

WDR uses Riedel for UEFA Euro 2024



The German regional public broadcaster Westdeutscher Rundfunk (WDR) has implemented a Riedel backbone for communications and signal distribution for the ARD broadcast of the UEFA European Football Championship 2024. In collaboration with Broadcast Solutions and Riedel's Managed Technology Division, the media and intercom infrastructure at WDR's Broadcast Center Cologne (BCC) was temporarily expanded to enable flexible and efficient remote production for linear TV, radio, online, and social media.

WDR opted for a centralized remote production from its Cologne location, which helped reduce travel and personnel costs. For this purpose, all UEFA feeds were centrally organized via the German public broadcaster control room in Mainz, decoded, and sent directly to Cologne over fiber. In addition, signals from up to six unilateral cameras with embedded audio were transmitted from each stadium to Cologne. There, all signals converged in a dispatcher room used by production, editorial, and technical staff, and were distributed throughout the Cologne campus.

“ARD wanted to be on location in the stadium, with the fans, at the heart of the action — but didn't want to do without a centralized way of working,” said Felix Demandt, Project Manager, Riedel Communications. “In previous large-scale

productions, an OB van with a large team had to be at the stadium. Today, production can be controlled centrally from Cologne with a small team on site. This is not only more efficient but also gave the team the chance to react more agilely to the dynamic production requirements of Euro 2024.”

Due to the high number of additional signals to be processed in the BCC, the WDR infrastructure was temporarily expanded by 17 MediorNet MicroN UHD nodes. Ten of these nodes were equipped with the Standard App to sync the unsynchronized UEFA feeds to the house clock and enable flexible distribution of video and audio signals. The remaining seven nodes used the MultiViewer App for scalable multiviewing capacities. The orchestration layer, hi human interface from Broadcast Solutions, was chosen to control and configure the infrastructure.

“Through their Ü3 OB van, our partners at WDR were already familiar with the powerful combination of MediorNet and hi human interface. They knew that the interaction between MediorNet and hi human interface is highly user-friendly, scalable, and reliable,” says Humphrey Hoch, Product Manager, Broadcast Solutions. “With a total of 29 hardware panels and software licenses, WDR was able to have flexible access to the hi system — from the BBC in Cologne to the German Quarter in Herzogenaurach.”

In addition to the existing intercom system, WDR rented an extra Riedel Artist Node with MAD1 cards to connect the commentator stations in the stadiums, as well as additional intercom panels to accommodate the increased number of workstations.

The integration of Euro 2024 into WDR's ongoing operations required careful planning to ensure that its regular processes remained undisturbed. For example, the Euro 2024 control room was decoupled from the main WDR control room to ensure dedicated processing of the European Championship content. Close cooperation from system planning to technical implementation ensured that the system met WDR's requirements and functioned flawlessly.

“WDR achieved first-class coverage of Euro 2024 with advanced and resource-saving remote production,” continued Demandt. “We are delighted that we were able to contribute to this success story with our services and technologies.”

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