



# Improving business results and team collaboration with Azure

The new solution enabled the Hockey Canada team to work more efficiently and produce better and faster results. Easy integration with 3rd-party platforms, including ecommerce tools, social networks, file storage, ad servers, and others have automated much of the manual work. Marketing and communication staff are now able to update information from anywhere via multiple devices and IT resources are no longer involved, reducing operational costs and errors, while increasing efficiency.

The updated design, mobile apps and specific content areas and microsites such as the Drill Hub (an area dedicated to providing coaches with online practice planning and skill development resources) have all assisted Hockey Canada in presenting new and increased areas where sponsors can participate. This in turn has increased sponsorship dollars allowing the team to continue developing new and creative ideas to improve the overall experience.



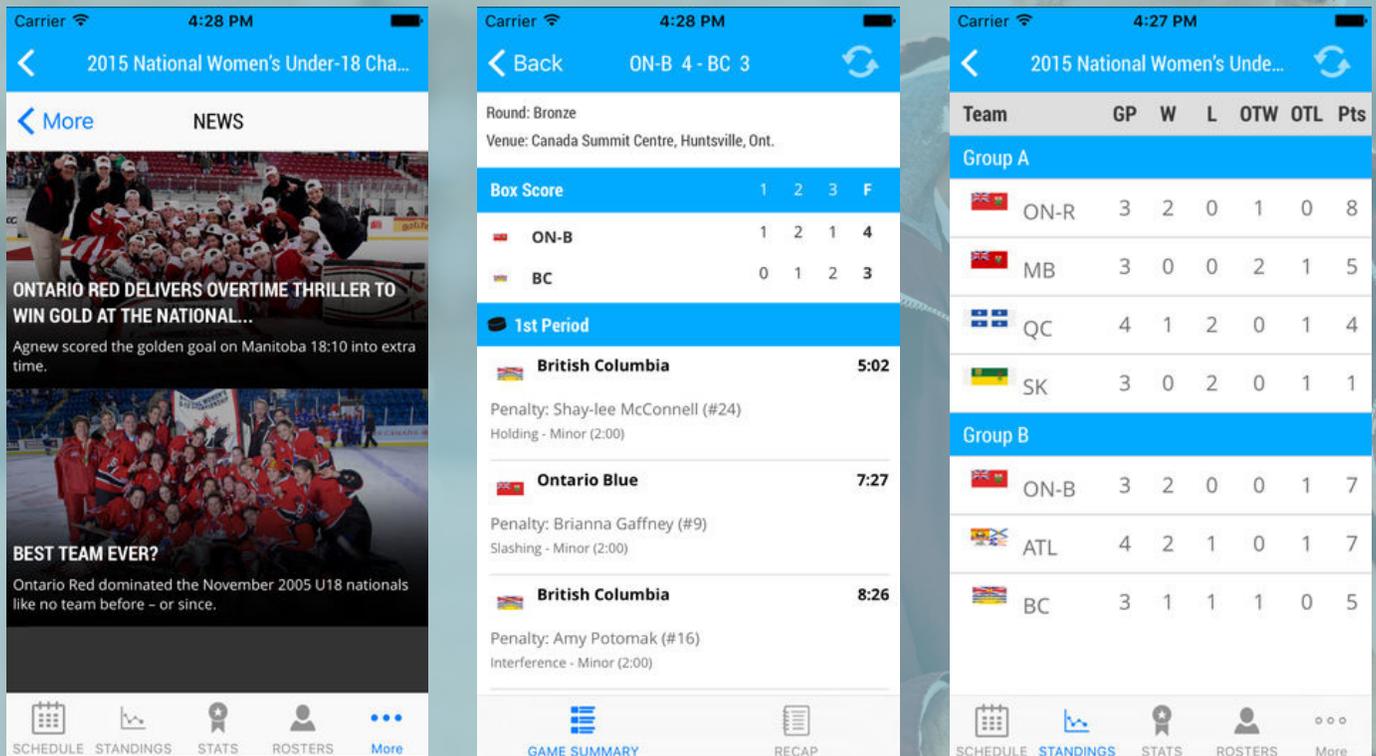
## Aesthetic and intuitive app design

The Hockey Canada mobile apps are simple and intuitive for both adults and children, with clear menus and simple navigation. They extend the rich content of the website to all phones for use on-the-go and on-ice. The Live Ice app makes it easy to access live video and real-time statistics updates and provides fast and easy access to data such as player bios. The Concussion app facilitates access to health-critical information and a list of nearby hospitals.

The solution leverages structured and unstructured data including the massive amount of statistics and live-stream video required to keep today's sports fans engaged, and provides real-time score and schedule updates as well as massive libraries of player and coach resources.

