



Video System Keeps Football Violence in Check

Artemio Franchi Stadium in Florence Selects March Networks Technology

Football fans watching their beloved ACF Fiorentina at the Stadio Artemio Franchi in Florence are on their best behavior since the installation of a state-of-the-art March Networks® video surveillance system.

Fiorentina supporters are passionate about their hometown club, contenders in Italy's Serie A, the top echelon of the Italian football league system, but passions at a hotly contested football match can quickly escalate to violence. Such was the case in Catania, on February 2, 2007, when a police officer was killed in a clash with hometown fans following a loss to Palermo, a rival Sicilian team. Coming on the heels of the death the previous week of an amateur football official following a riot elsewhere in the country, the tragedy in Catania mobilized the Italian government and football officials to take action on stadium security.

One month after the incident in Catania, a March Networks VideoSphere™ IP video surveillance system was up and running at Artemio Franchi Stadium in Florence, allowing police in an onsite monitoring center to view live video of the stands, stadium entrances and parking lots during and after the heat of a match.

The design of the system took into consideration the unique challenges associated with a stadium environment, including the large number of people and the range of scenes to be monitored.

To effectively monitor fan activity in the stands, Artemio Franchi security management

selected VideoSphere PTZ Dome cameras featuring 26x optical zoom.

Keeping an eye on fans and preventing a situation from escalating out of control is a difficult task for security staff responsible for keeping the peace in a stadium with tens of thousands of spectators. However, using radio communication and video surveillance, security staff in the stadium monitoring center are in constant contact with police forces in the stands and can dispatch them promptly to the scene of a disturbance.

The VideoSphere PTZ Dome cameras provide visibility of all of the stands, or terraces, allowing police to zoom in on troublemakers, and capture the entire sequence of an incident as it unfolds.

Precise, fluid movement of the cameras and high image quality give security officers the detail needed to positively identify

suspects and apprehend them either on the spot or following a match.

Video surveillance in sports stadiums can also be enhanced by using VideoSphere CamPX cameras from March Networks to monitor stadium entrances, which are a challenge because of changing light conditions. Equipped with a video acquisition system developed by Pixim, the CamPX IP cameras feature a 720x540 pixel progressive scanning sensor and a dedicated Digital Signal Processor that work together to ensure excellent video quality in any lighting conditions.

For parking lots and stadium access roads, CamPX cameras with built-in VideoSphere Analytics artificial intelligence are able to analyze live video in real time, alerting security staff to behavioral anomalies such as unexpected changes in the movement of crowds, which could be an indication of panic.

The monitoring center at Artemio Franchi stadium is equipped with two 42-inch plasma monitors and two operator

stations with dual monitors – one running VideoSphere SiteManager, the other running March Networks VideoSphere Edge Decode Station software that can display as many as 64 live video streams either individually or in a grid on overhead monitors.

VideoSphere SiteManager provides full remote management of networked VideoSphere IP cameras, encoders and recorders, as well as multi-server IP networks working in concert with powerful Video Management System (VMS) Software.

The system also accommodates analog cameras that are used in less sensitive areas within and around the periphery of the stadium.

“We are pleased with our video surveillance system,” said Rinaldo Profeti of the City of Florence, the stadium’s owner. “We have had a number of visitors from other stadiums who have come here to learn about our security system. They were all very impressed. It’s definitely helped us to intervene and prevent situations from escalating.”

TV and newspaper stories about the stadium’s video surveillance system have also had a deterrent effect, he noted.

“Just knowing that the system is there and capable of identifying troublemakers has made fans think twice about engaging in any disruptive behavior.” ✨

Stadio Artemio Franchi

Stadio Artemio Franchi is the home of ACF Fiorentina, Florence, Italy’s professional football club, currently in fourth place in the country’s Serie A league. Fiorentina has won the Serie A twice – in 1955-56 and again in 1968-69. The Stadio Artemio Franchi, built in 1931 and extensively renovated in 1990 for the FIFA World Cup, accommodates 47,282 fans per game.

