

Martin Audio for Sutter Health Park



Situated in West Sacramento, CA, Sutter Health Park - home to the River Cats baseball team and 'A's' (Athletics) - has undergone a major infrastructure upgrade for the coming season, designed to enhance the fan experience and improve game-day technology. This includes a strategically enhanced sound system for the bowl - based around Martin Audio CDD and SX subwoofer components, as well as process-controlled amplification from Focusrite sister brand, Linea Research, in the 14,000-cap arena.

The River Cats had acknowledged that their 25-year-old system badly needed enhancing. Locally based Martin Audio partner, Sacramento Production Services (SACPS) - who have a long history in servicing the facility - were brought in, initially to project manage for a third party before later being handed the full role of system integrator, as the time frame for completion narrowed. Their experienced Sales & Production Manager, Keith Wackford said, "The brief was to get the present system back up and running after they had completely gutted the control room. "In the process they said, 'What can we do to upgrade the system?' They wanted a major league experience in a minor league park on a minor league budget."

Wackford and his long-term associate and project manager, Anthony Brown, undertook a site survey and immediately recognised the imperfections - aside from the tired PA components. Budget and time frame restrictions would not allow for replacement of the main bowl speakers. "But with the addition of the new Linea Research amplification (LR-44C10M-Dante), it's as if they purchased new speakers.

“Elsewhere, it was a case of what would give us the best bang for the buck. We knew the system had always been lacking in subwoofers and if we were going to put in subs, we also needed to ensure the [infill and outfill] boxes would keep up.”

As a long-term Martin Audio partner they contacted Will Harris and Jim Sage at Martin Audio USA, who recommended the SX115 for its superior outdoor driver. “The 25-year-old outfield speakers on light poles were in really bad shape,” acknowledges Wackford, “and although difficult to get access to we knew we had to change them and replace them with [weatherised] CDD15W-WR. For how high up they are, everyone is absolutely impressed.” In fact one of the speakers is close to 80ft.

Of the CDD deployment he said, “The CDD15 gave us a little more low end and full range in the outfield, as the bowl PA doesn’t really reach out to there. We also like CDD’s whole intelligibility; at low volumes it’s got a really good intelligibility out of the far throw, plus it’s impressive how wide they are at the near point.” Distributed around the bowl, the subs themselves are mounted on I-Beams to the underside of the VIP suites, while 30 CDD10W-WR bowl fill speakers were added in conjunction with the subs. After consideration, they opted for one per each seating section, running right round the facility. “We are impressed with CDD10, for its throw and intelligibility - and the way it couples to the high frequency driver to carry the HF driver a bit further. One of the reasons we went for the CDD10 over the CDD8 is because it has a yoke, and we wanted something that would allow us to pan and tilt in an easy manner.”



In addition to the amplifiers and speakers, SACPS upgraded the mixing console, as well as the main system processor and touch screen interfaces to Symetrix. “Symetrix allowed us to use the Linea Research Intelligent modules bringing the amplifier telemetry data right onto the users’ touch screen remote - giving the user information as to what the nine LR-44CC status and signals are doing. The system is all running Dante with an analogue fail over from the console to the Symetrix, and to all nine LR-44C amps around the facility,” Keith Wackford explained.

Better known as ‘Raley Field’, the site itself is directly adjacent to downtown Sacramento, with a whole neighbourhood growing up around it. “We had a crazy speed limit of, I think 85dB, A-weighted 15ft from a source. So trying to do line array from the outfield or subs up high wouldn’t work. We had to keep things contained within the ballpark as there are a lot of new apartments with high rise buildings springing up. Everything distributed as close to the listening area as possible is critical.” System feeds include DJs on the concourse, taking advantage of the new audio inputs, and there are plans for future live entertainment. Main PA and pre-recorded live safety messages also run through the system. “Messaging now sounds so much better,” believes Keith Wackford.

Sutter Health Park upgrades with Martin Audio

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Aside from him, Anthony Brown acted as project manager; onsite programming and networking were provided by Brian Webber, while due to the tight time frame Alive Media were brought in to provide on-site installation, wiring and labour. Finally, Symetrix programmer Nick Danielson did “an amazing job” according to Wackford. The client is delighted with the result following the upgrade. According to Eric King, VIP Technology, “The difference is night and day - the quality, clarity, and overall experience are next level. We really appreciate the attention to detail, the seamless install, and the passion brought to the project.”

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