

Sporting Events and Security Screening: No Longer A “Nice-To-Have”

If the pre-existing world security climate was not warning enough, April 2013's Boston Marathon bombing has made it abundantly clear that athletic events, regardless of attendance, location or sport, are all potential targets for terrorist attacks. This means that event security operations have become front-and-center for nearly every major athletic event and sporting league, from the NFL to MLS.

While many security operations at sporting events include CCTV, security staff and access controls, the checkpoint is arguably the most important part of the overall event security footprint. Checkpoints provide a secure ingress point for attendees and, if properly managed, can ensure that threats are detected without impacting the fan experience. Too often, however, checkpoints are an afterthought or not managed to the correct extent, leading to long lines, lost revenues and angry attendees.

What causes the typical hold-up at an event checkpoint? Almost always, it is attendee inspection, which is typically done via visual, pat-down and handheld metal detector screenings. While these processes may take only a few seconds each, the ripples these delays can cause across throughput at scale can mean the difference between minutes and hours when it comes to actually entering an event.

Despite the negative impact these screening procedures can have on the fan experience, they are anything but optional, both in terms of process and scrutiny. Many professional sports leagues, starting with the NFL and spreading across other leagues as best practices, maintain stringent rules and standards relative to fan, player and attendee safety, all of which screen for potentially dangerous objects on an individual's person.

But these inspections, however, do not need to be as time-consuming. While handheld metal detectors

are the norm at many venues, the use of walkthrough metal detectors, like the Rapiscan Metor walkthrough metal detector series, are on the rise across the sporting world, and can not only shorten long checkpoint lines, but also improve fan sentiment and even revenue streams.

Secure Doesn't Have to Mean “Inconvenient”

For the most effective security screening checkpoint, however, team owners, facilities managers and security operators need to look beyond the “magnets” and examine how a metal detector fits into their overall security footprint. More specifically, these decision makers need to consider three key factors:

Throughput

In essence, “how quickly can people move through this checkpoint?” Faster throughput means shorter lines, which in turn leads to happier fans and, potentially, increased profits inside the stadium/arena. It should be noted, however, that increased throughput should not trump actual security, so it's vital to ensure that a given metal detector technology can keep attendees safe while still keeping lines short.

Flexibility

The ability to scale up and down to meet growth needs is a vital capability for a metal detector solution, especially for sporting events. Ease of installation and calibration are key components here, making it simple for security staff to obtain and implement additional units with little effort, allowing for scalability between events and crowd sizes.

Support

While most sporting venues and athletic teams are fully capable of designing and running their own security checkpoints, some may want additional specializations or even outsource the operation. In both of these instances, it is vital to have a solutions vendor that can support these needs, whether it be additional knowledge in a security screening field, like parcel inspection or trace detection, or the capacity to fully take on the burden of running a security checkpoint.

The Rapiscan Advantage: The Metor Series

Rapiscan understands the intricacies and nuances facing all of those associated with sporting events when it comes to security operations, from team and venue owners to day-to-day operations managers. With global expertise spanning events as varied as the Olympics and the World Cup, Rapiscan can help with every aspect of a security checkpoint, from:

- Risk assessment
- Checkpoint design
- Equipment purchasing
- Training
- Maintenance
- Logistics
- Day-to-day operations

Rapiscan's Metor Metal Detectors product line meets all of the needs of a sporting event checkpoint, with advanced design features that include independent detection zones, user calibration and passenger flow management. Each solution is easy to set up and features a simple calibration process, eliminating much of the trial and error inherent to most metal detector technologies, and is ideal for managing large groups and crowds, a common element at most sporting events.

Sporting event security will continue to evolve and grow more complex as the stature of these events (and the threats facing them) continue to grow; owners and managers need a partner that can address these changing needs to their exact specifications, whether it be through supplying security inspection technologies like metal detectors or helping to design a next-generation checkpoint. Whatever the need, Rapiscan has the expertise, the specialization and the know-how to help keep your venue, your attendees and your resources safe and secure.

For more information on how we can help secure your event, visit www.rapiscansystems.com or email sales@rapiscansystems.com

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