

Exactech Arena at the Stephen C. O'Connell Center Case Study

For TV partners and fans alike, reliable cabling performance and easy-to-access broadcast connections were a necessity for enhanced experiences at Exactech Arena

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Customer



The Florida O'Dome (now known as the Exactech Arena at the Stephen C. O'Connell Center), home to the Florida Gators, opened its doors in the early 1980s.

The University of Florida owns and manages the 292,000-square-foot, 36-year-old building. The facility hosts basketball, volleyball, gymnastics and swimming events for the University of Florida, as well as commencement ceremonies and other campus celebrations. It also hosts a variety of non-campus events, such as concerts and expos.



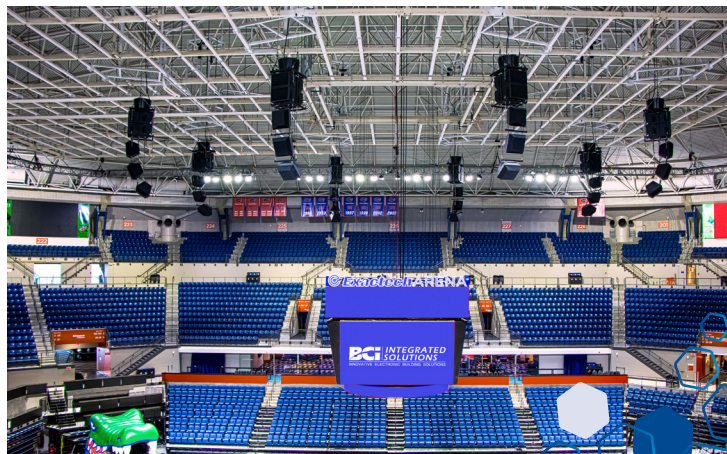


Challenge

Only minor upgrades had been made since the arena was first built in 1980, and the University of Florida wanted to bring the sporting venue into the 21st century to match the level of arena technology used by other universities and professional teams across the country. It also wanted to provide a more fun, interactive experience for fans, players and coaching staff.

From a cabling perspective, reliable performance and easy access to broadcast connections were a must for the TV partners that air games and events live from the arena. To meet these needs, the University of Florida was in search of an indoor/outdoor triaxial cabling system. “We didn’t even know if the type of cabling we needed was going to be available for the type of install we needed to do,” says Jon Rubin, assistant athletics director for the Florida Gators.

To make it more convenient for TV partners that bring in their broadcast trucks, the University of Florida wanted to relocate its broadcast panel from a sheltered spot close to the interior of the arena to a location that was several hundred feet away, exposed to the elements. “We hit a snag, and didn’t know if we’d be able to move the broadcast panel because we didn’t know if the type of triaxial cable we needed for it was available,” Rubin explains.



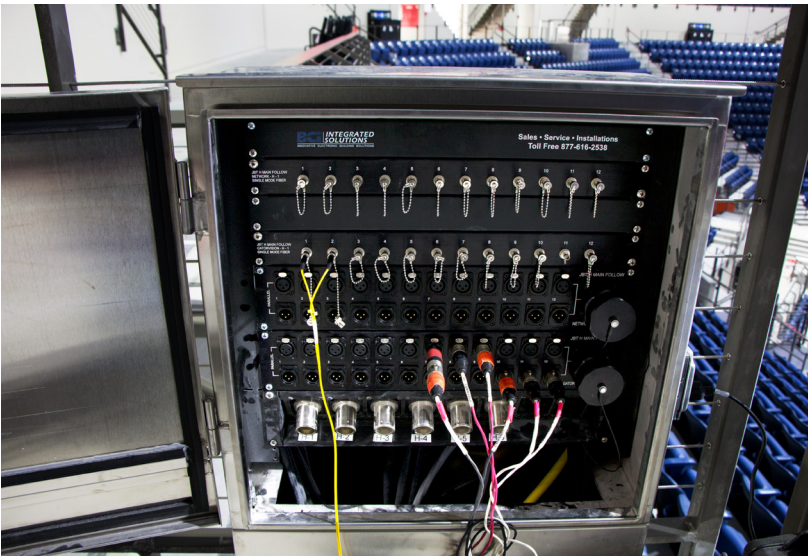


The University of Florida was looking for a cabling partner that could take its renovation ideas and make them reality with a cabling system that allowed for safe and reliable installation in their preferred locations.

Belden was able to connect the University of Florida with BCI Integrated Solutions, a Belden PartnerAlliance Networking Installer. The low-voltage systems integrator is an expert at designing, installing and maintaining Belden products and systems, understanding the importance of a reliable, high-performance cabling system as the backbone for internal and external interaction, broadcast and communications.

