

**Inside the World of Sports Facility Management:**Behind-the-Scenes Insights into Delivering Memorable Fan Experiences

by Jack Rubinger

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While fans are waiting in line thinking about hot dogs vs. nachos, finding their seats, checking out the larger-than-life digital scoreboard and settling into the game, there are many moving pieces, parts, and people behind the scenes working in stadium facilities teams.

Back in the early days of sports, fans might see fields transformed for baseball, football, soccer, car racing, boxing, rodeos, and maybe an occasional concert. Today, special areas such as exclusive lounges and themed restaurants and bars, are expected by fans.

Increasingly, fans are drawn to highly visual and dramatic displays, which are also maintained by sports facility management teams, including sound effects, explosions, fireworks, state-of-the-art displays, digital signage, and video boards for replays and statistics keeping fans engaged and entertained.

Ensuring Fan Satisfaction through Comprehensive Sports Facility Management

If there’s a seat that’s in bad shape and needs repairs, or if the traffic flow inside or outside the stadium is confusing due to poorly placed signage, then it’s up to the sports facility management team to step in to ensure that fans are happy, comfortable, and stress-free.

"The first step or foundation for delivering memorable fan experiences is to focus on creating a positive culture and work environment for the frontline staff who are, in fact, delivering the guest event experience. Venue managers need to take a strategic approach to create an environment that puts the event staff in the right frame of mind, enables them to focus on service, and makes the venue a place they WANT to be,” said Kimberly Mahoney, Venulogix venue and event management.

Fletcher Coffman is the Senior Director of Operations for the Washington Commanders football team, responsible for event management, keeping the stadium up and running throughout the year, overseeing customer services and daily operations, a position that encompasses the broad spectrum of sports facility management.

But if you were to describe his mission in seven words, it would be this: Deliver Memorable Game Day Experiences for Fans.

“What people watching games on TV don’t realize is the sheer magnitude of sports facility operations,” said Coffman. “They see the people in the stands, the players, the field – which all looks pretty on TV, but there’s a whole lot more they don’t see. We operate just like any large-scale facility. We have chillers, boilers, and hundreds of pieces of equipment – all of which must function to make these places safe, comfortable, and secure for fans,” he said. “Bottom line? We must make sure everything is perfect for the 60,000 to 80,000 fans before, during, and after every event.”

Safety & Security for Sports Facility Management

These days, fans and staff should expect robust crowd management, bag checks, metal detectors, CCTV as well as adequate lighting inside and outside stadiums and parking lots in addition to sound effects, explosions, fireworks, and digital signage.

Additional innovations and advancements in stadium safety and security include biometric access control systems, such as fingerprint or facial recognition, to enhance security and streamline access for authorized personnel.

Drones equipped with cameras are being used for aerial surveillance to monitor crowds, parking lots, and perimeter areas, providing security teams with real-time situational awareness.

Advanced CCTV systems with video analytics capabilities are becoming more common. These systems can automatically detect suspicious behavior, unattended bags, or overcrowding, alerting security personnel for prompt intervention.

Sports facility management at stadiums should address both ingress and egress traffic, which is all about getting people in and out of buildings safely. Signage is key to help both folks who are unfamiliar and familiar with the stadium to control the flow of where you go.

“Providing a sense of security allows fans to cherish the memories,” said Mark Herrera, Director of Safety and Security for the International Association of Venue Managers.

“At the same time, it’s important for stadium facility management and first responders, including fire departments, to understand the building footprint,” said Herrera.

Smiles, friendly concessions, clean and well-lit areas make everyone feel happy and positive when attending events, games, and shows. There’s a nice vibe when the air is filled with the aroma of popcorn.

Stadium Info Access for On-the-Go Facilities Teams

Because stadium facilities teams are constantly in motion, overseeing [**equipment maintenance**](https://www.arcfacilities.com/product/om-documentation), checking signage, repairing seating, lighting, special effects, and keeping restaurants, bars, and VIP areas clean and welcoming, the ability to map and pin key locations inside and outside the stadium needing attention [**using mobile devices**](https://www.arcfacilities.com/how-it-works) is valuable for effective sports facility management.

Also, since many stadiums like Fenway Park and Wrigley Field have been renovated multiple times over the years, having historic blueprints or [**legacy documents**](https://www.arcfacilities.com/product/legacy-documents) in hand via mobile devices helps stadium teams quickly find shut-offs located in unexpected places.

Ensuring the safety of fans at major sporting events involves a combination of comprehensive planning, implementation of security measures, and effective communication strategies. Here are some of the ways sports facility management experts recommend for keeping fans safe.

Enhancing Sports Facility Management: 7 Key Steps

1. *Security screening: Implement thorough security screening procedures at entry points, including bag checks, metal detectors, and pat-downs to prevent prohibited items from entering the venue.*
2. *Visible security presence: Increase the visibility of security personnel throughout the venue to deter potential threats and provide reassurance to fans. This includes uniformed security guards, law enforcement officers, and trained personnel.*
3. *Surveillance systems: Utilize advanced surveillance technologies such as facial recognition systems, and drones to monitor crowd behavior and identify potential security risks in real-time.*
4. *Emergency preparedness: Develop and regularly update comprehensive*[*emergency response plans*](https://www.arcfacilities.com/product/emergency-information)*that cover various scenarios, including medical emergencies, natural disasters, and security breaches. Conduct regular drills and training exercises to ensure staff readiness.*
5. *Crowd management: Implement effective crowd control measures to prevent overcrowding and maintain orderly movement within the venue, particularly in high-traffic areas such as entrances, exits, and concession stands.*
6. *Communication channels: Establish clear communication channels to disseminate important information to fans, staff, and stakeholders during emergencies or critical incidents. This may include public address announcements, digital signage, mobile alerts, and social media updates.*
7. *Collaboration with law enforcement and first responders: Foster close collaboration with relevant authorities to coordinate security efforts, share intelligence, and respond effectively to potential threats.*

Those in the sports facility management industry can do their part to educate fans about the importance of vigilance, reporting suspicious behavior, and following security guidelines to contribute to a safe and secure experience for everyone.

Conclusion

Finally, with safety and security such a key component of modern sports, stadium teams who can share [**building plans**](https://www.arcfacilities.com/product/building-plans) with first responders using mobile devices in the event of an emergency, are using technology when and where it counts the most – to provide fans with positive and happy memories they’ll treasure for years.