

INTEGRATOR SUCCESS

HITTING A HOME RUN

Installing security measures at the Great American Ball Park

By: Ralph C. Jensen

If you are a security installer, you probably have a favorite place to work. For instance, as an integrator of security systems, you may have a passion for securing schools or healthcare facilities. Both are honorable goals and facilities to provide security.

None are higher on the list than any other installation, but what about installing security measures at the Great American Ball Park in Cincinnati? That's right, the Cincinnati Reds; the big red machine. Truth be told, the security install is less about baseball and more about the thousands of fans who attend 82 home games, and any post-season outings. The Reds can host as many as 42,200 fans on any given night.



Located on the winding banks of the Ohio River in downtown Cincinnati, Great American Ball Park serves as the home of the Cincinnati Reds, baseball's first professional franchise.

Good security and top tier systems are a must. The Reds organization has been so impressed with T.J. Dooley over the past 15 years that whenever he made a change in employment, they stayed with him.

The Reds were passionate about good service and counting on a professional to recommend and install their security systems. Dooley has been their Ace in the bullpen for several years now. About 15 years ago, an extremely important relationship between the Reds and Dooley began.

Over the years, the security system has changed and when the Great American Ball Park was built to replace Riverfront Stadium, digital security equipment was the only thing on the table. IP cameras replaced analog equipment as financial help was available. Only

40 analog cameras remain in service at Great American Ball Park, but they too are on their way out. It was a good switch over to an IP network, and Dooley proposed a VMS software, manufactured in Austin, Texas, to run the entire system.



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“We're a local, family-owned business,” said Dooley of Ginter Electric. “When we started upgrading this facility, we wanted the best equipment available for our hometown MLB team. As for the software we have selected, trust me, it fits, it handles all the compression needs; it just works.”

Dooley has had a 15-year relationship with the Reds organization, longer than most players on the team, but when security is at the heart of a safe experience for the fan, that contract is well worth the money he gets. The upgrades and technology that Dooley has brought to the facility are on the cutting edge of using every available electronic device.

Dooley is a Reds fan, of course, but he also has privileges to move about the under-side of the stadium to ensure that all security systems are functioning. He is able to stay in touch with the system via mobile tablet or smartphone. He can produce random clicks throughout a game to pull video or snapshots to make sure everything is working as it should.

The stadium sits on 26 acres. Built in 2003, Great American Ball Park has more than 10,100 tons of steel and 150 cameras covering the stadium and nearby parking facilities. The Reds security equipment is maintained by Dooley, and monitored by the Reds Security staff, who monitor the command center 24/7. When alarms on the security network are activated, the command center staff has the ability to pull up maps of the facility to see why there is an alarm and what resources should be allocated to solve the situation.

Security for the Reds goes far beyond the Great American Ball Park. Other facilities owned by the team are also on the network and get the same professional treatment. Storage for the video presentation is kept for 30 days, as mandated by Major League Baseball.

The Reds, like any other MLB team, have facilities elsewhere. Cameras also are placed and working at the Urban Youth Academy in Cincinnati, which is a year 'round facility, and at their Spring Training Facility in Goodyear, Ariz., totaling about 300 cameras streaming video to the command center. Once again, Dooley is quick to point out that the VMS they are using allows streaming information to be compressed and flow properly to the command center.

The problem was the previous VMS couldn't handle the compression of so much data, so Dooley changed vendors, and just like that, the video was streaming just like it was supposed to. The importance of the proper VMS allows staff security to provide services throughout the ball park, especially when more than 42,000 people are attending a Reds game.

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The Reds, well, they are having a tough 2016 season, in last place in the Central Division of the National League. However, their security system is top tier, and it continues to give a flawless performance day after day.

