

Sports Venue Success Story

Dean E. Smith Student Activities Center

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With four new video boards, each 576 pixels tall by 3,024 pixels wide, the staff at North Carolina needed to add an above-average Display Control System to simultaneously control these extra-long screens.

DEAN E. SMITH STUDENT ACTIVITIES CENTER (2018)

CHAPEL HILL NC, USA

NCAA MEN'S BASKETBALL | UNC TAR HEELS

The **University of North Carolina Tar Heels** men's basketball program is one of the winningest NCAA Division I basketball programs in the country. Since their first season in 1910-11, North Carolina has won seven men's basketball national championships. On January 18th, 1986, almost four years after breaking ground, the **Dean E. Smith Student Activities Center** hosted its first event. The Tar Heels defeated the Duke Blue Devils 95-92 in the first of many home-court victories to happen in the Dean Smith Center. Since opening, the multi-purpose arena has undergone several expansions and renovations.

THE CHALLENGE

In early 2018, UNC Athletic Director Bubba Cunningham was given approval to replace the four 17.8' x 23.6' corner video board, after over a decade of service. Some had concerns over losing the open feel of the arena and obstructing people's views of the iconic rafter banners, and this led to the decision to stick with the four-corner setup rather than switch to a more common center-hung video display. Each of the four boards would measure 19' x 100', which meant they would be the largest video boards in any NCAA college basketball arena.

Previously the Tar Heels had been sending live gameplay to 2 of the 4 boards, while the other 2 boards received current player stat information from an existing XPression channel. With the new system, the Tar Heels could integrate engaging fan content, live video and sponsorship elements on each corner. The workflow changes and upgrades to the boards meant that the single 720p output that the Tar Heels were using would no longer cut it. They were faced with the challenge of keeping operational simplicity with a small staff while increasing the complexity of the show, which led to a display control overhaul.

THE SOLUTION

As long-standing Ross customers, the Go Heels Production team had been operating a Production Control Room with core Ross products for years. When it was time to choose a Display Control System for the new video boards that would integrate with their existing equipment, a **Unified Venue Solution** from Ross was an easy decision.

After seeing the newly released **XPression Tessera** solution at the Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta Georgia, the Go Heels team, and Ross worked to design and build the new system.

The core Ross components included:



Four channels of XPression Tessera, an XPression INcoder, and three Carbonite Black Solos were added to the existing production room equipment to allow for control of the four corner boards. An existing XPression was upgraded with a Tessera license to make it easier to continue feeding real-time rendered content to the existing 360 fascia, scorers table, TV announcer table, tunnel signage, and basket support signage. A DashBoard Custom Panel allowed the Go Heels to shift from an in-game, stat focused design, to a sponsored fan cam take over.



DashBoard, Ross' custom control & triggering solution, allowed the Tar Heels team to create a one-touch operation panel for the graphic elements of the display.

Once the system arrived onsite, Ross commissioned the system, reviewed the setup process and trained staff on how to build the Region Mapping through Tessera. After two days, the Go Heels team had a comprehensive understanding of the system to confidently build out the rest of the project.



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THE IMPACT

XPression Tessera allows the Go Heels production staff to easily create multiple looks on their extra-wide video boards and push dynamic content to the main displays as well as their multiple additional LED displays. With the RossTalk capabilities of custom DashBoard panels and Carbonite Black, controlling the more than 7.6 million pixels in the arena is as easy as pushing a button.

Chris Brown, Assistant Director of Game Day Productions:

"XPression Tessera represented a fundamental shift from the signal flow we were using previously.

Instead of the Carbonite being the last stop before the signal was handed off to Outfront Media's equipment, the XPression Tessera / Carbonite combo was now downstream of everything. Consequently, the role of our graphics operator and TD had changed, as the XPression Tessera operator now controlled most of what you see on the board through a DashBoard panel, and the TD just controlled what you see in the video window. Between a handful of Macros built into the TD's switcher and the graphics operator's DashBoard panel, all signage in the arena is now controlled by these two people. The nature of Tessera's design has allowed us to quickly move between board layouts that service our different game day needs. Through a click of the button we can shift from an in-game, stat focused design, to a sponsored fan cam take over.

Tessera has also fundamentally affected the way I design content for the boards. It is so easy to modify and add regions so we can easily conceptualize a promotional design and have it operational in a matter of days. This gives us the flexibility to implement creative ideas even in the middle of a season.

What we have been able to achieve in the Smith Center would not have been possible without the use of XPression Tessera. Even with the small size of our game day production group, we have been able to create a clean and effective show for two seasons in a row. There will always be new challenges as we work to service the many events that we host in the Smith Center, but we can move forward with the confidence that Tessera's flexibility affords us. "