

Sporting Lokeren, Belgium

Barco scores with digital perimeter display at Sporting Lokeren



“We are confident that our LED perimeter display, one of the first on the Belgian football scene, will soon provide a great return on our investment.”

Ariane De Troch
Marketing Manager, Sporting Lokeren

In 2008, Sporting Lokeren, one of the 18 clubs in Belgium’s first division, decided to go digital as part of an ambitious business plan. The club replaced its existing perimeter advertising space with an 108-meter long LED display, which allows the content – ads, logos and other information – to travel around the arena.

The innovative display system – one of the first in a Belgian stadium – together with its hardware and software is the work of Barco. Sporting Lokeren supporters greatly appreciate the new viewing experience. Sponsors are thrilled with the creative advertising opportunities. And Sporting Lokeren has set a major step forward in achieving its ambition to become one of the top five clubs on the Belgian football scene.

BARCO

Visibly yours

Friday 8 August, 2008, was an exciting day for the fans of Sporting Lokeren, one of Belgium's 18 football teams in the first division. When they gathered at the Daknam Stadium for their annual fan day, the stadium had been revamped with a brand-new digital perimeter display system. Barco's SP-10 Sports Perimeter solution had gone live only a few hours before their arrival, following a tightly scheduled but successful implementation. By going digital, Sporting Lokeren substantially enhanced the viewer experience, while sponsors are thrilled with the new advertising opportunities.

The history of Sporting Lokeren goes back to 1907, and includes mergers with local clubs RC Lokeren, Standaard FC Lokeren and Sint-Niklaas. Since 1973, the club has been playing in Belgium's first division. To underline this premier league position, the club's Daknam Stadium was significantly renovated over the past few years. The podium was enlarged, a banquet room was added and the playing field was covered with artificial turf. The installation of a brand-new digital display system was the cherry on the cake.

Boosting advertising income

"In 2007, we developed a new business plan to improve the management of Sporting Lokeren and safeguard our future," said Ariane De Troch, the club's Marketing Manager. "One of the pillars of that plan was a new sponsoring approach. To provide our sponsors with new advertising opportunities, we decided to replace the existing Multivision screens - in fabric - with an innovative alternative: LED display boards." A comparison of all the systems available on today's market soon showed that Barco's solutions were a cut above the rest. "We already knew from our own experience that Barco deserved its title of market leader," continued Ariane De Troch. "A visit to RSC Anderlecht confirmed that perception. The top club was enthusiastic about the Barco sports perimeter LED



solution it had installed in 2006. Both the public and the sponsors had welcomed the new system and RSC Anderlecht had been able to increase its advertising income significantly. Sporting Lokeren resolutely decided to follow their example".

Exceptionally rugged and robust

Barco succeeded in installing an updated version of its SP-10 solution in merely a week's time. The Sporting Lokeren field perimeter is now boasting a display wall that is 108 m long by 90 cm high, and consists of 8 sections (1320 x 88 pi). Cutting-edge hardware and advanced dedicated sports software provide smooth visualization and management of the content. With its very high refresh rate, the SP-10 ensures a perfectly stable image. The system's automatic color calibration and color temperature adjustment create perfect images for broadcasting. The solution also features sun brightness calibration, a unique feature which ensures that the image quality on television is not impacted by the position of the sun, shadows on the display or loss of brightness due to direct sun light. Harsher weather conditions, such as rain, hail or snow, do not affect image quality, either. The LED displays are so rugged and robust that they are immune to water, dust and spraying grass clippings. At the same time, the outer shell of the shaders is made of a soft material to protect players should they come into contact with the display.

Professional support

"The digital solution was totally new for us," continued Ariane De Troch, "but Barco quickly familiarized our staff with the system. Even the sponsors and their advertising agencies needed an introduction. To make sure their ads would be flawless when displayed during the weekend matches, we gave them the opportunity to conduct some trials during the week. Fortunately, the system is very user-friendly and Barco is always on stand-by to lend support."

High-end branding opportunities

Sporting Lokeren considers the digital banner a huge leap forward from every perspective. Commercials, logos, animations and all other information can be easily input into the system and travel the length of the playing field perimeter with a simple click of a button. Fans greatly appreciate the new experience, while sponsors are enthusiastic about the high-quality, flexible advertising package the club now offers. "Sporting Lokeren is committed to be among the top five Belgian clubs. Our club management is therefore constantly looking for ways to enhance the game experience of players, fans and sponsors and enhance its professional image. Our artificial turf is unique in Belgium. And now we also boast one of the first LED perimeter displays on the Belgian football scene. We are confident this initiative will soon provide a great return on our investment," Ariane De Troch concluded.