

# Sporting Event Security

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It used to be setting up security for a sporting event was a simple administrative function. An official from the sponsoring event or from the team that either owned or had a working agreement with the stadium would negotiate a contract with a local security guard organization for a number of security guards to work the event and that was it.

Well, that was then and this is now. Today, even a local sporting event will probably involve federal, state and local authorities to go along with a well-established security guard firm. The event will also have highly sophisticated ID badging systems that will be used not only to identify, and then allow participants into the arena, but every single individual involved in the event will be ID'd. This means administrative personnel, referees, vendors, grounds keepers, the press, and maintenance personnel, anyone who has any reason at all to be there.

The situation has really changed. The threat of terrorism, people with access to unauthorized and/or illegal weapons and the increased possibility of rioting have made protecting everyone involved at the event a very complicated endeavor.

Preparing for the event will likely begin more than a year in advance. After all, more than likely there could be up to as many as 100,000 people attending if it is a one-day event and perhaps up to half a million people if it is a three- or four-day event, and depending on the nature and length of the event, hundreds of athletes.

Team leaders from the event meet with the various law enforcement agencies and professional security personnel to establish chain of command, territorial responsibility, procedures, channels of communications and equipment to be used, protect all on-site monetary (financial) operations, and build fortified temporary holding cells to detain (and protect) detainees. The idea behind all of this is to follow these basic rules: Anticipate, Prevent, Respond and Recover from an attack or other incident. They are the same basic rules followed by Homeland Security today.

This will require months of training and working together. The purpose of the training is as follows: to learn of and

eliminate areas of vulnerability, set up secure redundancies, set up contingencies, provide for medical support with emergency standby, determine "worst case scenarios" including for quick evacuation through urban areas, temporary shelter, hospital readiness, effective ways to protect all of the participating athletes, and secondary security backup for the arena including SWAT team preparedness. At first each group will concentrate on its own area of responsibility. This in itself can require several months. As an example, the group responsible for the identification cards must first learn how to use the software, then how to use the sophisticated ID badge printing equipment. Another example would be state and local police determining the best routes into and, perhaps more importantly, out of the parking facilities. In an emergency, thousands of cars would surely all attempt to take the same route away from the stadium. Alternate (escape) routes would have to be determined, then tested. Yet another example would be the additional need for EMS workers. It would be dangerous to remove so many of the EMS staff in the local community. Additional staff would have to be recruited from other areas. While they would certainly know their job, they would have to be trained on the procedures that are established for the sporting event. The same would hold true for local fire departments. Most certainly more than one battalion would be called upon should there be an incident. Before this "event" is actually going to take place, every organization involved will go through countless drills and "dry runs" to 1) gain insight into possible failures they may encounter; 2) learn of what and where other groups are operating; and 3) interact with the other groups.

With so many different groups needing access to the arena both prior to and during the event, the number of people who will need access to the stadium could be several thousand. Keep in mind these are not the paying customers; they are support and administration personnel. With the security of many thousands at stake, the accessibility to the arena and the movements within, all of these support people have to be carefully monitored. For example,

vendors, although important for the sales they make for management to the paying customers, still do not belong in all areas of the arena. They have to be able to move about, yet not walk into the locker rooms or administrative offices, etc. Similarly, grounds keepers should not be allowed to visit press box areas or locker rooms. To do that will require a very sophisticated photo identification system integrated with an access control system.

The identification card of choice would be approximately 4" x 5", large enough to be seen at a fairly long distance. The actual design of the card would be chosen by the event host. The card would be color-coded for each group to make it easily identifiable also from several feet away; designed with a large picture area for easy viewing of the person; a hologram embedded in the card to severely minimize the possibility of card falsification; and an encoded magnetic stripe that will provide access only to approved areas for any particular person. The magnetic stripe would be answering to an access control system. Once the card is "read," an access control device will either "allow" or "deny" access to the individual to the part of the arena he or she intended to enter. An individual attempting to enter an area where he or she is not allowed would meet with no more success than an attendee (a fan) attempting the same thing. All entering and exiting "events" to a particular area are recorded. An "illegal" attempt to enter any particular area will be immediately picked-up, recorded and an alarm sent out to those responsible for that area.

The access control system will be tied into closed circuit television cameras. Cameras will be posted in every area of the stadium: grandstands, lobbies, admission areas, clubhouses, press areas, restaurants, rooftops, stairways, elevators, parking facilities, bus and train unloading areas. The surveillance crew will rely on what is known as video analytics (Intelligent Video). With so many cameras to monitor and so much to see, it is likely impossible for security personnel to view everything going on in real time. While reviewing the recording(s) can be very helpful, the use of video analytics-real-time "thinking" by the cameras-can be enormously help-

ful. A “smart” camera can be programmed so that a package placed on the ground and left unattended by someone can be “viewed.” With the use of computer algorithms, the guard can be informed immediately if that package remains on the ground for longer than the amount of time deemed safe.

Everyone *that means everyone* will have to enter a walk-through metal detector. Identifying and locating concealed weapons is quite efficient with today’s technology. Using a multi-coil detection field system, the detector pinpoints the exact location of any metal object within 33 distinct areas of the archway, whether on the left, right or in the center of the body, from head to toe. It is also likely that everyone will be frisked or have to be checked with a hand-held metal detector as well. Today, these are so efficient that virtually anyone can become an effective security screener. They virtually eliminate the need for pat downs when screening for weapons as they can detect even a fine needle. This helps to save the attendees from embarrassment, while providing outstanding security. A policy will be established indicating what packages and personal belongings may be brought in.

