



ACC gets in games with sponsored app

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The surge in popularity of mobile gaming apps has finally reached the college space.

The ACC and its multimedia rights partner, Raycom Sports, will roll out the ACC Football Challenge on Aug. 28 for Apple and Android devices. The mobile gaming app will feature all 14 of the league's football teams and will integrate with social media.

Raycom signed McAlister's Deli to be presenting sponsor of the game, which is believed to be the first of its kind among college conferences. It will be free to download, but some upgraded elements in the game will cost from \$1.99 to \$4.99.

"McAlister's is really strong in the ACC footprint and they'll play a significant role in the game's promotion," Trey Walters, Raycom's manager of new media and business development, said of the restaurant's 300-plus locations in the Mid-Atlantic.

Mobile gaming apps, those addictive, comically simple games like "Angry Birds" on smartphones and tablets, are played by more than 40 percent of the population with those devices, according to a survey by Bellevue, Wash.-based research group Information Solutions. That's the trend that the ACC hopes to tap into with a game that serves as a brand extension that potentially could put the league in front of more young viewers.

McAlister's, whose low-six-figure investment helped pay for the game's development, will give the gaming app strong retail promotion with point-of-purchase signage in its restaurants. More promotion will come from Raycom's syndicated broadcast of an ACC football game each week through the season, as well as on-line through TheACC.com, which Raycom also manages. At multiple points during



the game on TV, announcers will reference the gaming app with on-screen graphics.

Walters said Raycom has worked on the game through the spring and summer with San Diego-based Naquatic, an app developer.

The game is played by the user dragging a finger

across the touch screen. That motion instigates a field-goal attempt and points are collected for field goals made. Users can play against the game or, with a Wi-Fi or cell signal, against other gamers. Results can be posted to Facebook and Twitter.

Stadiums in the app are designed to look like the actual facilities, to give it an authentic feel.

Apple and Android stores will make the game available on Aug. 28, but the conference allowed users to take it for a spin this past weekend at the PGA Tour's Wyndham Championship in Greensboro, N.C., where the ACC is headquartered. Fans at the tournament were able to visit an ACC-sponsored kiosk and play the game on iPads.

As the game gains users, Raycom will offer a VIP trip to the ACC football championship game in Charlotte to players who score well. McAlister's gift cards and ACC-branded gear also will be part of the giveaways through the fall.