

Football fever taxes sound at Glenbard North

Indiana basketball. Hockey in Canada. Football at Glenbard North High School in Carol Stream, Illinois.

"They have an incredible following," says Novatoo's Santo DiBenardo. "There's not nearly enough room in the stadium seating to accommodate everyone who comes to the games. Hundreds of people stand around the end zones or on the fence line. And it turns out that a sound system designed for the stadium is not going to be enough to serve this crowd."

DiBenardo learned the extent of this football fever only after he had designed and installed a new sound system for the stadium itself. What would the typical sound contractor do once he realized that the stated specs really weren't adequate for the job at hand?

"We were very pleased with the work Novatoo did," says North's Assistant Principal Brian Waterman, "but we were extremely pleased with their customer service and followup afterwards."

Waterman says the new system "sounded awesome" in the stands, but much less so in the overflow areas given the crowd at the first home game. DiBenardo came out and made some adjustments during the week, came out again that Friday night to hear the system with a big crowd, came out again for more modifications then once more the next home game to make sure his solution was working.



Weber Field at Glenbard North, with a new sound system by Novatoo AV. At right: Santo DiBenardo in the announcer's booth.



"With the fans this team is attracting—they tell me 2,000 - 3,000 people—they really could use a set of speakers for each end zone," says DiBenardo. This, however, was an expense that the school had not planned on. "We ended up changing the angle of the speakers to cover the additional areas and then adding another amplifier."

"We're really pleased," says Waterman. He says the system sounded good after DiBenardo moved the speakers, "but when Santo was here he told us we were running at capacity, hitting the red. He said you really don't want to do that. He put in a more powerful amp with the idea that the system would last longer running at about half capacity and we'll get better sound."

In addition to the football games,

Waterman says the school uses the new sound system for track meets, soccer games, and other athletic events. The biggest change—other than the clarity and reliability of the sound—is the addition of a wireless mic that coaches and instructors can take out on the field. "In track meets, it really helps if the head track coach can make announcements," Waterman says, "where to line runners up, where to report to, and so on. Now he can just carry the mic with him and make those announcements while he's down on the track."

Classroom installations

Waterman says he chose Novatoo for the stadium system based on other work they've done in the school over the last two years.

Nancy Scheitler, North's AV Director, says she knew the Novatoo partners from their previous jobs, and so when she heard they started the new firm, she brought them in to work on her new multimedia lab.

"The room is a little unusual in that it's a computer lab but also a presentation area, where teachers can come if they want to show a video or PowerPoint presentation," she says. "We have it set up with wireless mics, so both students and teachers can have a microphone."

After finishing the multimedia lab, Novatoo designed and installed systems in a dance studio, auto shop, electronics lab and business education classroom at North.

The labs and classrooms each feature wireless mics plus the ability to project from both a permanently installed computer and a laptop. "They use the dance studio for aerobics instruction," says DiBenardo, "so we designed the system with a multi-format CD player with pitch control so they can speed up the music or slow it down. We put in some larger JBL Control speakers which really get their students' hearts pumping but set up the aerobics instructor with a headset mic so she can be heard above the music."

Like Waterman, Scheitler has been very pleased with the service from DiBenardo and Novatoo. "I can call them for just about anything," she says, "and know they will help me."

For example, she adds, "Over the summer the lab is cleaned and equipment needs to be moved. Getting all the cables back where they belong so that equipment works properly is not always an easy task. I just call Novatoo and they come right out."

"They really have been great. I would definitely recommend them to anyone."



The new business education classroom, auto shop and electronics lab