

## **Digital Signage Enabling the Next Generation of Sporting Venues**

A construction boom is happening globally. Professional, minor league and collegiate athletic facilities around the world are either being renovated or built new from the ground up. A reported \$3.6 billion was spent on stadium works for the World Cup alone. Wikipedia chronicles an extensive list of 75 stadiums currently under construction around the world with seating capacity from 5,000 up to 100,000.

What's interesting to me is to observe how integral a role digital signage is playing in bringing about this next generation of sporting venues. The economics of spectator sport complexes has changed dramatically. In these newer facilities, you would have a hard time going anywhere that wasn't within eyeshot of a digital screen. Believe it or not, 30 years ago the "jumbotron" next to the scoreboard was the only screen in the entire place. Now we have screens at the concession stands, in restaurants, in seat backs, in the causeway, in VIP hospitality suites and even in the bathrooms. And those grainy jumbotrons have been replaced by LED screens measuring hundreds of feet across. This is clearly an enormous opportunity for the digital signage industry.

No doubt the proliferation of digital displays in sporting venues has revolutionized the spectator experience. But beyond this obvious development, I believe that digital signage has opened up a huge opportunity for stadium owners to generate additional revenue by hosting events outside their core sports. These new venues now host corporate functions, private receptions, other sporting events and even community events. A BIG reason this is now possible is that signage is no longer static. With the flip of a switch, every screen in the stadium can change over to reflect another corporate (or team) identity. The chameleon-like ability of these new venues to reinvent themselves to accommodate additional teams and organizations gives near-limitless possibilities to the number of and types of events a stadium can host.

There's no turning back – every new sporting facility will be built for visual impact, and designed with digital signage at the core of the fan experience. Fans will enjoy a much richer experience in the stands, and stadium owners will enjoy new revenue streams with a dramatic increase in outside events they can host.