With the likelihood of athletes and attendees from all over the world at the event, emergency exit signs, restroom signs, no smoking signs, etc., should use the International Symbol Standard. This is a system of recognizable safety information graphics which communicate hazards and actions without the need for words. Because of the possibility of a power failure during an emergency, the signs should be photoluminescent. This type of sign, when exposed to light, becomes fully charged, so that it will continue glowing during the loss of electrical power. For an added touch, signs can also be multilingual.

Roads and highways leading to the stadium will be monitored as well, with that part of the operation most likely being handled by the local municipality. Their job is to keep traffic flowing (safely) at all times, especially during the peak travel conditions, and to be ready to divert traffic in case of an emergency. Concrete barriers are put into position surrounding the stadium at such a distance as to insure that a vehicle cannot penetrate the established perimeter for any reason.

Event (Game) Day. Fans that used to wait outside the night before in anti-

ipation of a grand time and perhaps set for some “tailgate” parties are kept away. The less activity to observe, the less to “police,” the better. Many hours prior to allowing anyone into the arena, electronic “sweeping” equipment and bomb sniffing dogs go over the entire area. Police helicopters sweep over the roads, buildings and structures checking carefully for anything suspicious that may have been placed during the last hours of darkness, or that may now be inconspicuously moved into position. Helicopters may be the only thing in the sky. A no-fly zone will be set up for all other air traffic. That goes for both private and commercial air flights. Automobile traffic starts to build up slowly as everyone heads to the event. As attendees arrive they may be surprised to learn that their box lunches and coolers are searched meticulously or simply not allowed to be brought in. People will most certainly complain that this is just a way for the arena to get you to buy from their own vendors and thus increase their profits. While there may be some truth in this, once again it is a way for security to have fewer packages to check and be concerned with. Technology may be considered our best friend. At times, it can also be considered our worst enemy.

At the event, uniformed and plain-clothed police are everywhere. That guy drinking beer and yelling, sitting next to you is wearing a striped T-shirt, dyed jeans and an old pair of sneakers. Is he a die-hard fan? Or is he a cop? The closed circuit cameras are panning the field, the grandstands, the vendor locations, everywhere. Suddenly, a camera picks up a shiny object in the stands. The camera focuses right in-so close, so clear, the graphics on the program the man is holding in his hands can easily be seen. The shiny object turns out to be the man’s gold watch. Another man is waiting in line for a hot dog. As he gets to the counter, he realizes his pocket has just been picked. He reports it to security personnel. Security quickly checks with the digital camera monitoring that location. Because it is hooked up to a digital video recorder, security can quickly review the recorded data to see what had happened, even while continuing to record in real time. The review of the recording quickly finds the culprit. His tracks are checked on recordings from cameras adjacent to the area where the incident took place. His seating section is located. He is brought to a

security office for questioning. We can question whether or not our freedom is being compromised. It most certainly is. But before we are quick to blame those in the security field, we must consider why they are doing all this. They do what they do because of those whose goal is to take away our freedom permanently. They have started this “war.” So we must pay the price a little bit as far as our “freedom” is concerned and let security do its thing.

When the event is over, the cheering and yelling may be over, but not the security. In fact, this is a very vulnerable time. Thousands of people, who had arrived over a two- or three-hour period and slowly taken their seats, are now crowding the exits and eventually the roads, trains and buses-all at the same time. Escalators in the arena previously set up for up and down are now all headed down. Roads leading to the area are all cut off.

Streets that handled two-way traffic are now all one way out. Some traffic, unfortunately for many of those leaving, will place them in the wrong direction of their goal, forcing them to do an about-face several miles down the road. But the goal of all this is to disburse everyone as quickly as possible, minimizing any unexpected, unforeseen dangerous occurrence. Everyone is escorted out of the arena quickly. But has everyone left? Another sweep will be underway to insure only authorized personnel remain. And when they leave, they will need their access card to swipe through a card reader or turnstile and their departure will be noted. A check of the data will indicate who remains (and why). A female employee checks out through a turnstile, then realizes she has left her pocketbook at her desk. So, she’ll just turn around back through the turnstile to go get it. WRONG. Once outside the secured area she must go through the entire entry procedure. There is no taking chances with her or any employee. Key security personnel will remain, or be replaced during a shift change, to remain in the arena during the off hours. Every area will remain guarded, either electronically or with trained personnel. Inside the locker room, the star players and/or winning team(s) are interviewed by the press. With all the noise and tumult it is easy to become relaxed and complacent. Have all ID’s been checked for the press that are allowed in. Has anyone been allowed into the area without a pass?

Now the athletes dress and leave. The arena is closed for the day. If it is a multiple-day event, everything will be repeated in day 2, 3 and so on. Security personnel will have a briefing before each event to both review procedures and review any breaches from the day before. What is learned here at this event will certainly be carried over to the next event, in whatever part of the world it is held.

Finally, who will pay for the cost of the added security? You will. In higher ticket prices and in higher federal, state and local taxes. It will not change anytime soon, so just sit back and enjoy the game.

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