

# Connected Jerseys: Scoring advanced authenticity for intellectual property

Cardano's unique capabilities allowed Epoch Sports and Merchadise to radically transform property authentication and fan engagement.

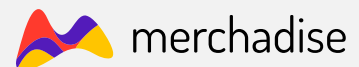
## Challenge

### A Need for Innovation in Fan Engagement and Brand Authenticity

Since its founding in 2011, Epoch Sports has established a reputation for excellence in the lacrosse industry. The company is known for its innovative, high-performance equipment and commitment to quality, making it a popular choice among lacrosse players at all levels. Despite its success, Epoch Sports wanted to **explore leading-edge solutions to improve customer experience**, as well as new ways to **authenticate its products** in response to the growing prevalence of counterfeit merchandise.

Unlicensed items threaten not just intellectual property but also brand authenticity, undermining consumer trust and revenue streams for stakeholders. In fact, **counterfeit products have become a global challenge**, accounting for 3.3% of global trade<sup>1</sup>, with domestic and international counterfeit or pirated goods sales totaling an estimated \$1.7 trillion to \$4.5 trillion per year<sup>2</sup>. Modern solutions are needed to secure intellectual property and address demands for innovative fan engagement options that meet user expectations.

Recognizing the risks of inaction, **Epoch Sports tapped into Cardano's exclusive features for upgraded authenticity** and used the Merchadise platform as a bridge for a groundbreaking solution merging Web 2.0 with Web 3.0.



#### Company

Epoch Sports

#### Industry

Sports Apparel

#### Size

\$33 billion global industry

#### The challenge

- \$1.7 - \$4.5 trillion lost to counterfeit or pirated goods
- Outdated intellectual property protection
- Threatened brand reputation
- Diminished fan engagement



#### The solution

- Bridging Web 2.0 and 3.0
- Leveraging Cardano's advance storage
- Generating immutable, verifiable records with Cardano
- Creating future-proof authenticity

"This exciting collaboration with the Cardano Foundation marks a significant milestone in licensed apparel, setting new standards for intellectual property protection, while also supporting fan engagement. By harnessing the power of blockchain technology, Merchadise's customers can be assured of the authenticity of the products they purchase, while also gaining access to a range of possible offers and supports, simply by scanning an NFC chip."

Alex Phelan  
CEO of Merchadise

Solution

## Tokenization and Cardano NFTs Unlock Brand Potential



During the 2023 World Lacrosse Championship, Epoch Sports and Merchandise entered a technical collaboration with the Cardano Foundation to revolutionize fan engagement and merchandise authentication. Benefiting from the **Cardano blockchain's security, immutability, and transparency**, each limited-edition jersey was embedded with an NFC chip containing a unique digital certificate of authenticity. Fans could simply tap their smartphones to verify their purchase, unlock exclusive rewards, and connect directly with participating brands.

This innovative approach not only **enhanced the fan experience** but also **provided a powerful tool against counterfeiting** in the \$33 billion licensed sports merchandise industry<sup>3</sup>. By choosing Cardano, Merchandise ensured a secure, scalable, and sustainable blockchain solution to protect the integrity of Epoch Sports' brand and deliver a truly unique experience to lacrosse fans worldwide.

Linking the embedded NFC tags to a blockchain record creates an **immutable security solution that protects licensed intellectual property**. The resulting non-fungible token (NFT) is a digital twin version of the jersey that effectively tokenizes the garment and contains cryptographically signed metadata, namely information about participants, partners, and the world championships.

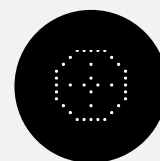
Leveraging tokenization, regulatory entities and end consumers alike can **easily track an item's production process** from design to material sourcing and manufacturing. In fact, this level of transparency **enhances a brand's reputation, builds trust, and improves the customer experience** by providing proof of authenticity and ownership. It also allows for the **easy integration of loyalty programs and sponsor campaigns** from a variety of third party services and applications.



- Blockchain-verified jerseys enhance authenticity
- Tokenization enables supply chain transparency
- Digital versions facilitate third-party interaction
- NFC chips increase fan engagement and loyalty
- Digital versions boost loyalty and sponsor campaigns
- Branded environment improves support functions
- 6,000 jerseys sold in two weeks

### User Walkthrough

01.



Scanning the NFC chip embedded within the jersey.

02.



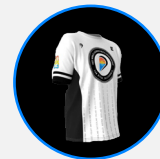
Registering the jersey online with a phone number and email address.

03.



Display showcases a 360° view of the authenticated jersey, plus registration records and loyalty program details.

04.



Complete NFT metadata also available online for external verification.

## Results



### Brand Protection

Blockchain authentication ensured the provenance and originality of each jersey, safeguarding Epoch Sports' brand reputation and revenue.



### Sponsor Integration

Sponsors offered "tap-in" or "wear-to-earn" rewards with participating brands, increasing fan engagement.



### Fan Engagement

An interactive NFC experience and exclusive loyalty rewards fostered immersive connections with the Epoch Sports brand through digital and in-person activities.



### Innovation

Blockchain technology increased revenue for Epoch Sports and Merchandise while building fan loyalty and trust.



## CARDANO Advantages



### Competitive capabilities

Low requirements to implement an advanced authenticity solution with predictable costs proportional to the resources used.



### Advanced storage efficiency

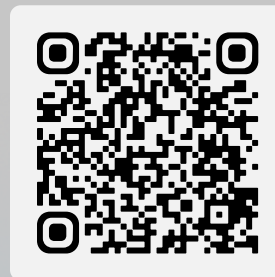
Metadata records can include multiple information of different types and a single transaction holds a significant amount of data.



### Interactive information

Easy for machines to read on-chain data and simple for both clients and fans to interact with the records.

## Contact Us



Cardano Foundation

The Cardano Foundation is an independent, Swiss-based not-for-profit advancing Cardano as a public digital infrastructure across a wide range of industries.

[www.cardanofoundation.org](https://www.cardanofoundation.org)

Sources  
<sup>1</sup> <https://www.oecd.org/trade/morenews/trade-in-fake-goods-is-now-33-of-world-trade-and-rising.htm/>  
<sup>2</sup> <https://www.uspto.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USPTO-Counterfeit.pdf>  
<sup>3</sup> <https://www.skyquestt.com/report/licensed-sports-merchandise-market>