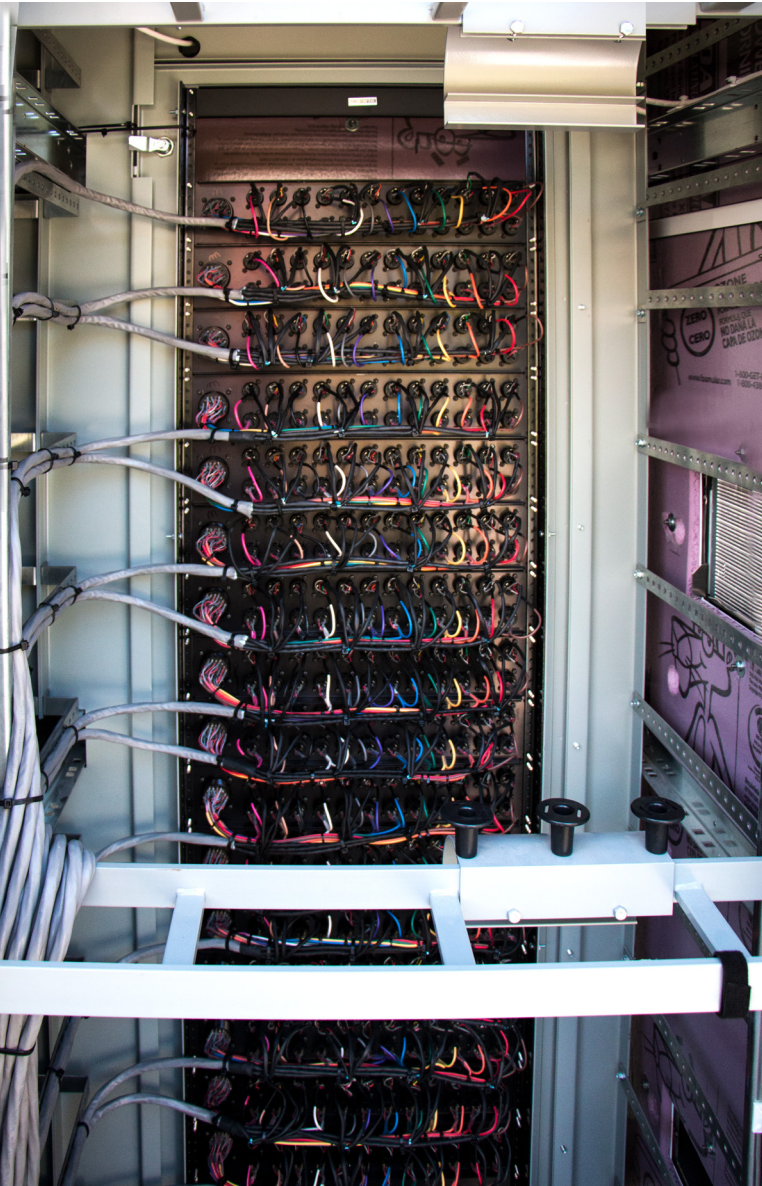
“There was a point where no one was manufacturing an indoor/outdoor cable that could be used for broadcasts,” says Darryl Carver, ICM installation manager at BCI and project manager for the Exactech Arena project. “Belden stepped up and started making the triaxial cable.”

“Belden stepped up and started making the triaxial cable.” - Darryl Carver, ICM Installation Manager at BCI Integrated Solutions and Project Manager for the Exactech Arena project





Solution



As part of the \$65 million Exactech Arena renovation, BCI and Belden worked closely together to design a cabling infrastructure to support the technology deployed inside and outside the building – not just improving the experience for fans inside the arena, but also for the viewers watching elsewhere.

An indoor/outdoor triaxial cable, developed by Belden specifically for this project, was used to ensure high bandwidth and interference rejection while protecting against water damage. Based upon project timing, Belden fast-tracked the development of the 2233RW cabling product and the Underwriters Laboratories (UL) Listing process, making sure everything came together in time for installation. With its water-blocking tape between the outer braid and outer jacket, this cable enabled University of Florida to relocate its broadcast panel for easier access by its TV partners.

Belden fiber cabling and adapter panels are installed throughout the building to support technology such as on-court hologram projection connectivity and real-time information updates on the \$2 million center-hung videoboard and four corner scoreboards that provide replays and announcements. Belden speaker cable is also used to connect the arena's new sound systems, speaker clusters and delay speakers.





Results

“Everybody is blown away by the improvement of the building. They can’t believe it’s the same building they’ve come to for the last 36 years. All of our TV partners are over-the-moon happy with the results.”
- Jon Rubin, Assistant Athletics Director for the Florida Gators

Arena-wide cabling infrastructure upgrades make the Exactech Arena a first-class sports venue, helping the University of Florida rise to the top of the SEC when it comes to athletic facilities.

“Everybody is blown away by the improvement of the building,” explains Rubin. “They can’t believe it’s the same building they’ve come to for the last 36 years. All of our TV partners are over-the-moon happy with the results – not only in terms of the broadcast panel being in a much more convenient location, but also in terms of the installation of the main panel and individual broadcast panels around the building.”

As broadcast trucks arrive onsite, Rubin says he is often asked: “‘Who did this cabling install? It’s so nice!’ It has been very well received, both internally and externally.”

Since the day the arena reopened, the installed cabling system has performed flawlessly with 100% uptime. The University of Florida is confident that the cabling infrastructure will provide reliable, high performance and connectivity for the long term.

