


OPTIONS APLENTY WHEN CHOOSING A NEW SCOREBOARD

 ROB MEYER - FEBRUARY 9, 2015

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There are so many options. The prices are all over the map. What company do I use? What size do I need? Do I need LED lights, high-definition screens or sponsorship banners?

If I'm the sports field manager at a high school or small college who's examining options for replacing my decrepit and outdated scoreboard, the questions posed above are just a fraction of what's going through my head. It's dizzying, really. I know I need a high-quality, durable product, and I want the latest technology, but I also need to be practical, as my school's budget for the project has its limits.

Let's fast-forward a few months. After doing the research, meeting with board members and my superiors, and talking to peers who recently purchased scoreboards, we chose a new scoreboard. It was recently installed, looks great and functions without issue.

So, how did I choose? What options and features did I look for? How did I decide what I really needed, while staying within my budget?

Narrowing down your options

"When customers look for scoreboards and video displays to install at their venues, some of the main factors they consider are design, size, viewing distance, resolution, content/how it will be used and budget," says Will Ellerbruch, national sales manager at Daktronics (www.daktronics.com). "With all of these factors taken into account, the customer's budget provides a guideline to what can be done to meet their wants and needs."

Let's take each of these factors individually. Design: It's important that the design and overall look of the display fits the profile of your venue. Just as the electronics can be customized, so too can the appearance of the scoreboard, as the school's colors and logos can be incorporated into the design for the ultimate custom look.

"Games are more than just games at most schools," says Craig Katt, senior vice president of display technologies at the electronic information display supplier Trans-Lux (www.trans-lux.com). "They're often a social event that includes marching bands and even fundraisers. Scoreboards with electronic team names, changeable electronics, sportsspecific captions and even school colors help to highlight the excitement and keep the fans engaged in watching their favorite sport. From the equipment manager's perspective, extra sport controllers allow each equipment manager to have a dedicated controller without the need to share because of different events or practice times."

Colors and aesthetics play a large role in this process. Companies like Daktronics, Spectrum (www.spectrumscoreboards.com), Fair-Play (www.fair-play.com), Varsity (www.varsityscoreboards.com) and Nevco (www.nevco.com) allow for team or school names, colors and logos to be used in different variations and placements. Size: Obviously, the size of your new scoreboard is dependent on the situation at your field. If your display will be intended for longer viewing distances, like behind the end zone of a football stadium, you'll need a larger scoreboard. If you have a smaller field, the size of your scoreboard can be reflective of that.

For example, Daktronics makes football scoreboards that range from 14 to 20 feet wide on the smaller side and 40 to 48 feet wide on the larger scale.

Smaller scoreboards display only essential info: the score, period, time remaining, and current down and distance. A school logo and advertising banners can be incorporated. For some schools, this is all you may need.

Some scoreboards can have features like high-definition (HD) video boards and animated message screens that can be used for advertising, entertainment purposes and other functions. Typically, video scoreboards are incorporated into a facility doing a major upgrade or purchased through sponsor commitments.



Manufactured by Fair-Play, this scoreboard at Southwest Mississippi Community College in Summit, Mississippi, has a smaller video board, surrounding advertisements and school logo along with the information panel.



This high school football scoreboard, manufactured by Fair-Play, at Drew Charter School in Atlanta, displays only the essential information — there are no advertisements, video boards or school name/logo.

Resolution and content: “[Resolution] determines the display quality for the content intended to be shown,” Ellerbruch explains. “At farther viewing distances, a lower resolution can provide high-quality imagery. The closer the viewing distance, the higher the resolution would need to be for optimum image quality.”

This ties into the type of content you intend to put on the display of your scoreboard or how you intend to use the display. Essentially, the overall resolution provides you viable options for content choices in conjunction with the viewing distance. High schools across the country are focusing on new scoreboards to make the game day experience more stimulating and fun.

Other considerations

According to the Electronic Scoreboards Buying Guide, following are some things to consider before choosing a new scoreboard.

Better display

LED (light emitting diode) displays offer many advantages over traditional bulb scoreboards. LED scoreboards operate on less power and can last decades longer without maintenance. “To survive some of the most challenging outdoor environments, the LED digits should have a neoprene gasket and polyurethane coating to protect against moisture,” Katt says.

Timing is everything

Coaches, from Pee Wee to the pros, are demanding at least 10th of a second timing to give their team any advantage they can. Goal-mounted game clocks and regular scoreboards should come equipped with proper timing functions.

Consider sponsor panel options

A new scoreboard is a prime advertising opportunity, so why not sell advertising space on it?

Customer service is important

It’s important that the scoreboard works when you want it to, so make sure your scoreboard supplier provides installation support, as well as customer service when things go wrong.

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<http://www.sportsfieldmanagementmagazine.com/field-equipment/options-aplenty-when-choosing-a-new-scoreboard/>