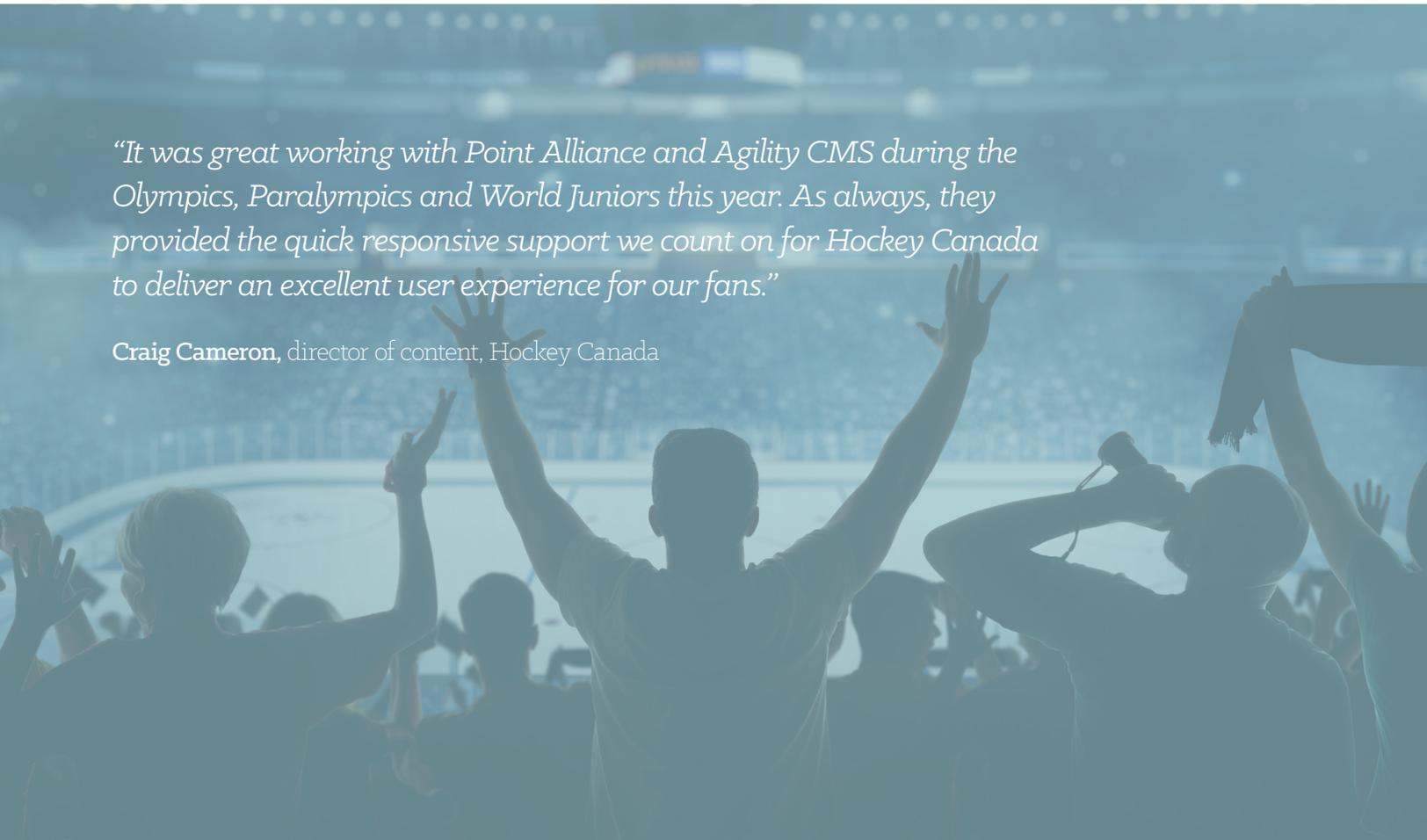
The apps used DevOps best-practices including agile software development, continuous integration, continuous delivery pipelines, automated and continuous testing, proactive monitoring, and improved communication and collaboration.

Azure and Xamarin accelerated Point Alliance's ability to deliver applications and increased their productivity; increased quality of their mobile projects and their ability to develop for all phones.



Azure enabled the speed of development, deployment, operation, scalability security, and disaster recovery. It also enabled Point Alliance to win the Hockey Canada business. The combination of Point Alliance's implementation and integration and the Agility CMS was a compelling proposition.

The solution has broader market potential for customers who need to extend their content to mobile devices, and customers with seasonal usage spikes and high-profile/ no-failure requirements. Point Alliance and Agility CMS now use the Hockey Canada solution as a success case to win business with clients in other industries whether it's Canada's leading health, beauty and convenience retailer Shoppers Drug Mart, or smaller not-for profit organizations like Partners for Planning (helping individuals with disabilities and their families).



*“It was great working with Point Alliance and Agility CMS during the Olympics, Paralympics and World Juniors this year. As always, they provided the quick responsive support we count on for Hockey Canada to deliver an excellent user experience for our fans.”*

**Craig Cameron**, director of content, Hockey Canada

- Hockey Canada Concussion App Case Study <http://ipoint.to/e1vw44>
- Hockey Canada Success Story: <http://ipoint.to/zydhjv>
- Microsoft awarded Agility CMS Canadian Cloud Leader award in 2015. <http://ipoint.to/8mdnpz>
- [www.Hockeycanada.ca](http://www.Hockeycanada.ca)
- Concussion Link in Globe & Mail: <http://ipoint.to/vjx285>