Focusrite RedNet for Super Bowl LVII



On February 12, 2023, the Kansas City Chiefs and Philadelphia Eagles faced off at State Farm Stadium in Glendale, Arizona. As one of the most highly anticipated sports events of the year, Super Bowl LVII had viewership of over 208 million. The Apple Music Super Bowl LVII Halftime Show performance by Rihanna was a big spectacle to match the big game. Once again, ATK Audiotek (a Clair Global company), the live-sound provider for the Super Bowl for the past 25 consecutive years, had an all-digital audio signal path thanks to an extensive Dante® networked audio infrastructure featuring components from Focusrite's RedNet range of Dante-networked audio converters and interfaces.

"This is our eighth year using Focusrite RedNet with our Dante Audio-over IP network at the Super Bowl," stated Kirk Powell, Engineer-in-Charge for ATK/Clair at Super Bowl LVII. "We started with a pretty small-scale Focusrite setup, but it's grown over the years into the huge deployment that you see today. This year we are responsible for all audio in the stadium, including the halftime show, so that is a pretty hefty undertaking. We know State Farm Stadium well, as we have done past Super Bowls there, so we know what we're getting into. But still, it's a huge logistical challenge, with a ton of different audio sources and places the audio needs to be routed, and Focusrite RedNet components are absolutely essential for us to do our job. They give us the interconnectivity and flexibility that we need to do the job right."

ATK Audiotek's Focusrite gear setup for Super Bowl LVII included 20 RedNet D16R

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16-channel AES3 I/O’s; 24 RedNet A16R 16-channel analogue I/O interfaces; and 24 RedNet D64R 64-channel MADI bridges. Additionally, ATK/Clair used the stadium’s house P.A. system but augmented it with a number of additional speakers from L-Acoustics. “Being an indoor venue, State Farm Stadium has a lot of reflective surfaces,” notes Powell. “The challenge is to keep intelligibility up and keep reflections down.”



At Super Bowl LVII, A16R units were used to connect with various interfaces operated by the venue and other entities, and D16R units were used to interface with amplifiers. RedNet D64R MADI bridges were deployed to interface with consoles and broadcast trucks. Clock management during the Super Bowl is important not only for the teams on the field, but also for audio production. The RedNet D64R blends a high channel count with the ability to convert sample rates between disparate audio systems on a multitrack scale, providing glitch-free inter-system audio transfer and sharing without a common master reference clock. While FOH and stage monitors could share a clock, Powell explains, “the production tracks are on a different clock, because they're not used all day long. The D64R allows me to break the clock between my system and the production tracks because they're done after halftime. They start to pack up, and I don’t want to be on their clock and have them shut down.”

Prep time at the stadium isn’t exactly plentiful, so ATK/Clair covers their bases by doing a dry-run setup at their home base in Valencia, California, in the weeks leading up to the big game. “We set up the whole network in the office, getting all the Dante routing done and double- and triple-checking everything to minimize on-site setup and look for any issues that need troubleshooting. It sometimes feels like overkill, but we don’t want to leave anything up to chance when gameday comes. Looking at our staging area for the system, you see a sea of red rack-mounted units! [laughs] We’re able to get to State Farm Stadium, set up and go. Because we do our extensive prep work, there are very few surprises.”

Focusrite gear has helped ATK/Clair get into a groove with this annual event; Powell notes, “The routing changes from venue to venue, but basically we’ve developed something of a standard setup now, and RedNet is a huge part of that. At an event this big, you just don’t want to leave anything to chance, and RedNet is the tool that keeps the robust network working.”

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